

NOTES FOR PUBLIC OPEN MEETING

on Saturday, 16th August 2014

The meeting was attended by approximately 80 to 90 parishioners.

It commenced with an introduction by Cllr Richard Marsh, Chairman of Cold Ash Parish Council, who explained how the meeting would proceed.

Cllr Mike Munro then explained the process of the examination and assessment for the SHLAA, and the subsequent submissions to WBC by CAPC. He then ran through the next moves. District Cllr Garth Simpson explained the input of the WBC Working Group, whose findings would be placed before a full WBC meeting around the end of November.

Brian Woodham, from CACP, then set the historical scene, from 2008, with the first public consultation taking place only now, and that it is likely that the whole process will be repeated in three or four years' time. He then explained the background and detail of Appendix A. (During this, a photographer from NWN took pictures of a very full Fisher Room.)

Cllr Marsh then invited questions from the floor.

Bill Ashcroft Lee (Bucklebury Alley) asked whether the needs of the parish were being addressed during this process. Many older people wished to retire but to stay in the parish, but in smaller accommodation. District Cllr Simpson replied that this had been addressed in our response to WBC, where 30% affordable homes/smaller units were recommended.

Jeremy Dick (Hatchgate Close) asked for an explanation of the difference between strategic and non-strategic sites. Brian Woodham and District Cllr Simpson clarified this.

Dr Philip Ross (top of Stoney Lane) was concerned about the possibility of development creeping up Stoney Lane. He pointed out that there had been an earlier proposal for the development of Ashmore Green Farm. He was concerned about the unsuitability of Stoney Lane/Ashmore Green Road for any traffic increase. District Cllr Simpson commented on this.

David Smith (Hatchgate Close) pointed out that site COL011 (land at Cold Ash Hill) had previously had flooding. Brian Woodham explained that this site had "appeared from nowhere" and comments were being submitted in the very near future. He told the meeting that there was a culvert for the Cold Ash stream within the boundary of Pound Cottage, which could be affected by any development. There was also a problem with site lines for exiting any proposed property.

Bill Allen (Hatchgate Close) was concerned about the possible loss of a rural view and the wildlife involved. District Cllr Simpson explained NPPF and its anachronisms. Brian Woodham suggested that the intrinsic beauty and value to the area, as well as the wildlife corridors, might be used to defend the situation.

Jan Parsons (Cold Ash Hill) concurred with these opinions.

Janette Morgan (Stoney Lane) commented regarding the necessity of widening Stoney Lane was NEW045 to go ahead. District Cllr Simpson and District Cllr Jeff Beck explained the principles involved. They also explained that the site evaluations undertaken by WBC had initially been done from a theoretical point of view.

Veronica Korolev (Stoney Lane) advised the meeting that she had read and evaluated Appendix A in detail, with regard to NEW045. She had found that the reasons for it having been brought forward were almost identical to the reasons given for other sites being rejected. This principle appeared to apply to the remaining three sites under discussion at this meeting.

She wondered whether a joint petition from the residents would help. Cllr Marsh advised that individual submissions were important, but that a petition in addition was probably a good idea. Brian Woodham offered assistance from CACP.

Lorraine Roberts (Ashmore Green Road) asked for access to the details to use in submissions. Brian Woodham suggested that the links to the WBC and Parish Council websites be advertised widely and District Cllr Simpson suggested that arrangements would be made for information to be made available from the Parish Clerk.

Jan Parsons (Cold Ash Hill) commented that although only six houses were suggested for COL011, this could increase before too long and another 150 houses could cover the hillside. Brian Woodham suggested that CACP response would submit that no further "ribbon" development could be sustained.

Jay Bretts (Cold Ash Hill) voiced similar concerns.

Nigel Rawls (adjoining Poplar Farm) was concerned about the proposed access to the Poplar Farm site. Cllr Marsh suggested that, although it had not been included in the submissions, it had been implied that the lower field (fronting Cold Ash Hill) may be utilised. Brian Woodham pointed out that there had been previous flooding of the area which had traversed the roadway.

David Grant (Ashmore Green Road) mentioned the difficulty of walking children to school because of the absence of pavements and also the limits on school capacity in the parish. District Cllr Simpson explained the complications of the large catchment areas for both religious schools.

Denise Holt Wilson (Windyridge - near convent) raised the problems of traffic on The Ridge and the possible need for parking restrictions, particularly during school opening and closing times. District Cllr Simpson spoke to this in detail.

Cliff ? (Strouds Meadow) mentioned the traffic and parking problems which would be exacerbated were Poplar Farm to be developed.

Brian Woodham stressed that no detail of any development has been published and that these issues would have to be addressed were any of these sites to be taken forward, and when detailed applications were submitted. District Cllrs Simpson and Beck supported these remarks.

Bill Ashcroft Lee (Bucklebury Alley) mentioned that the Parish Design Statement, with which he had been involved, had included land at Westrop Farm, to where St Mark's School could be moved, and its original site used for residential development. He commented that it was not now included in the process.

Ellen Prutow (Strouds Meadow) asked that, were these sites specifically rejected, where would the required housing go? Cllr Marsh explained that this would be a different situation and District Cllr Simpson said that it might be necessary to negotiate regarding any shortfall.

Brett Collett (The Ridge) asked that information be disseminated more widely to the almost 4,000 parishioners who were not at the meeting but who may wish to participate. Cllr Marsh explained that, because of the time constraints, more communication was needed.

Jason Collett (Thatcham) thanked the meeting for the work being put in to assist Thatcham Flood Forum and the residents of Thatcham.

Cllr Marsh concluded the meeting by suggesting that small community groups could be formed, in the short term, and that information could be collated through the Parish Council, to enable a co-ordinated response. He suggested that as many as possible of those present should pass their email addresses to Robert Pattison, so that information can be disseminated through the Community Bulletin.

He closed the meeting by thanking the Ashmore Green WI for their kind provision of refreshments, and the parishioners showed their appreciation.