

A Meeting of GREAT AND LITTLE CHISHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Venue: Village Hall
Date: 11th January 2024
Time: 7:30 pm
Chair: Cllr Dring
Parish Councillors: Hall, Hatt, Leitch, Ridge, Clements
Clerk / Proper Officer: Sarah Scott
County Councillor: Not present
District Councillor: James Hobro
Members of the Public: James Coney, Martin Prescott, Claire Joghee, Paul Crawford,
David McKeown
Start Time: 7:30pm

1. Apologies for Absence (and reasons)

Cllr McDonald – previous engagement
Cllr Pine – could arrive late

2. To receive any declaration of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interest of Councillors

The Chair had an interest as one of the planning applications was his, he also declared an interest in 1 Heydon Road. All Parish Councillors declared a personal interest in the Chair's application.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 16th November 2023

The minutes of 16th November 2023 were approved as a true and accurate account of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

4. Public Participation

The Chair stated that the Clerk had sought advice from SCDC and CAPALC as to best practice of running the meeting which had been circulated to the Councillors. The Chair explained how the meeting would run and suggested that in the absence of the Vice Chair, Cllr Hall should chair the meeting in his absence. This was agreed.

As there were a few members of the public present who wished to speak, the Clerk explained the procedure for Public Participation. The Chair vacated the meeting at 19:35.

David McKeown spoke (see report below)

May I firstly state that the applicant and I have enjoyed a friendly, co-operative relationship with respect to boundary maintenance, etc but that I believe that they have made an error of judgment in accepting and submitting Hutch Design's proposal.

You have all had the opportunity to examine the facts and opinions that led to so many objections being lodged but I should like to emphasise that this proposal is of major significance to the whole of Great Chishill and demands careful thought before deciding the PC stance on it.

One major issue is the impact on the privacy of those living in 4 New Road. Counter to the opinion of the one supporting public comment, this is not of 'little detriment to neighbouring properties'; it would be devastating. The images below show the outline elevation.



View from dining/living room

Outline of proposed building **

*Note from Clerk: ** This picture shows David McKeown's interpretation of the proposal.*

These photographs show the north side building's true proximity to, and its scale of overlooking of, the single storey bungalow at 4 New Road. Something that was missing from the designers' submission. There is even a balustrade fitted with a handrail to encourage occupants to lean and take in the view. Unfortunately, the bulk of this view would be our kitchen and dining/living room, clearly lit by early morning sunlight.

Proposing first floor outdoor living, together with an open fireplace for all manner of leisure activities, shows a complete lack of concern for neighbours by the designers.

However, I believe that an even more important consideration for you is the blatant disregard for the character of Great Chishill Conservation Area. Such a large two storey building with a huge stacked slate chimney has no place in GCCA. To attempt to pass it off as a single storey extension is farcical. It could clearly be converted to a separate building very easily.

The applicant has stated that this would be a second phase that would be unlikely to be completed in the near future, but this is not the point. What matters is the planning permission. Were it to be granted, it would set a precedent for brutal, poorly thought-out building elsewhere in the conservation area.

Of course, it is the Planning Office or Committee that will make the decision on the proposal, but the Parish Council surely should let them know that it is resolute about preserving the character of our conservation area. Having experience as a parish councillor, I am well-aware of the difficulty of voting against a colleague, but I ask that you think deeply about the implications of this proposal and vote to benefit the village in the long-term rather than an individual's desire. Please oppose it.

Clare Joghee spoke next (see below)

Summary

- noise, in a rural area – sensitive owing to the prevailing acoustic environment
- seriously compromising privacy due to overlooking garden and straight into a habitable room in a residential amenity
- density change to conservation area due to size and height of design
- precedent set by the Lane's planning refused next door, outside the conservation area with a much smaller, lower design.

Noise and Right to Privacy (Phase 1)

We would have no objection to stage 1 if it wasn't for the roof terrace.

A balcony at the front of the house would be no issue but a roof garden overlooks far more of our garden and home - the level at which it would sit would be the same level as our upstairs bedroom window and those on the garden roof terrace could look directly in. This room is a residential amenity, a habitable room requiring privacy.

