

BENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr David Hawes

Clerk: Ms Allison Spyer

14 Barley View, North Waltham, Basingstoke RG25 2ST
Tel: 07786 063579 Email: clerk@bentworthparishcouncil.org

MINUTES OF PLANNING MEETING

Thursday 22nd March 2018, Jubilee Hall, 7.30pm

1. **Councillors Present:** Paul Mellish, David Hawes, Veronica Parker & Abbie George
2. **Apologies for absence:** Allison Spyer
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Abby George for application 55077/002, 1 Denyers Cottages. Consideration of this was deferred until the next meeting
4. **Meeting Open to the Public:** There were 61 villagers present at the meeting. The developers, Waller Energy Ltd, represented by Robert Tutton supported by their Architect, Anthony Carlisle, spoke in favour of the application suggesting that the design satisfied core strategy clauses CP10, CP11 and CP16 and was in line with the 2008 Village Plan. They refused to take any questions from the floor or committee.

Tony Davis a representative from CAMRA, the campaign for real ale, spoke in favour of retaining the public house and said there was an upsurge in popularity of country pubs and several pubs in Hampshire had been successfully revived.

All other speakers were villagers, all those who spoke were against the application for a variety of reasons summarised below. Discussion lasted 40 minutes.

5. **Planning Applications** – to consider the Parish Council’s response to the following planning applications

27431/031, The Star Inn, Church Street, Bentworth, Alton, GU34 5RB

Proposed erection of two-storey side and rear extensions, provision of basement and conversion of the extended building to 4x2 bedroomed houses, a 1 bedroomed flat and a village shop, following demolition of existing front/side lean-to and single storey elements.

The Parish Council strongly objects to this application on the following grounds.

- **Viability of the pub to continue trading.** Bentworth Parish Council registered The Star Inn as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) on 2nd March 2015. The draft Neighborhood Plan (2018) supported The Star Inn as a community asset demonstrated by over 80% of respondents representing 58% of the Parish. Due to the lack of maintenance over many years, before becoming vacant, the building has

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fallen into disrepair and in consequence has not been offered to the market at a fair price to enable the community to purchase the property as a profitable public house. We recommend that EHDC revisits the process to see that it was handled in a fair and proportionate manner. It would appear that the current owner seeks only to maximise profit from the sale of the property regardless.

- **Density of proposed development.** The draft Neighbourhood Plan states that any proposed planning applications should restrict the number of dwellings to 20 per hectare. Using this criteria, The Star Inn site would support a maximum of 2 dwellings. The plan area shows a doubling of the current floor area of the pub.
- **The provision of a shop/post office.** Bentworth has a history of failed shop units in the village including a farm shop and Mobile shop and this was before the rise in on-line shopping. There is a new Post Office in Medstead and the chance of getting one in Bentworth is remote. It should be noted that Four Marks applied for one and was refused. We suspect the unit would eventually become another flat.
- **Location.** The site is in the Conservation area and on the Village Green. It faces West where the sunsets and is considered to be the prime location in the centre of the village. This is an ideal location for a public house and highly inappropriate for a row of terraced houses.
- **Traffic and Parking.** The scheme shows 9 parking spaces and 3 for the shop. The existing 2 houses at the rear of this development both have 2 cars. There is limited turning space. There is no provision for disabled parking. Parking spaces are shown above the sewage tank and possibly the oil/gas tanks. The site is on a roundabout at the intersection of 2 of the busiest roads in the village. Traffic is extremely heavy when the children arrive and leave the school which is situated around the corner further down Church Street and where the site lines are poor. This scheme has the potential to be extremely dangerous.
- **Sewage, fuel storage and provision of waste.** Details for these elements are not clear on the drawings and the Developer would not clarify their proposals. Every other week there could be up to 15 wheelie bins, currently left at the entrance to the site, to be collected. Both fuel storage and the sewage tank(s) will probably be buried under the car park, thus impeding deliveries and collections.
- **Conclusion.** This much loved, award winning public house, is held in high esteem by the Village. We feel the marketing campaign is biased against selling the property so it may continue use as a public house. The current development scheme for the houses as proposed are not “social housing”, they are not suitable for older residents, they are not disability friendly and they are not affordable for first time buyers. We urge the Council to refuse planning permission.