

Hardwick Parish Council
Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 4 August 2020 at 7.00 pm
Held remotely via Zoom due to the current pandemic

Present: Councillors: A Gill (Chairman), P Joslin, S Rose, A Joolia and D Wellbelove.

In attendance: Liz Connell (Countryside, Director, Head of Planning); Andrew Fisher (Countryside, Associate Director Technical); Ian Mitchell (Mayer Brown); Wyn Evans (Forty Shillings); Cllr Steve Jones (Coalition of Parish Councils), 6 members of the public, District Cllr Grenville Chamberlain and Mrs A Griffiths (Minutes Secretary, LGS Services).

1. To approve apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Giddings (prior appointment).

2. Declaration of interests

2.1 To receive declarations of interests from councillors on items on the agenda and details of dispensations held

None.

2.2 To receive written and grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate for items on this agenda

None.

To receive a presentation and update from Countryside Properties regarding the Bourn Airfield Development and to ask any questions

Representatives of Countryside Properties gave a presentation on recent and proposed amendments to the application. They outlined the amendments made to the application in December 2019 as a result of discussions with the South Cambs Planning team to bring the application into line with the SCDC Supplementary Planning Document, including: adjusting the site entrance to allow for a busway which will run from Cambourne into the village centre and along the northern edge of the site; providing a mixed use area near the eastern bus stop; expanding the Country Park and repositioning the village centre. Further revisions submitted in June related to changing the annotation of the village centre to allow more flexibility in the final design, the re-alignment of the spine road near the northern primary school for safety reasons, and new woodland planting to define the boundary with Highfields Caldecote. More details on noise had also been submitted.

An opportunity was given for questions and answers.

3. Countryside Properties presentation – to consider any matters arising from the presentation

Transport scheme

Q – Given the uncertainty around the provision and timing of a transport scheme from Cambourne to Cambridge, and the importance of the transport system to this application and its approval, what will happen to the scheme without it?

They were confident that a transport scheme would come forward but it was not currently clear what form this would take. A successful strategic transport route in and around the site was essential and should reduce current transport problems.

IM stated there was no evidence to suggest that a scheme would not come forward and that they were currently looking at mitigation and monitoring to support the early phases before a strategic transport route comes forward.

Q – Would Countryside consider the simple solution of a direct access from Bourn Airfield to the A428?

A – This has been discussed with Highways England who are not supportive and have effectively ruled this out, as they have advised SCDC there is capacity at the junctions with the trunk road at both the east and west of Bourn Airfield.

Environmental issues

Q – What changes to building methods would you use to reduce CO² emissions from new homes, such as insulation to prevent heat loss, and what will you be doing to go beyond the regulations, with measures like solar panels and alternative heat sources?

A – We have to build according to the regulations, and have two modular building factories supplying ready insulated timber panels to the site. A solar array will be provided at the northern side of the site by the A428 where an earth bund will be built for noise attenuation purposes. We are aware of the loss of gas boilers from 2025 and are working on providing renewable energy on the site such as photovoltaic arrays. Electric car charging points will be provided within properties.

Q – What is the CO² footprint per building?

A - We will look into the size of the CO² footprint from the development.

Cycling

Q – What in the plans will encourage cyclists and discourage vehicle use?

A – The scheme has been designed with pedestrians and cyclists in mind. There will be a network of cycle paths between key locations within the site. We have proposed a fast cycle path to run alongside the bus route and we are working with the GCP on routes to the city centre.

They have been looking at a shared cycle service from the eastern roundabout to the Madingley Mulch roundabout and upgrades towards Cambridge to connect with improvements to the Madingley Road. There will be a combination of incentives and marketing measures to encourage people to cycle and use buses

Q – There is no link from Bourn Airfield, Cambourne or Hardwick to connect with the Comberton Greenway proposal.

A – They have put forward the idea of extending the Comberton Gateway to have another corridor into Cambridge and a shared cycleway along the gateway.

Access to transport

Q – What will you do to support transport provision for disabled and older people? Many will struggle to access the public transport corridor and may not be able to cycle.

A – In the past they have collaborated with a volunteer network for a Dial a ride scheme and arranged for buses for the mobility impaired to use. A similar type of scheme is proposed here using compliant vehicles and they will also provide residents with details of taxi companies with suitable vehicles.

Q – Dial a ride schemes can be inflexible and reluctant to support small rural communities. There are very few taxis in rural areas and these are expensive.

A – There could be scheduled trips during peak periods to the Science Park and Addenbrookes and vehicles can go to other destinations during the day. Countryside would sponsor these services for a period of time and try to get these schemes embedded in the community. A taxi pooling scheme could be set up to spread the cost.

Highways

Q – Why haven't Highways England endorsed this development yet?

A – Highways England have written to SCDC and Mayer Brown confirming they have no objections to the proposed development subject to certain conditions. SCDC were not showing the latest position on their website. LC offered to send through copies of the relevant documents.

Q – What were the discussions between the developer and Highways England? There are serious concerns about the traffic calculations, which predict that 14 vehicles will enter Hardwick in the morning rush hour from the development. Where is the supporting evidence? Will you do a new traffic assessment?

A – We have completed the transport assessment and Highways England have withdrawn their holding objections. The scheme will do an ongoing monitoring exercise on all the local roads, which will detect any changes in traffic post-development and we have proposed setting up a traffic calming fund to set up traffic calming. The basis for the assumptions in the transport assessment is that by using traffic calming measures traffic would be kept to the St Neots Road/Madingley Road corridor, and so we are not predicting rat-running through the local villages, as we believe we can manage and control it through traffic mitigation measures.