The noise carries further when higher up so when in use a garden terrace has a very different impact on the level of noise when outside on a roof terrace to a balcony or in a garden.

Addition of rooflights means the plan is to use the terrace after daylight hours which will further have an impact on noise in the evening.

Further Comment, rather than objection: The note on the planning portal from environmental planning regarding air source heat pump proximity to us and related noise is concerning; how much of it will apply to the installed system will only be known upon installation. Background noise levels during the night in more rural areas can be significantly lower than that used in the standard assessment for ASHP acceptable levels. The noise impact would be increased because of the sensitivity of the prevailing acoustic environment. Additionally, the duration and frequency of increased noise level may be constant so we would appreciate adherence to the planning officer's suggestions. We also support the use of sustainable energy development and suggest planning needs and placed in the least impactful place for residing neighbours to ensure no impact on our quality of life.

Noise, Density and Right to Privacy (Phase 2)

We cannot support phase 2 development. The same issues stand as in phase one and in addition:

The plans do not make very clear how close the building would come to our boundary as they are not to scale and do not show the boundary on the drawing plans. Having discussed this with No 29 Heydon Road it is clear it nearly touches the fence line. This comes such a far way out from the existing footprint that the impact would be similar to building a new house at the boundary to our property, particularly because of the height of the proposed development of 2 storeys and the size of the development, which doubles the existing footprint area. The impact would be to change the density of the local area of the property in question, our property and No 4 New Road.

There has been a previous Parish Council decision at our property, not to allow further development (our property is outside of the conservation area that 29 Heydon Road is in) – and I would argue precedent is set for not allowing development of this size or nature, particularly in affect of the skyline and height of the building proposed of two storeys.

The roof garden on this phase is extended and comes much further towards us and increases the impact of lack of privacy and noise for us as set out above. The plans show that this extended roof garden would come almost along our boundary at second story level, allowing someone using the roof terrace to see over and into a very large area of our garden. It is also much closer to the bedroom window at which it would be the same level as. The same issues exist in terms of noise and privacy impact as set out above for phase one but are intensified in impact due to closer distance, proximity and increased area of the roof garden.

James Coney was next to comment. He said he had objections for lots of the same reasons already mentioned. He added that three new roof lights would look straight into his garden and he is lucky not to have any issues of overlooking at the moment. He also said that he had concerns over the scale of application in a conservation area. He added that the lack of dimensions on the plans made it difficult to understand the scale of the proposed extensions. He said that that he felt that slate was not in keeping and there might have been a better design. He made comment that although there was talk of phase 1 and phase 2 of the application this was not clear on the application. For these reasons he says he objects to this application.

Paul Crawford spoke next. He stated that he felt that scale of the application was huge, he did not like the slate chimney and he talked about the loss of privacy. He went to say that the design was horrible and out of proportion.

The Council bought the first point of agenda item 8 forward:

23/04552/HFUL – Part single storey, part two storey side and rear extensions. Two rear dormer windows, installation of rooflights, double glazed windows and ASHP - 29 Heydon Road

Cllr Hall told the meeting that to help with noise fears about air source pumps, there was one installed in Colts Croft and there were worries about noise and actually it cannot be heard.

Cllr Hatt thinks the design is an appalling one for a conservation area and rural village. He commented that in his opinion he thought the extension was very large at the square footage equates to the size of a small house.

Cllr Clement said that the scale and height were his main concerns.

Cllr Leitch said that she thought the chimney was too large.

Cllr Ridge said that although he agreed with some of the neighbours comments, he started that in terms of the look of the village it is apparent that the conservation aspect had been abused many times, so that in his opinion the materials chosen are not an issue. A comment was made about Colts Croft (built circ 1980) and it not necessarily being in keeping with a conservation area .

Post Meeting Note: It was pointed out by a member of the public that Colts Croft is not in the defined conservation area (it is however, in the village envelope).

Cllr Clements commented that there is a 'hotch potch' of designs of buildings in the village.

