

FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Planning & Highways Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 6 January 2009 at 7.00 pm in the Corn Exchange, Faringdon

PRESENT: Cllrs. A V Hickmore (Chairman)
Mrs M J Barker
Mrs J Boulton
J Boyle
J C W Gillman
D Hughes
D Keeble
A Marsden
Dr M L H Wise
D/Cllr Mrs A Thomson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Brown, Marriotts
Mr A Henderson, G L Hearn
Mrs D Saunders, Faringdon Area Project
Faringdon Local Food Group
Mr P Saunders, Faringdon Local Food Group
Isobel Thomson, Faringdon resident
Mr P Schwab, Faringdon resident
Mr A Cane, Faringdon Folly
Jane Celia, Faringdon Junior School Governor
Mr N Elwell, Chamber of Commerce
Focus on Faringdon
Sarah Allen-Stevens, Wicklesham Comm. Properties
Mr T Allen-Stevens, Wicklesham Quarry
Mr T Evans, Faringdon Resident
C/Cllr Mrs J Heathcoat
Deputy Town Clerk
Assistant Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D Price.
2. **Minutes of Last Meeting: Tuesday, 9 December 2008**
The Minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
3. **Matters Arising**
Min 3, Planning Application GFA/4905/9: Cllr Wise reported that he, together with a local Faringdon resident, had attended the meeting of the District Council Development Control Committee held on 5 January 2009 and that they had both spoken regarding their objections to the variation in access. *(A written copy of Cllr Wise's objection was circulated)*
Cllr Wise advised that the Development Control Committee had deferred making a decision on the application and had voted that the issue regarding access be referred to an independent road transport engineer for review. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Wise for acting on behalf of the Town Council in this matter.

Min 7, Planning Application GFA/7341/10: Cllr Boyle wished now to declare an interest in this application as at the time the Town Council originally considered the application he had been unaware that this interest would be relevant.

4. Public Question Time

No questions had been received.

5. Public Speaking Time

No members of the public wished to speak at this stage.

6. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

7. The following Planning Applications were considered:

GFA/20753 Erection of a rear conservatory
53 Town End Road, Faringdon
For: Mr & Mrs Bowley
NO OBJECTIONS

GFA/3261/4 Demolition of existing conservatory. Erection of a conservatory
28 Gravel Walk, Faringdon
For: Mrs Phillips
NO OBJECTIONS

8. For Information

(a) Notices of Permission from the Vale of White Horse District Council in respect of the following Planning Applications were received and NOTED:-

GFA/20602/1-A Erection of two non-illuminated hoarding signs onto poles
Land at junction A420 and to the north of Park Road, Faringdon
For: J S Bloor (Tewkesbury) Ltd
(No objections – Planning & Highways Committee Meeting, 26.08.08)

GFA/20722-LB Demolition and rebuilding of existing garden wall in car park to rear of property
Gloucester House Dental Surgery, 8 Gloucester Street, Faringdon
For: Gloucester House Dental Practice Ltd
(Do not object – Planning & Highways Committee Meeting, 9.12.08)

GFA/15496/12 Conversion of 2 ground floor store rooms to form
GFA/15496/13-LB 2 bedroom apartment with parking, bin and cycle storage and rear amenity space. (Re-submission)
50-54 London Street, Faringdon
For: Mr Richard Crewe
(No objections – Planning & Highways Committee meeting, 18.11.08)

- 9. Oxfordshire County Council Consultation - Formal Bus Stop Markings**
It was NOTED that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) was in the process of consulting on the proposed introduction or alteration of “bus stop clear way” signs and markings at bus stops on the Service 66 between Oxford, Faringdon, Shrivenham & Swindon as part of a premium route upgrade. Copies of the scheme layouts were received and considered. The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to check with OCC whether the road shown as Highworth Road should, in fact, be Coxwell Road.
- 10. Parking for Residents in Town Centre**
A draft questionnaire, drawn up by Cllrs Hickmore and Wise, to be sent out to residents in the central area of Faringdon in order to explore the possibility of introducing a residents’ parking scheme for central Faringdon was received. Following a request to change the optional times to 8.00am – 6.00pm and 6.00pm – 8.00am, the questionnaire was APPROVED and it was AGREED that recommendation should be made to Town Council to carry out a survey using this questionnaire.

At this stage of the meeting, Cllr Hickmore paid respect to the memory of Clive Davis who had recently died after a long period of ill health. He noted that Clive had been a dedicated member of the community, strongly committed to the interests of Faringdon and its residents and that he would be sorely missed. He asked the members and public to spend a few moments in paying their respects to Clive.

- 11. Vale of White Horse District Council (VHWDC) Local Development Framework - Preferred Options Consultation**
The Chairman stressed the importance of the Local Development Framework (LDF) which would determine the direction of the town to 2026 and opened the meeting to invited guests and the members of the public present in order to discuss the above options. C/Cllr Mrs J Heathcoat stated that she was present purely as an observer only and that to take part in the discussion would fetter her interests as a County Councillor. It was NOTED that the Vale of White Horse District Council was holding public exhibitions and workshops around the district and that one would be held in the Faringdon Corn Exchange on 30 January 2009. It was FURTHER NOTED that the deadline for comments to be submitted to the VHWDC was 27 February 2009. Discussion then took place and responses to the following relevant questions in the consultation paper were agreed, as follows:

Q1. Is there any additional information of which you think we should be aware?

Response:

Yes, as follows:-

- Faringdon Town Council Development Strategy 2008 – 2026
- Faringdon Health Check
- Faringdon Action Plan

Q2. Do you agree with the way the Vale and the challenges for the future are described? It is meant to be a broad overview but please let us know if you disagree or have anything you wish to add.