Q – There have been many objections. We do not find your assessments credible and I cannot see how you can protect the St Neots Road/Madingley Road corridor. Without a connection to the A428 all the traffic will be pushed on to Hardwick's nearest roundabout, at the moment 40% of that traffic comes down St Neots Road yet you are saying that 3% of the Bourn Airfield traffic will come down St Neots Road.

A – A great deal of scrutiny and extensive traffic survey work has been carried out. Highways England and CCC referred all the reports to independent traffic consultants for scrutiny and we provided traffic information following extensive surveys at Cambourne. Highways England have satisfied themselves. In our experience subsequent monitoring elsewhere has revealed lower traffic movements than in the transport assessment, proving that our figures are cautious.

Q – Can we have a meeting with you to understand your assumptions?

A – We have attended a meeting with Bourn Parish Council and set out assumptions in a letter.

Q – That was a long time ago – the calculations are disputed as well as the allocation on different routes and we would like to discuss this with you in detail.

A – We will need to discuss that with Countryside and we need to ensure CCC and SCDC are happy to join that meeting before agreeing to it.

Q – What do you mean by mitigations to avoid rat-running traffic from Bourn Airfield through Hardwick?

A – Mitigation will deter people from rat-running. We will have on-going monitoring for a number of years where we will count the traffic on residential roads including through Hardwick and if there is a significant change in traffic flows, it would trigger a requirement to provide funding towards traffic calming measures which will discourage rat-running. We want to ensure enough funding to implement those according to local requirements. Long term monitoring will be over a 7 year period to demonstrate there hasn't been a change in traffic conditions.

Education

Q – Will the schools be up and running by the time residents move in or will you have contingency plans in place?

A – We are working with the CCC Education Department, who have said they will need the first primary school to open by the time the 150th house is occupied. Prior to

that capacity in existing schools in the area will be used. We provide the service site to CCC, then CCC designs and builds the schools.

New children would have to go to surrounding primary schools if they are in the first 150 houses.

Traffic flows

Q – Your statements on traffic flows imply that you will inflict inconvenience and damage to the communities around Bourn.

A – No. This is an allocated site for housing in the Local Plan, we are looking to ensure that any adverse impacts that might occur are mitigated as well as possible 1) through measures along the Madingley Road/St Neots Road corridor, to encourage people not to drive and free up capacity, 2) to monitor and manage if any rat-running occurs, and bring in new services such as the one from Cambourne to Addenbrookes and the Science Park.

Q – You are failing to address the issue of rat running other than to provide obstacles for the current residents of all communities around Bourn. This is completely unacceptable.

A – By providing money for a traffic calming fund we can monitor to see if there is any change. The money is unlikely to be called on as we will put mitigation in place to ensure rat running doesn't increase, and by putting forward money we will allow interventions that meet local requirements. We are looking at what we can do through ongoing monitoring and management to minimise that as an issue.

Q – We currently see rat running based on 4400 houses in Cambourne but by the time all the houses are built there will be a 150% increase in the number of cars leaving the Greater Cambourne/Bourn Airfield area. You should not be mitigating afterwards but planning for it in advance. We wish to see your data and assumptions and where you think these cars will go or there will be adverse impacts on the local community.

A – Our surveys on the local roads go back to 2015, so we can see the changes. You have requested a meeting and we have said that we will take that away to consider.

Q – By late 2020 there will be 150% more cars, what you have proposed will have a very small impact. A lot more cars would have to go down Madingley Hill to prevent people going through the small villages, and a very large number of cars will come from this development. What are you doing now to address this as it will be too late to think about it once it has happened?

A – We will consider the suggestion of a meeting and discuss with CCC and SCDC.

Q – We will ask our County Councillors to insist on it.

Healthcare

Q – What primary healthcare is included in the plan?

A – LC said they have made provision for space for healthcare facilities in the plan but at the moment it is unclear what the NHS want, as they don't want a new surgery but would like the existing surgery to expand and have satellite consulting rooms on Bourn Airfield.

Cycling

Q – How do you envisage the cycle provision towards Hardwick? The S106 for West Cambourne has a funded cycleway to Cambridge which will go through Hardwick but you intend to extend the cycleway from Bourn Airfield to Cambridge through Hardwick. Does Hardwick get a say in this as there are many highways issues planned for St Neots Road and plans may conflict.

A – Countryside has put forward a detailed drawing to CCC and their cycle officers showing a cycle way from the NE roundabout through to the Madingley Mulch roundabout. Our offer of this cycle way is subject to working together with other schemes, but the line of communication is through the County Council. We are putting forward cycle mitigation but CCC and their cycling people are responsible for how it works.

Other

Q – Surely it would be shocking not to have a GP surgery (satellite or otherwise) on Bourn Airfield when you want to cut down on car journeys?

A – We would like there to be a GP surgery but NHS policy does not favour it and we understand there will not be a surgery, just a consulting room on certain days for certain hours rather than a full time surgery.

Q – What route should a Bourn Airfield development resident use to access the M11 southbound that will avoid Hardwick?

Cllr Rose left the meeting at 8.26 pm.

A – We have looked at the traffic signals and bus lane at the M11 junction with a view to having two stop lines rather than just one as at the moment. This has been independently tested by CCC’s signal consultant, which showed that this would significantly reduce the queue on the St Neots Road for cars and buses, with one lane for the M11 and the other for ongoing traffic so the queuing would be less than on the current corridor.

Q – You have focused on Madingley Hill and the M11 but we asked how to reach the M11 from Bourn Airfield. We query that only 14 cars would be going via Hardwick to the M11.

4. Closure of meeting

Countryside were thanked for attending and were asked to return to the Parish Council and the Coalition of Parish Councils with their responses on the action points, in particular on the requested meeting on transport matters along with the County Council.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

SignedChairmandate