The Clerk wanted to inform the meeting (as a member of the public and not the Clerk) that a recent application by her neighbour, whereby her home and garden would be overlooked by a new balcony was told by the planning officer that being overlooked / loss of privacy was not miscible when submitting her objection to the said application. Mr Prescott commented that he thought the planning officer was incorrect.

Cllr Hall asked if the council should go back to the applicant and ask for more details of the application to be submitted. This was rejected as the strength of the public opinion had been made.

A vote on the application was taken to approve/support/object to the planning application:

3 Councillors were in not in favour and objected to the application.
2 Councillors abstained.

Motion carried: to recommend refusal of the application.

The Chair returned at 20:10

5. Correspondence

Parish Council formal complaint about the phone mast. The Clerk had circulated the response from SCDC. Whilst the council is disappointed by the whole process from start to finish with the mast now up it will not be removed. Cllr Hobro requested to see the correspondence and the Clerk will forward it.

Mr Clements would like to be reminded to ask Giga Clear to come and talk to the Parish Council

6. District and County Councillors Report (already circulated)

Cllr Hobro spoke about reporting drain blockages on the District Council website. Some of the flooding which has occurred around is due to drains being blocked.

There are some Green business grants being launched in the county (see report)

The council's Climate and Environment Advisory Committee has backed the development of a new Air Quality Strategy with stringent targets in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) aspirations.

Cllr Hobro spoke about Mr Gove's plans for many houses in our county. Nothing will happen until after the election but what is clear is that the County cannot sustain a further 50 thousand houses due to the lack of water in the area.

Cllr Clements commented that a careful eye should be kept on this proposal and these plans are not for Cambridge but County wide.

There is a delay to the Local Plan. There will be no further updates until at least March, followed by the release of the draft then a consultation in the Autumn.

The 4 day working week appears to be going well and money is being saved. The Council are waiting to hear what the new minister will propose in terms of SCDC submitting lots of data.

7. Highways / Transport

Outstanding highways issues in Great Chishill. The Parish is getting increasingly fed up with the state of the roads. New Road is very unsafe and it was suggested that maybe it could be made one-way.

A505 – there was no update as Cllr McDonald had sent his apologies.

8. Planning

- 23/04904 and 23/24905 (HFUL and LBC) Conversion of part of former bake house from garage to living space and single storey front extension to stable building to form parking spaces. Erection of garden shed between bake house and boundary wall and extend driveway to allow turning space. There were no objections.
- 23/04913/CLUED – Information only. Certificate of lawfulness under S191 for the existing residential (Class C3) use of the dwellings known as Hay Barn and Stable Barn. Rectory Farm, Little Chishill Road Great and Little Chishill. The council were disappointed that in 2018/19 permissive development was granted. This CLUED has demonstrated that the properties have been used as residential use for four years and this feels like an abuse of the planning process.
- Land in Village – there have been no further updates.
- North Hall Farm – there have been no updates from SCDC since the compliance form was sent. There appears to be 5 new terraced houses on the site. The Council are unsure if planning was sought. The Clerk to write to Chrs Braybrooke.
- Bridgefoot Farm – It was reported that there was some activity at the teashop/gallery which indicated that it might be being used for residential use. Also, the caravan which recently arrived has now been clad in wood. The Clerk to fill out the compliance form for both of these.
- Rabbit Residence. The caravan is still on the site with someone living in it. The Clerk has written to SCDC and is awaiting a response.
- Community Asset Renewal – The Pheasant. Martin Prescott has no problem with the Parish Council applying to renew the Community Asset application. The Chair went on the say thank you to Mike and his team for all they are doing at The Pheasant; it is a great pub once again.

9. Finance

Precept. After discussion it was proposed that the precept should remain at £23.5k

There were no comments on the finance sheets and these were duly signed and dated.

10. Speed and safety

Speed Watch. Cllr Hall had circulated a report about possible signage and also speed radars. The Chair thanked Cllr Hall. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Mirror – thanks to the Chair for putting this up. Cllrs Dring and Hall will look at it again and tweak it.

11. Promotion of Parish – 5 Minutes, Cllr Hall

Poster / flyer. The Clerk has found someone in Barley who is interested in helping. The Clerk to follow this up. D-Day is 6th June.

