

Draft minutes subject to acceptance at the next meeting.

CHELWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT CHELWOOD VILLAGE HALL, CHELWOOD ON WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2024 COMMENCING 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Julie Glynn (Chair), Pat Harrison, Alex Scholfield and Lucy Sherborne; also in attendance Cllr Sam Ross (B&NES) and Alan Butcher (Clerk).

24/02E/1 - Apologies for absence. Cllr Peter Jones.

24/02E/2 - Declarations of Interest:

Cllr Sherborne declared an interest in agenda item 23/04785/FUL by way of a personal friendship with the applicant.

Cllr Harrison advised that he knew the landowner of The Old Colliery, Fry's Bottom. The clerk advised that, in the interests of Governance he had granted Cllr Harrison a Dispensation to allow him to take part in the meeting.

24/02E/3 - Public Participation:

The Chairman will adjourn the meeting and allow a maximum of 15 minutes for public participation on matters included on the agenda only. Thirty five members of the public were present;

- i) Planning application for The Old Colliery, Fry's Bottom:
The clerk read a statement passed to him by a representative of the applicant giving the history of the use of the site and outlining the proposals for the use of the site, access and parking arrangements.
Many members of the public voiced an objection to the proposals including residents who lived close to the site who had prepared a statement which was read to the meeting. Objections included damage to the woodland, wildlife habitat and wild life itself, prolonged noise throughout the day and early evening, access to the site, parking arrangements and the increased number of users of the site during the extended period of use being sought. Representatives of the applicant spoke in defence of the voiced objections detailing the management of the woodland, the removal of diseased trees and the planting of new trees on all parts of the site. They noted that both the access to the site and parking would be managed and that the useage might be less than suggested.
The Chairman thanked members of the public for their participation.

24/02E/4 - Confirmation of the Minutes of previous meetings:

- i) That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th February 2024 be held over for agreement at the meeting to be held on 4th April 2024. This was so agreed.

24/02E/5 - Planning applications:

- i) 23/04785/FUL - Site Of Old Colliery, Fry's Bottom, Chelwood, Bristol, Bath And North East Somerset. Change of use from Forestry to Mixed Forestry and for recreational use as a Trial Bike and E-Bikes (EAPCs) practice area (Sui Generis)

Cllr Glynn was concerned about the increase in traffic, the number of users coming to the site during the week and at weekends. She noted that the traffic report indicated around 100 vehicles per day using the lane past the site.

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The suggested use of Barn Lane would cause difficulties for walkers and horse riders who use this narrow lane. She was also concerned about the noise generated by the additional useage and noted that the Environmental Health Officers report noted that the noise caused by motor bikes was a distinctive noise source. She cited a number of B&NES Placemaking Plan policies which were conflicted by the application.

Cllr Scholfield cited NPPF Policies referring to noise and loss of amenity.

Cllr Harrison advised that he held, on his land, small motorbike events three times a year for short periods. He had no further comments and would abstain from voting on the proposals.

It was proposed Cllr Scholfield, seconded Cllr Glynn that the Parish Council object to the application. This was passed two in favour and one abstention.

The following response and comments to be sent to B&NES:

“Chelwood Parish Council considered application 23/04785/FUL concerning The Old Collery, Frys Bottom, Chelwood at its meeting on 28th February 2024. There were a significant number of members of the public present with a majority speaking against the application.

Councillors agreed a motion to object to the application which was passed two in favour and one abstention (one councillor had declared an interest and could not vote and one was absent).

Councillors made the following comments on the application:

Concern was expressed about the continuing damage to the woodland and natural habitat caused by the current level of usage of the site by trail bikes and the loss of animals and birds throughout the area which this had caused which would be greatly exacerbated by the proposed increase in numbers of motorbikes using the site. The proposal to operate for 10 hours per day with 15 users on weekdays, 25 users on a Saturday and 20 users on Sunday could mean, for instance and assuming 2 hours use per rider, would result in up to 125 riders on a Saturday B&NES Placemaking Plan Policy NE3 applies.

The proposed on-site parking was considered to be inadequate given that, on a Saturday during a ten hour operating period, as many as 125 vehicles could be arriving at the site. The access routes to the site and especially Barn Lane are unsuitable for larger vehicles which will be unable to pass. This lane is a quiet lane used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists whose amenity will be greatly impacted. Vehicles parked on narrow lanes at times when they are used as a shortcut by other motorists will cause unwanted congestion. B&NES Placemaking Plan Policy ST7 applies.

The proposed increase in the number of motorbikes using the site for a longer time will cause a significant increase in the level of noise affecting local residents who already complain about current usage and whose amenity will be adversely affected by the increase. The timing of events, especially in the evenings, will cause nearby residents to lose any brief respite from noise they may have experienced in the past. The Environmental Health Officer comments that the increase in usage will significantly increase the distinctive noise caused by motorbikes using the site and further reduce residents opportunity for the quiet enjoyment of their properties. B&NES Placemaking Plan Policy D6 applies.

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The National Planning Policy Framework section 13, Green Belt, para 153 requires local authorities give consideration to potential damage to the Green Belt caused by development. There can be no considerations contained within this proposal that outweigh the protection of the green belt.

The National Planning Policy Framework section 15, Natural Environment Ground Conditions and Pollution, para 191 states:

a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life.

As noted above, nearby residents will be subjected to greatly increased levels of the distinctive and pervasive noise from motorbikes using the site during the day, in the early evening and at weekends.

In summary, councillors were greatly concerned about the destruction of the woodland, wildlife habitat and wildlife itself, the huge loss of amenity by local resident's and the effect on their mental and physical health, the possible public safety risk to those using areas adjoining the site and the likely affect of increased traffic and parking. B&NES Placemaking plan and the NPPF provisions clearly set out reasons why the proposal should be refused."

The Chairman adjourned the meeting briefly to allow members of the public to leave the meeting.

24/02E/6 - Parish Council Matters.

- i) UK Shared Prosperity Fund update. The application had been submitted. An answer was expected by 26th March 2024.
- ii) B&NES Local Plan consultation. Cllr Glynn would be attending a forthcoming Webinar on the subject. Cllr Ross suggested that councillors could respond Individually.
- iii) Annual Parish Meeting – Final arrangements were in hand with Cllrs Glynn, Sherborne and Scholfield.
- iv) Clerks reimbursement of EPC and MEES surveys for the village hall - £329.40 This was agreed and a cheque raised.

24/02E/7 - Matters of Report

No matters were reported.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm

24/02E/8 - Date and Time of Next Meeting.

4th April 2024 at 7.30pm.

Cllr Sherborne and Scholfield gave apologies.

**Alan Butcher,
Parish Clerk.
12th March 2024:
01749 870358;
chelwood.parish.council@gmail.com**