Response:

Para 2.16: A420 needs a proper upgrade in order to transport the extra traffic that will arise from the proposed major expansion east of Swindon as well as from the current and proposed developments in Park Road, Faringdon.

Para 2.17: There are nowhere near enough pedestrian routes or cycle ways in Faringdon and more are needed.

Q3. Do you agree with the vision and objectives for the future of the Vale and the places within it? If not please give your reasons.

Response:

Para 3.6.5: To add Didcot, Lechlade and Highworth.

Q5. Do you agree that the Council's preferred approach to concentrate development at the main settlements is the best option for the future?

Response: Yes

Para 4.8: Add "... in the east of the district, with a significant growth in Faringdon to provide employment opportunities in the west of the Vale."

Para 4.30: "Opportunities for access by walking" Would like to see more cycle ways and would like this message more strongly enforced. It was noted that in Oxford there were cycle ways on either side of trunk roads

Q11. Do you agree that land south of Park Road is the best location for new homes to be built at Faringdon and that new jobs should also be provided on the site?

Response: Yes

Para 4.43: It was felt that there was a weakness in the LDF in that Wicklesham Quarry had not been included. The current LDF indicates a loss of employment land and the Wicklesham Quarry site would (a) provide up to 20 acres of land suitable for B2 and B8 employment land, (b) provide an ideal location for heavier industry and distribution companies and (c) be hidden from sight due to the depth of the quarry. It would further ensure that heavier traffic was removed from Park Road by the improvement of the Park Road/A420 roundabout which would need to be created to allow a new access into the quarry.

It was felt that although VWHDC had carried out employment land review, it had not looked at local needs. Plans for employment land seemed to be concentrated in the eastern part of the Vale district and the western area of the Vale was being deprived.

Q13: Do you agree with the Council's proposed approach to ensuring the numbers of houses in the draft South East Plan are built?

Response: No, they should start in 2012 as per the Faringdon Town Council Development Strategy 2008 – 2026.

Housing should be related to local employment opportunity. There should be scope to add more housing even after 2026 rather than just a number in the area for the period of the LDF. VWHDC should be planning for increases in the future but restrict increases up to a development level. It was hoped that provision would be made for an increased number of housing if it was to fall short elsewhere on designated sites. It was pointed out that there was a massive expansion of housing proposed for the Milton/Harwell and Didcot/Grove areas. If those developments did not go ahead, the question was asked as to where the housing would be located. It was also felt that housing should be related to local employment opportunity.

Para 4.53: It was noted that reference was made to the possibility of the area of Budgens store and Southampton Street car park being redeveloped to

improve the environment and provide a larger store. It was AGREED that the following two further areas should be included in this statement:

- (i) Proposal for a retail/residential/office/parking/communal development on the land north of Faringdon Junior School;
- (ii) the possible building of a Tesco supermarket/superstore in Park Road.

Q21: Do you agree with the highway improvements shown on Figure 4.7?

Response: Request that Highway Improvements should include –

- Upgrade of A420. Due to the large expansion of Swindon this road will carry greatly increased traffic loads and will need comprehensive upgrading;
- Coxwell Road/Park Road Roundabout is a junction which needs adjustment.
- Junction at top of London Street/Stanford Road.

It was NOTED that all road development seemed to be happening over the eastern site of the Vale and that the western side seemed largely to be ignored. The possibility of the A420 becoming a dual carriageway was discussed but it was pointed out that this would be a major exercise as there were three routes accessing/egressing Faringdon.

Q30: Do you agree that the Council should seek 40% affordable housing across the Vale even though the draft South East Plan indicates 35% outside Central Oxfordshire?

Response: No.

Q31: Do you agree that the Council should seek to apply lower thresholds for affordable housing than those currently in force if further work indicates this would be viable?

Response: 35% is an adequate figure

Q32: Do you agree that the Council should try to achieve the mix of housing types and tenures as set out above?

Response: A local needs survey should be carried out.

Q33: Do you agree that the Council should seek to apply the density targets currently set out in the Local Plan?

Response: It was felt that 50 dwellings per hectare were very high for Faringdon. It could be acceptable for Oxford but Faringdon was considered to be a rural area and therefore 30 dwellings per hectare would be more appropriate.

Q36: Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to building communities?

Response:

- It should be an objective to meet the national criteria in making provision for allotments relative to the size of the population;
- Car sharing should be an objective;
- There is a need for a dedicated performance venue as highlighted by the Faringdon Healthcheck;
- Educational provision should (a) keep pace with population growth, (b) be provided in permanent buildings as opposed to portakabins and (c) should not be at the expense of recreation and open spaces but carried out on new land and not leisure land.

Para 5.13: “Safeguard local shopping areas”. It was agreed that small estates need shops. It was NOTED in this paragraph that a view had already been taken on the proposal to build a supermarket on Park Road.

The Chairman stated that he, together with the Vice Chairman and the Deputy Town Clerk, would draw up a paper summarising the views expressed. This paper would then be distributed to the various local organisations and other interested parties for them and their members, where applicable, to discuss. The Chairman asked that any comments they wished to make be submitted to the Town Council in order that these could be discussed at the next meeting of its Planning & Highways Committee meeting due to take place on 20 January 2009. The Chairman stressed that a united response incorporating local views and submitted by the Town Council to the VWHDC would carry a lot more weight.

Mr Elwell agreed, in principle, that where there was agreement amongst the local organisations and other interested parties this was acceptable. However, he suggested that where there were issues when people did not concur, submissions should be made individually to the VWHDC.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to everyone for attending this important meeting.