12. To Accept Notices & Matters for the next Agenda – 5 Minutes

Gig Clear Broadband

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 21:16.

Cambridgeshire County Report to Parishes Jan 2024

County Council Budget

In December I reported that we were facing a £23m gap in funding for 2024/25 as a result of inflation and other factors. This has now been closed to c.£2m.

The revised proposals focus on sustaining social services, continuing to provide free school meal vouchers for eligible children during holidays, progressing the council's commitment to pay the real living wage to people providing adult social care, and prioritising highways and cycleways maintenance across the county. However, even with a proposed council tax rise of 4.99% – 2% of which will be dedicated to adult social care services – the combination of demand for services, inflation and the ending of some government grants will still leave a £2m gap in the 2024/5 budget.

Included in the proposals for the coming year are for the council to:

- ☑ Invest £57 million to sustain children's and adult social care services.
 - ☑ Further the Council's commitment to the Real Living Wage, which has increased to £12ph outside London, to take account of the Government uplift of the legally enforceable Living Wage, being paid by adult care providers.
 - ☑ Prioritise £3m to continue to provide holiday food vouchers for all children eligible for free school meals, despite the government support being likely to end in the next financial year.
 - ☑ Invest £2.2m to deliver other anti-poverty initiatives – such as support to make sure that vulnerable people are claiming all the welfare benefits that they are entitled to.
 - ☑ Put £1.3m into delivering more accessible libraries to support vulnerable communities.
 - ☑ Prioritise investment of £23m into making highways, footpaths, and cycleways safer – on top of a recently announced government allocation of £2.3m. This will be to deliver improvements which both repair and prevent potholes, deliver improved drainage schemes, and reinstate cycleway maintenance and weed clearance.
 - ☑ Put additional funding into schemes for people experiencing mental health issues to prevent them reaching crisis, particularly focussing on younger people.
- The proposals include an increase of council tax by 4.99%, the maximum permitted by Government before a public referendum is needed – with a total of 2% of this increase dedicated to adult social care services across the county, and £17.6m of identified additional savings – from areas such as:
- moving to LED streetlights which are set to deliver £1m in energy savings each year.
 - £1.5m across the next three years from rationalising the council's office accommodation.
 - more than £2m from reviewing the highest cost children's placement costs, and home to school transport routes – to bring children closer to home and reduce

District Council Report for December 2023 – January 2024

Councillor James Hobro

District Councillor for the parishes of Foxton, Fowlmere, Heydon, Great Chishill & Little Chishill.

I am always happy to hear from residents with any questions about these or other issues relating to the District Council. Please contact me by telephone on 07768 706670 or by email at cllr.hobro@scambs.gov.uk.

Advice on flooding

The severe flooding we have seen in the aftermath of Storm Henk has brought the issue of dealing with floods sharply into focus. The council has a web page with advice for residents and businesses on dealing with the risk of flooding. Please let me know if you have any feedback on the content. Some of the flooding that we have seen locally has been due to blocked drains on the highway. These incidents should be reported to the County Council. I am happy to help residents find the support needed to deal with flooding, and have been working closely with our County Councillor, Peter McDonald in reporting and dealing with flooding within our parishes.

Green Business Programme

South Cambridgeshire District Council has launched the Green Business Programme, an 18-month project to help local businesses go green, working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities. Grants are available to help businesses reduce their carbon footprint, reduce energy costs and work towards Net Zero.

Cost of living support

The District Council is urging residents who may be in need of support through the cost of living crisis to check they are claiming all the benefits they may be entitled to. The council is also offering extensive advice on reducing energy bills and other available help, including food banks. Please do get in touch if you need any more information.

Improved air quality standards

The council's Climate and Environment Advisory Committee has backed the development of a new Air Quality Strategy with stringent targets in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) aspirations. The recommendation is for a joint strategy with Cambridge City Council covering the Greater Cambridge area. The District Council has an important role in tracking and improving air quality.

Currently, WHO air quality targets set higher air quality standards than our national objectives. Adopting the WHO targets would set a long-term target for air quality improvements in the Greater Cambridge area. It would also aim to help prevent pollution levels from increasing as new homes come forwards in Greater Cambridge.

