

STOCKSBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation & Environment Committee of the Town Council, held in the Council Chamber, Stocksbridge Town Hall, The ARC, on Tuesday, 7th September 2021

PRESENT:- Cllr. M Milton (Chair), Cllrs. R Crowther, J Staniforth, J Grocutt, M Whittaker, and A S Law

IN ATTENDANCE: E Hughes and A Gillespie, Dransfield Properties Ltd, Item 5
A Millner and M Sugden, Penistone FM Community Radio – Item 6

1. Election of Chairman

Proposed by Cllr. J A Grocutt, seconded by Cllr. A S Law and

RESOLVED:- That Cllr. M Milton be elected as Chairman of the Recreation and Environment Committee for the Council year 2021/2022.

All members were in favour.

2. Chairman's Remarks and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllrs. S Abrahams and C Ward.

3. Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no items for exclusion of press and public.

4. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. J A Grocutt declared an interest in any planning items.

5. Fox Valley Residential Scheme

The Chairman welcomed Emily Hughes and Alister Gillespie, Dransfield Properties Ltd who had requested an invitation in order to present to members proposals for the Fox Valley residential scheme. EH circulated copies of the proposed development, which was shortly to be seen by the Planning Department.

EH informed that the development would contain 33x 1 and 2 bedroomed apartments with a communal garden area and allocated parking spaces. Five tenders had been issued to prospective developers.

EH stated that retail was uncertain at the present time and it was felt the best use for the land would be apartments adjacent to all the facilities provided in Fox Valley. Sheffield was also short on housing stock at the present time.

Cllr. MW noted that he liked the post industrial theme and enquired whether there would be any affordable housing.

AG stated that in the present climate with shortages in materials/drivers and the increased cost of materials it would not be financially viable to offer affordable housing, but it was hoped that the apartments would be offered at a reasonable price.

Cllr. JS enquired whether the close proximity to the train track had been taken into account from a noise point of view and whether the apartments would be environmentally friendly.

AG stated that the train noise had been taken into account and that solar panels would be fitted on Block C, however, these would probably be utilised to power the communal areas CCTV and lighting in the building and garden area.

EH noted that there would be no gas in the apartments only electric

Cllr. RJC stated that he understood the current climate with respect to building material/transport issues and fully supported the scheme, however, it would be good to see some affordable housing.

Cllr. MW noted that he was pleased to see some development not on a Greenfield site and fully supported the scheme.

Cllr. JAG noted previous issues with regard to staff parking on the main Manchester Road and was pleased to see that parking places were allocated to each apartment. However, at present staff were using the area for parking, had they been consulted/informed of the changes?

EH informed that staff had been consulted regarding the proposed change to parking and that there would be some parking permits for staff allocated.

The Chairman thanked both E Hughes and A Gillespie for attending the meeting and keeping the Town Council informed of proposals.

6. Penistone FM Community Radio

The Chairman welcomed Andrew Millner and Martin Sugden, on behalf of Penistone FM Community Radio who had requested a letter of support from the Town Council for their application to Ofcom to extend their FM broadcast coverage to include Stocksbridge, Deepcar and Bolsterstone.

AM advised that the current transmitter, located at Hoylainswaine did not cover a wide enough area to reach Stocksbridge, Deepcar and Bolsterstone. The station therefore hoped to locate a further transmitter in Wortley to improve reception. For the past 12 years the station had supported not for profit organisations such as Stocksbridge Community Leisure Centre, Stocksbridge Park Steels and Steel Valley Project promoting them on the radio.

MS stated that the station was 100% committed to local issues and promoting local businesses. They had 30 volunteers and each year they train 10 youths from Penistone Grammar School Enrichment Programme which improves confidence and ability and one of them recently had a Breakfast Show on Radio 1.

Ofcom require to see engagement and that there is a demand for the station.

AM informed that if Ofcom approved the extra transmitter then funding would be required to facilitate its purchase and additional technical requirements.

Dan Jarvis, Miriam Cates MP and Sheffield City Councillors had already pledged their support.

Cllr. JAG stated that it was a great idea, noting that she had been interviewed many times. There was a lot going on in the Town which could be promoted and it would also be a way to reach to harder to reach groups.

Cllr. JAG felt it would be a good idea to extend the training to youths at Stocksbridge High School and advised that Stocksbridge Community Forum would be a good group to visit and request support.

Cllr. JAG asked for a projection on timescales.

AM advised that the process could possibly take 6-12 months, maybe slightly longer and noted that a visit to the station could be arranged if anyone wished to look around.

Cllr. ASL noted that the station currently was predominantly about Penistone.

AM stated that there was a vibrant community in Stocksbridge, similar to Penistone and they already had a number of volunteers from this area.

Cllr. RJC endorsed everything already said noting that Radio Sheffield were always interested in attending events at Fox Valley.

MS advised that the station had already worked with Radio Sheffield on a number of occasions and noted that Penistone FM now had the facility to undertake outside broadcasts. A rebrand of the station would be required if the bid to Ofcom was successful.

Cllr. ASL noted the similarities between the two Towns both bordering the Peak District National Park and having the same values.

The Chairman thanked both A Millner and M Sugden for attending the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr. R J Crowther, seconded by Cllr. J A Grocutt and

RESOLVED:- That the Town Council provide a letter of support to Penistone FM Community Radio to be included as part of their application to Ofcom to extend their FM broadcast coverage to include Stocksbridge, Deepcar and Bolsterstone.

7. Hollin Busk Development

Cllr. R Crowther updated members following result of the Hollin Busk Inquiry noting that he had been involved for a number of years with the Friends of Hollin Busk group as they put together their fight to keep the green open space at Hollin Busk. The group was still being inundated with comments from members of the public very upset and disappointment with the Inquiry outcome.

