

COLWALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Assembly of the Parish Meeting duly convened and held at the Colwall Village Hall, Mill Lane, Colwall on Wednesday 4th November 2015 at 7.30pm.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman, Mrs Nicky Carless, welcomed circa 110 members of the Public, 8 members of the Parish Council, and the Clerk.

Apologies had been received by the Clerk from Councillors Haynes and Rees and Working Party member Neil Bowring.

2. A presentation was held to present the “1st Draft Colwall Neighbourhood Development Plan” document. This document encompasses the draft policies, the options for the changes to the settlement boundary to accommodate the future housing needs of the village and the options for the location of the proposed new primary school.

As previously, this event had been widely advertised by Colwall Parish Council. 1,100 newsletters had been hand delivered to households in the village advertising this public meeting. A further 200 newsletters were available in the library and village shops. Notices were also exhibited on the 4 public notice boards in the Parish and on the Parish Council website along with 2 banners advertising the event. The banners were located in the village centre and at the existing Primary School.

Following the welcome by the Chairman, the meeting was handed over to Councillor John Stock, who undertook a detailed power point presentation on Colwall's Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The presentation

i) Recapped the recent changes to planning regulations:-

- Regional planning has been replaced with a National Framework “NPPF”;
- At County level there is a local plan “the Core Strategy” which has now passed examination and been adopted by Herefordshire Council, within which, there are no longer Settlement Boundaries around Towns or Villages.
- And at a parish level there are Neighbourhood Development Plans (also known as Neighbourhood Plans), all of which are statutory planning documents.

The Colwall Neighbourhood Development Plan needs to be in general conformity with both the NPPF and the Core Strategy. In addition, because the parish is in the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the impact on the landscape of any proposed development needs to be taken into consideration.

There is a need to accommodate an additional 156 new dwellings in the Parish of Colwall between 2011 and 2031 (as set out under policy S22 in the Core Strategy).

Since 2011 Planning permission has already been approved for 66 new dwellings.

This leaves a further 90 to be accommodated.

Assuming windfalls (based on the previous rate of windfalls in the Parish) 20 have been estimated over the remaining 16 years.

This leaves 70 to be accommodated within the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The question is where should those 70 be accommodated? Accepting they must be within the following parameters:-

Great weight needs to be given to the landscape (NPPF)
 Major development in the AONB should be refused (NPPF)
 Development should be within or adjacent to the main built up areas (CS)
 70 additional dwellings are required in the Parish (indicative target) (CS).

Faced with these considerations, a detailed Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment “LSCA” was undertaken to assess all the land around the existing settlement boundary based on its’ “capacity to absorb development without undue damage to the Malvern Hills AONB”.

A number of small sites have been identified based on these outputs and these are set out in the draft plan, to which the Parish Council is seeking the public’s views.

ii) The Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan

A summary of the draft plan contents was presented. The consultation focuses upon the aims and objectives of the draft document and the draft policies contained therein.

iii) Allocation of a Site for the new Primary School

The rationale behind the decision made by Herefordshire Council for a new primary school was highlighted.

Following the identification of 3 potential sites in the Parish, Colwall Parish Council sought the expertise of the Landscape, Environmental and Colour Consultancy (who had undertaken the LSCA) for her input based on the assessment of the impact the school would have on the Landscape should it be located in any of these 3 sites.

The landscape impact priority outputs are:-

That, “Grovesend Farm” was considered to have the least impact on the Landscape Followed by “the land adjacent to the Village Hall in Mill Lane”.

The site which was considered to have the most impact on the Landscape was the rebuilding and expansion of the school on the existing site and its adjoining land.

Each of the 3 sites had then been assessed for other considerations e.g. ease of access, proximity to the village centre, size of land being adequate to accommodate the needs of the school.

Initial feedback from the key stakeholders has indicated a preference for “the land adjacent to the Village Hall in Mill Lane” site. This site also provides the potential for a more comprehensive community hub, in addition to the school.