Youth engagement award

In my November report I described a youth engagement workshop I had attended in Fowlmere, run by planning officers, to introduce schoolchildren to some of the design challenges and career options in development and planning.

The council's Youth Engagement Service has since won awards for 'Best Local Authority' and 'Individual Youth Engagement Practitioner of the Year' at the 2023 Inspire Future Generations Awards.

'Cambridge 2040' update

On 19 December, the Rt Hon Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, unveiled updated plans for the Government's 'Cambridge 2040' vision, with proposals for "northwards" of 150,000 new homes around Cambridge.

A joint statement from our local authorities said, "We note ... that the number of new homes ... has come down from 250,000 to 150,000, but this is still substantially more than the over 50,000 homes we have identified as needed ... – a number which will already be incredibly challenging to bring forward. We are ambitious for high quality sustainable, green growth but can't stress enough how vital it is that Government supports us to tackle the issues that will otherwise act as roadblocks to sustainable growth."

The District Council continues to stress the need to address water supply, public transport, community infrastructure and affordable housing in negotiations with the Government. We are still awaiting clarity over how they might support the development of the 50,000 homes required to follow Government policy in the Local Plan, let alone any larger number.

Corporate Peer Challenge

The council recently took part in a Corporate Peer Challenge, which is a comprehensive review of activities by officers and councillors from other councils. The review praised our high recycling rates, cost-of living support, well-functioning corporate culture and youth engagement programme. It contained many useful recommendations, including developing a stronger vision for the future of the district and continuing the process of closing outstanding historic audits.

Local Plan timetable

The Local Plan timetable identifies the expected timings for the plan that will replace the 2018 Local Plans to become the planning policy framework for Greater Cambridge. The latest timetable was agreed by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council in 2022. However, continuing uncertainties over external factors (chiefly water availability and transport strategy) have prevented the 2022 timetable from being met, and continue to prevent officers from being able to confirm a revised timetable.

The First Proposals for the emerging Local Plan were published in 2021. An update on the development strategy with information on several key sites was published in January 2023 to give some certainty about the strategy where this was possible. Given the continuing external uncertainty, a further report on the Local Plan will not be presented before March 2024.

Four-day working week update

We are now a year into the council's four-day working week trial, which is due to run until the end of March 2024. The trial was designed to test whether a four-day working week could improve the council's value for money to taxpayers, primarily by reducing its reliance on temporary staff for roles that are better filled with dedicated permanent employees. So far, the results have been very promising. Since the trial began, over half of 23 key roles previously covered by temporary agency staff have been filled by permanent staff. Jobs that had previously attracted no interest when advertised are now attracting a strong pool of applicants, allowing the council to recruit the best candidates. This has saved the council hundreds of thousands of pounds and is helping to build a more talented and efficient workforce. The direct savings from filling all of these roles would be around £1million per year. The council's performance has not suffered during the trial, and the focus on continuous improvement has been maintained. The trial still has 3 months left to run. The overall effects of the policy will be assessed at the end of the trial period, and a

decision on whether or not to continue will be made by Full Council.

On 13 November the former Minister for Local Government, Lee Rowley MP, was replaced. Mr Rowley had repeatedly asked the council to abandon the four-day working week trial, even if it were offering improved value for money to taxpayers. His successor, Simon Hoare MP, has so far made no official comment on the topic, but his general statements favour a more cooperative approach to working with local government. Shortly before leaving office, Mr Rowley had issued a 'Best Value Notice' requesting a large amount of weekly data on the trial. This notice was issued 'outside the statutory powers', meaning there was no legal obligation to comply. Best Value Notices are intended to be used when councils are in poor financial health or are failing to demonstrate continuous improvement, neither of which is the case for South Cambs. This notice appears to have been issued entirely for political reasons. However, the council decided at a meeting on 20 November to comply in full with the request, to avoid an unnecessary conflict with the government over non-compliance.

My position, as stated perviously, is that the trial should be assessed objectively, and the council should continue the new arrangements if they offer improved overall value for money.

Draft