Cllr. RJC stated that the outcome was not particularly surprising given the recent changes to the planning system, it being market lead and the delay to the Inquiry starting.

Cllr. RJC noted several factual errors in the Inquiry report and noted his anger that the FOHB group had not been afforded the courtesy of being informed directly of the outcome, instead finding out via LinkedIn.

Cllr. RC noted that he had circulated earlier a response to the Planning Inspector for approval at this meeting, as below:-

Re: Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/21/3267168 Land at Junction with Carr Road and Hollin Busk Lane, Sheffield S36 2SS

We are writing to express our profound disappointment with regard to the decision recently made to allow the above appeal on land at the junction of Carr Road and Hollin Busk Lane.

As we are sure you will appreciate, the report came as a bitter blow for local groups such as Friends of Hollin Busk and indeed the wider communities in Stocksbridge and Deepcar, and the impending loss of this land as a valued visual asset for local people, adjacent as it is to one of the few flat walks in the area, is a great cause for concern in the area. The decision remains a topic of active discussion locally, and an issue which united the town and all our representatives on the Town Council, City Council and in Parliament, is now a source of shared loss.

It is the nature of the planning system that different people take different views with regard to how individual planning policies apply to a particular site, and the interplay between the differing and sometimes-conflicting planning policies themselves. Indeed, planning professionals with years of experience can form completely different views after having considered the same evidence. We are concerned however that despite the courtesies extended to third parties during the Inquiry, any and all views put forward appear to have been swept aside and disregarded, whilst the assertions of the appellant seem to have been largely accepted without question and not subjected to the rigorous scrutiny that one would expect at a Planning Inquiry.

One example of this is where the report accepts the appellant's contention that Hollin Busk is an area which has no defined boundary. This is clearly not the case, and indeed documentary evidence from Sheffield City Council was provided by the Friends of Hollin Busk to the Inquiry showing very clearly the boundary of the site defined as Hollin Busk, and was included as one of the Inquiry documents. At least one of the third-party spoken contributions also made reference to this point, however despite these clear definitions the report claims that the extent of the site was undefined. There is a litany of other areas where the real and valid concerns raised by local people, who know the area best, have been either accepted but dismissed as minimal or irrelevant, or ignored altogether.

Quite apart from the substance of the decision itself, and the consequences of that decision which will be felt by local residents, is the manner in which the decision was communicated. As third parties we would not have expected notification of the decision prior to its dissemination to the main parties or its publication on the Inspectorate's planning portal, however it would have been courteous to inform us of the decision once published. However Stocksbridge Town Council, the level of local government closest to the community, was told about the decision by Friends of Hollin Busk, who themselves had not been officially notified but had discovered it by chance. Our understanding is that the most senior planning professionals at Sheffield City Council, the local planning authority, were informed of the decision not by the Inspectorate but via a post on LinkedIn published by an individual connected to the appellant. We would hope you would agree that this is not the notification process that one would expect of a quasi-judicial process in the planning system, nor does it reflect the courtesy we were pleased to be afforded during the Inquiry itself.

To conclude, whilst we have no choice but to accept the decision and the consequential loss of a local amenity which has been so important to so many residents, particularly during the periods where the country was locked down, we wished to state for the record our profound disappointment in a decision which sweeps aside the valid concerns of local residents, seems to

apply little rigour or challenge to the appellant's assertions, contains apparent factual and typographical errors, and was not communicated satisfactorily to relevant parties.

Proposed by Cllr. A S Law, seconded by Cllr. J Staniforth and

RESOLVED:- That the Town Council approve the letter to the Planning Inspector as previously circulated to members, with copies to City Councillors, the local MP, Head of Planning Department and the Secretary of State.

Cllr. RJC queried whether it would be appropriate, in an effort to salvage things and in view of the fact that there would have to be a lot more houses built in Stocksbridge in the future, to have another go at the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to become part of the Sheffield Local Area Plan? This task had been undertaken a number of years ago and failed. A NP had to be community led and it was a huge undertaking with a lot of work involved, possibly taking at least 7 years to finish so there had to be a large degree of commitment involved.

Cllr. JS felt it might be a good idea but queried whether a NP would have made any difference to the Inquiry for Hollin Busk.

Cllr. RJC stated that in this case probably not, as Sheffield City Council had already refused planning permission for this development.

Cllr. JAG stated that a NP had been tried in the past, noting that there were a lot of hoops to jump through and it has to be community driven. There were lots of skills required and the Town Council covered a large area. There was a need for professional people to be involved but did the Town Council have an obligation to do it?

Cllr. MW noted that Sheffield has a large number of brownfield sites available for building and queried why these were not put forward instead of the Greenfield areas?

Cllr. RJC informed that brownfield sites require a lot of clearing first involving a lot of remediation costs. It was therefore easier and more cost effective to build on Greenfield sites.

Cllr. MM felt that the Friends of Hollin Busk and Friends of Oxley Park groups would be interested plus Dransfield Properties and there were lots of community groups who may wish to be involved.

Cllr. ASL stated that there had got to be a lot of committed people involved or it became a serious problem.

The Clerk undertook to locate the previous Neighbourhood Development Plan booklets for information and noted that previously a SCC Officer had attended a Town Council meeting to advise on the tasks required to be undertaken in a NP.

Proposed by Cllr. J A Grocutt, seconded by Cllr. J Staniforth and

RESOLVED:- That the Town Council facilitate a public meeting to gauge public interest in starting a Neighbourhood Plan to be community led with appropriate people to speak on the subject.

There being no further business the meeting closed.