

MATHON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a PLANNING MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL held in Mathon Parish Hall, Mathon, on Tuesday 19th March 2024 at 7.00 pm

Prior to opening the meeting, the Chairman Cllr S Harte explained to the 11 members of the public present that comments must relate only to the factual accuracy or otherwise of the supporting statement presented by the Applicants, and that no general planning matters could be considered or discussed. He then opened the meeting.

Present:- Cllr S Harte (Chairman), Cllr N Walker, Cllr P Davies, Cllr M Malsbury

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk)

Apologies - Cllr K Perkins

Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or other Disclosable Interests falling within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct - Cllr C Green had informed the Clerk of her Pecuniary Interest in this application and did not attend the meeting.

No requests had been received by the Clerk for any Dispensations relating to items on the Agenda (Sec 33 of the Localism Act 2011)

As the applicants or any representative/Agent for the applicants were not present, the Chairman invited members of the public present to put forward their comments on the following Certificate of Lawfulness Application:-

App No: 240414
Site: Rook Row Farm, Mathon WR13 5PR
Proposal: Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for existing use of the construction of a packhouse and the use of the packhouse and access for B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage or Distribution) purposes.
Grid Ref: OS 372550,245531
App Type: Certificate of Lawfulness

Parishioners comments/concerns were as follows :-

All previous planning applications in respect of the Packing Shed and other buildings, including the 2022 application for seasonal worker accommodation, have been based on the agricultural nature of the business and decisions taken on this basis. This is the first time mention has been made of the business being in any respect industrial.

It cannot be correct that the change of use from agricultural to industrial use of the packing shed occurred because the Company rented more land than they owned, as suggested by the application, when in fact the Company was still planting, harvesting and packing their own produce. Local concern is primarily that of imported products coming in from abroad rather than

produce which has been grown by A S Green on land owned or rented locally. A more recognisable change of use from agricultural to industrial resulted from the Company's decision in ca 2017 to supply product all year round, necessitating the import of product from overseas. This is brought by lorry into the packing shed and then despatched again by lorry to customers.

This has caused a huge impact on the locality, not only in environmental terms e.g. severe potholes and verge damage to the roads surrounding Rook Row, but also to the safety of residents, horse riders, walkers and car owners from the massive lorries using the country lanes/roads. The supporting statement from the applicants Agents produced no evidence about how the growth of the business has been safely accommodated.

In terms of labour, the majority of employees on site at Rook Row are from abroad and are not local.

The Certificate of Lawfulness, if granted, should be conditional i.e. limited only to produce grown on land owned or leased by A S Green locally and not for produce imported from abroad.

Over the years, the planning applications from A S Green have been primarily piecemeal in nature and based on agricultural needs. Parishioners want Herefordshire Planning Services to undertake a more holistic review of the whole site as the Company moves from agricultural to industrial activities which may require different planning permissions.

19/24 The Council agreed that the above list of concerns voiced by parishioners to be relevant to the application under discussion. The Clerk was directed to forward these to Herefordshire Council Planning Services.

DRAFT

..... Chairman Date