

**HAWSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL  
ON 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013.**

- Present:** Cllrs John West (Chairman), Clive Robinson, Christabel Carr and Jayne Robertson.  
Catherine Hibbert (Clerk).  
B Cllr A Rushen and twenty one members of the public.
- Apologies:** Cllrs Michael Harrison, Henry Brewis and Ros Alexander.

*The meeting recessed for Public Forum at 7.30pm.*

Public Forum

Those present were invited to address the meeting with particular focus on the development proposals which comprise the main agenda item.

The applicant briefly summarised the work done to date in preparing the development proposals, the nature of the proposed use (as an educational facility rather than a film set), the suitability of the site for this use, the opportunity to remember and learn from the events of WW1;

The following concerns about the development proposals were raised:-

Visitor numbers and the impact of car parking should the development attract more visitors than anticipated; the vulnerability of the Green to erosion should it be used for overspill car parking; Difficult access to the site (i) down narrow lanes used by agricultural vehicles, ill suited to coaches; (ii) existing hazards/blind corners on roads around village; (iii) the possible need for passing places and the impact those might have on landscape/erosion of Green;

Negative impact on peace and tranquillity of Hawstead;

Impact of lighting;

Ecological impacts including in relation to the River Lark and whether further consideration is required as to any mitigation necessary to address impacts on biodiversity/ loss of Green;

The need for sustainable development;

The possibility of any passing places being used for lay-bys;

Reservations about the currently tranquil and peaceful village being connected with WW1 and the large number of associated casualties;

The legacy for this site should the current applicants move on.

Support for the development (subject to appropriate safeguards) was expressed:-

Potential asset to the village (jobs/cafe);

The opportunity to remember the past and learn from it;

*The meeting reconvened at 8.00pm.*

**1. APOLOGIES.**

Noted.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

None.

**3. PLANNING**

**To consider the following planning application:-**

**DC/13/0623/FUL change of use of site to world war one army camp including (i) extension of existing barn and change of use to cafe/visitors centre; (ii) erection of 12 timber huts; (iii) construction of trenches and associated works at Brook Farm, Bells Lane, Hawstead, Suffolk.**

Signature.....

The meeting noted that all Councillors had read through the application documents (some 285 pages), undertaken a site visit and listened to concerns expressed by parishioners prior to this meeting. Cllr Robinson introduced the proposals for development and change of use, noting that whilst the development proposals are limited (the extension of an existing barn plus the construction of 12 timber huts and trenches in a land dip) this is a relatively big development for Hawstead. The meeting considered the pros and cons of the proposals with reference to the points made during the public forum and in particular debated the following issues:-

Access; whether (i) an SCC (highways authority) assessment is required as to the need for any passing places to enable safe site access and minimise erosion of the Green; (ii) SCC has authority to create passing places on Bells Lane/ the Green and whether those would be sympathetic to the rural village setting; (iii) the costs of creating any necessary highway improvements (i.e. passing places) should be borne by the applicant; (iv) the impossibility of coaches accessing the site from the direction of Stanningfield; (v) the applicants assurance that there would be no more than one coach per day; (vi) the need for planning conditions to regulate this, if approved; (vii) the existing dangers presented by some local lanes/ the persisting issue of speeding and the danger of this being exacerbated by increased traffic.

Preservation of the Village Green; the view was expressed that (i) additional traffic/unauthorised parking could erode the village Green; (ii) planning conditions to ensure all parking is onsite with no overflow onto the Green must be imposed if the development is approved. (The applicants' assurance that a gatekeeper would be employed to turn away any surplus visitors from the village was noted).

Visitor numbers and opening hours; noting the applicants' assurance that the facility would only be open in summer months, the view was expressed that opening hours should be managed by planning condition, if approved, in order to limit impacts on the Green and the village.

Long term legacy for site; concerns were expressed about (i) the long term legacy for the site if it falls into the hands of a different operator who seeks more intensive use; and (ii) the potential for the 12 timber huts to be used in other ways in the future.

Lighting; lighting impact has not been considered in the application documents but is a concern, given that some car park lighting is likely. The view was expressed that this could be best controlled by planning condition to (i) restrict the opening hours to those proposed by the applicant (10am-5pm during summer months only) and (ii) require any lighting to have appropriate mitigation measures.

Noise pollution; the applicants have given assurance that no re-creations involving gunfire etc are proposed and the view was expressed that this needs to be regulated by planning condition if the proposals are authorised in order to safeguard local amenity and ensure safety for horse riders using the nearby lane.

Ecology; concerns were expressed about the impact of construction of trenches on the trees in the relevant part of the site.

**On a majority vote of three to one the Parish Council resolved to support the development proposal in principle subject to:-**

**(a) clarification from the Highway Authority as to; (1) whether passing places are required to make access to the development site safe; (2) the proposed location and appearance of those passing places; and (3) whether the Highway Authority has power to create those passing places in the locations proposed; and**

**(b) imposition of appropriate planning conditions to regulate access, parking, opening hours, lighting and restrict use to educational use only (with no re-creations/filming involving shooting/noise etc permitted);**

**(c) the authorised use being personal to this applicant; and**

**(d) the removal of the huts upon cessation of use under this planning consent.**

Signature.....

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2014.**

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked Councillors and members of the public for attending.

*The meeting closed at 9.00pm*

Distribution  
Cllr C Robinson  
Cllr R Alexander  
Cllr J West  
Cllr C Carr  
Cllr Jayne Robertson  
Cllr H Brewis  
Cllr M Harrison

Website ) following approval  
Noticeboard ) following approval

Signature.....