

GREAT LIVERMERE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Great Livermere Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 12th August 7:00pm via zoom

Present: Cllrs: H Johnston, A Johnston, B Bryers, A Norburn,

1. **Apologies for absence** Cllr A Hudson

2. **Members Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:**

- 3.1 To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda.
- 3.2 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests.
- 3.3 To grant dispensations as appropriate under Section 33 of the Localism Act.

3. **Minutes** – The minutes of the Wednesday 22nd July 2020 meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. **Meeting open to the public** 1 member present

5. **Planning**

DC/20/0539/FUL | Planning Application - change of use (i) conversion of existing single storey barn to 2no. dwellings (ii) conversion of barn to office (class B1) (iii) additional office block (following demolition of existing barn) (iv) site access, parking and landscaping. | Plot 1 Land Opposite Street Farm House The Street Great Livermere Suffolk – post revisions

Response from Great Livermere Parish Council regarding planning application as detailed above.

This response also represents the views of local residents who attended a parish council meeting held by video conference on Wednesday 12/8/2020.

In principle the Parish Council support a development of the derelict barns that was sympathetic to the needs of the local community, maintained the history and heritage of this small, ancient, rural village, and did not compromise the quality of life for residents and wildlife. However, there are a number of matters, listed below that we would need answered/addressed before being able to support the application. With this in mind, until we have received a response to these issues, the Parish Council feel they have no option but to object to the application at this time.

Need for a commercial office development in Great Livermere

This is a proportionately large commercial development that could bring an additional 80 workers into an office environment in a village of a usual residential occupancy of around 190 people. This is a significant daily increase in our community. No evidence has been provided in the planning application for the need for a development of office space in this location. There are other local villages that have had similar developments, the closest is in Ingham, which have remained empty. The need for office space for rental will have been impacted by the current Covid 19 pandemic which has forced many businesses to look at remote working from home as a new normal. It is widely believed that businesses will continue with this culture to a greater extent post pandemic reducing the need for office space in the future. Doubts were expressed that there is a need for another office development of this size in the local area.

As a community we would welcome a more mixed development comprising of housing, small storage or workshop units, studios for artisan crafts and a smaller number of small office units. We believe that the development as it has been planned currently could remain empty and present as a 'white elephant' albeit a newly developed 'white elephant'.

The Parish Council is opposed to any redevelopment plans where there is not strong evidence of the commercial need for its proposed purpose.

Village heritage

The Parish Council felt that the amended plans reflect, in the main, the suggestions made by the Conservation Officer, Christine Levenson in relation to building A. and as such they are happy to support this.

They also support the changes made following advice from the Conservation Officer regarding building B apart from the section dealing with the loss of the milling equipment/tower. We would like further investigations made into the historic nature of the tower before a decision is made to exclude it from the building. We would also like further investigation as to the feature of the single storey lean to referred to by the conservation officer on building B as this also may hold significant historical interest and should be carefully considered prior to demolition. We would not support any plans until these two features were properly considered.

The new build block C is a vast building that does not in any way reflect the heritage of the original buildings and will look out of place on this site which we believe should nestle comfortably at the heart of this village and its heritage. The Conservation Officer comments that this building should 'harmonise' with the other buildings on the site. The scale and design proposed does not meet this criteria. A single storey or a building that tapers to a single storey at the ends would be far more in keeping. It is difficult to get a feel for the overall design without the benefit of a 'street Scene' and we would request that one be produced so an informed decision can be made.

The details of such architectural considerations have been submitted in detail by a local resident and we would hope that this will help planners and architects in proposing a plan for this site that takes these into account.

This site sits within the village conservation area (see attached plan) and as such if considered for development should be sympathetic to its history and the aesthetics of this village.

The Parish Council is opposed to any planning proposal that does not preserve the original look and feel, and significant architectural features of the original buildings for the conversions and the new build block.

Impact on traffic and road safety

The proposed development seems to show the potential for space for 80 - 100 workers to be accommodated at desks. The plan seems to show only 36 car parking spaces.

There is no regular public transport to Great Livermere other than a bus service that runs every 2 hours on weekdays.

As most workers will need to drive to this office development, the impact on traffic levels and traffic noise on this small rural village, will be significant. This will not only be at the start and end of the working days but also at lunchtime as workers leave and return to site to search for lunch facilities. There are none in the village.