Finally, during the last few days, the landowner of the site at Mill Lane has put forward a proposal for the development of the site as a mixed use site to include residential; dwellings as well as the school. The proposal is based on a larger area of housing than that originally considered under the LSCA.

iv) The Consultation - At this juncture, the Parish Council is seeking feedback on the options of all 3 sites for the new school, the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan, including the proposed changes to the settlement boundary, the policies contained therein,

and the proposal for the landowner of the site at Mill Lane all in the accompanying questionnaire.

Responses are required by the 30th November 2015.

3. Parishioners Question Time.

There was approximately 30 minutes of Questions and Answers.

Q. How will the proximity of houses to the village hall impact on the facility?

A. The Parish Council is aware of this potential issue and the layout of the site will need to protect the village hall and the amenity value it provides to the Parish

Q. Why are you prepared to consider Grovesend Farm for the school but not housing?

A. Because the importance of the school for the village makes this an “exception/special case”.

Q. How will the school financially benefit from a mix development site?

A. The contribution from the housing, by way of CIL monies (previous S106 monies), may be utilised by Herefordshire Council to assist in the development of the school.

Q. Now the Core Strategy has been approved, is there a timescale for Neighbourhood Development Plans to have to be approved by, to protect against unwanted development?

A. No there is no specific timescale, but we are moving to get the Neighbourhood Development Plan finalised as quickly as possible.

Q. If the Neighbourhood Development Plan allocates land for the Primary School will that be restricted?

A. The wording for the allocation will need to be very specific to ensure it meets the needs required of it.

Q. Could the existing school site be used for housing?

A. Yes, we have included that within the draft Plan.

Q. How will the CIL monies be deployed?

A. CIL has yet to be adopted by Herefordshire Council, assuming it's adoption, Parish Councils who have a Neighbourhood Development Plan in place, will receive 25% of any CIL monies from new housing for use in the Parish (subject to the specifications within the CIL agreement between the developer and Herefordshire Council).

Q. In reality how much consultation will be undertaken by Herefordshire Council on the design of the school?

A. We don't know at this stage.

Q. Will the Parish Council have the opportunity to veto any planning application?

A. No, but the Parish Council's views will be embodied in the Neighbourhood Development Plan which will become a statutory planning document, which the planning authority have to take into consideration upon receipt of planning applications.

Q. Have you considered the impact that the school would have on the open countryside, if it is located in Mill Lane?

A. Yes the Parish Council is aware of the potential impact, and it is a consideration, but we are aware that the community needs for a school may out way that consideration.

Q. Will the school be large enough to accommodate the children from the additional new dwellings in the Parish?

A. Herefordshire Council have to take this into consideration when they are planning for the school.

Q. Why does the housing have to be built at the same time if it's a mixed site?

A. There is no requirement, it could be in tandem.

Q. Will additional monies be available if the Community Hub is developed?

A. It may be possible for alternative grant funding to be secured. Herefordshire Council are exploring all funding options. Some grant funds are not available to public bodies so it may be up to individual organisations, such as the Village Hall, to seek this type of funding.

Statement from a Parishioner – We need a school .Let's concentrate on securing a site for the school and not the individual finances of the transaction, that is for Herefordshire Council to negotiate.

Response from Chairman – The Neighbourhood Development Plan is about future housing as well as a school. The Policies contained in the document are key; please do consider the policies not just the question of the location of the new school when responding to the questionnaire.

Q. Why is the landowner's proposal being specifically considered? Surely it should be considered as a response to the ongoing consultation?

A. It was felt that it was essential to have the community's views, having received this offer.

Statement from a Parishioner – The school is key, not the deal.

A. Yes, but we do need to know what the Parishioners views are.

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked all those who had attended.

Questionnaires were available for those who attended the meeting to complete

The meeting closed at 9.00p.m.

Chairman.....

Date.....