There is a high risk that with the current plans there will not be enough parking on site for workers and they will be forced to park on The Street or other locations in the village. There are currently no parking restrictions in the village. Large numbers of parked cars along The Street or Troston Road will have a negative impact on the aesthetics of this village where street parking is rare and currently unnecessary.

This site sits on a blind corner which is a 90 degree bend in the road with a junction already on the bend. Any parking on the road will add to this danger as drivers will be forced to drive into the middle of the road to pass parked cars. This is a rural farming village which needs to accommodate very large farm vehicles on its roads safely. Any street parking along with increased traffic will cause difficulty in accommodating this farm traffic safely.

The current plans show both an entrance in The Street and on the Troston Road. The entrance on Troston Road which seems to service the dwellings is in a dangerous position. Turning right out of the development onto the Troston Road towards Troston would be dangerous due to the blind corner and restricted view from this site due to walls and telegraph pole. We would encourage planners to ensure that they have visited the site to fully take this into account and not solely rely on desk top plans.

The Parish Council opposes any development that does not provide adequate parking facilities for its planned use or compromises driver safety.

Impact on local residents

As previously mentioned the Parish Council is concerned that increased traffic volume and noise will significantly impact local resident's safety and quality of life.

The construction of the new building block C, so close to the properties of Orchard Close which are single storey bungalows, is significant. The height of this building is proposed at 8.366m to the ridge line and 5.25m to the gutter line. This will potentially impact on the outlook of the properties in Orchard Close, the light and also the aesthetics of this part of the village which is comprised mostly of bungalow buildings.

The Parish Council would like to see a proposed street scene plan for this area for planners to consider the height impact of this proposed two storey building in this context.

There is currently a proposal to place bins close to the rear of properties in Orchard Close. The plans do not show an accurate picture of the rear wall of these residential properties since extensions have been agreed and built. This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed in any plan permitted.

The village currently has very little artificial light after dark which means that residents can enjoy views of the night sky. This development will compromise this for local residents with the potential of all-night lighting left on in the buildings, security lights and potential upgrading of street lighting to mitigate the issues of the dangerous bend. This changes a highly regarded feature of village life for those affected.

The Parish Councils supports the conditions proposed by Matthew Bullock, Public Health and Housing regarding any lighting schemes.

There is concern that any heating and cooling plant installed could cause noise pollution for local residents. There have been no plans included to show how this plant will be located and therefore the potential impact on residents.

The Parish Council supports the conditions proposed by Matthew Bullock, Public Health and Housing regarding any mechanical ventilation.

Surface water is a daily concern during wet periods of weather in this part of the village. Whilst some details have been given to show how surface water will be managed on the site there has been no provision of a Ground Investigation Survey to fully understand the water table and existing water features both current and ancient in this part of the village. Any development that worsens surface water in this location will cause localised flooding, adding to a problem that the Parish Council already has to communicate regularly with West Suffolk Council about, to ensure local residents properties are not at risk of flooding eg drain management, impact of re surfacing of the road and curb levels

Surface water and sewerage drainage is problematic in the village. Along The Street at the north end of the village, Anglia Water manage a series of pumps to ensure that waste water is moved towards the treatment plant at West Stow efficiently. On many occasions these pumps fail due to their age and at times volume of waste water and Anglia Water have to respond quickly to ensure that residents do not experience back flow and flooding in their properties. The Parish Council would want reassurance that an impact study has taken place with Anglia Water to ensure any increase in waste volume will not compromise the current sewerage system.

The village currently has a limited broadband supply that does not efficiently serve the current residents in the village without limitation and down time. The impact of a commercial property with it's demand for connectivity needs to be considered carefully so as current services are not reduced for current residents. We doubt that the current broadband provision will support the commercial activity proposed.

Similarly, local residents experience intermittent power supply outage on a regular basis. Planners must ensure that any addition to the demand from this development will not compromise this already fragile service.

Impact on Wildlife

The Parish Council recognises the survey that has been carried out of this potential development on local wildlife. Whilst we would support the proposal of the inclusion of bat and owl boxes, we would highlight the previous issue of light pollution on local wildlife. This village enjoys a wide variety of species of wildlife that many residents feel is a strong feature of living in this village. There is resident concern that although nesting sites will be provided the impact on light will drive away many species from this dark and quiet rural village. Every care must be taken to minimise the impact on local wildlife.