

## **STEEPLE MORDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Parish Council Planning Meeting held remotely on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors: J Clayton (Chairman), A Drew, M Bird, C Upchurch, N Badger, K Austin, G Belson, S Wheatley, S Traverse-Healy

**In attendance:** Mrs S Walmesley (Clerk) Sam Deegan, Will Rogers (Planning Potential) Dennise Springett and Sarah Vale (Cambian Group) with 28 members of the public.

#### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Apologies were received from District Cllr Williams.

Cllr Badger and Cllr Drew declared a non disclosable interest under Item 3.2 as neighbours of the property.

#### **2 COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS FROM PARISHIONERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

##### **2.1 Planning Ref 20/04358/FUL**

The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting adding that a public meeting of the village, as requested by some residents, was not allowed under the current Covid restrictions. He added that representations from residents had been circulated to Councillors and to the representatives of the Cambian Group.

The most common concern on the planning application was traffic and vehicle movements. The lack of facilities for youngsters and young adults in the village was also a concern.

Mr Deegan was invited to speak. He advised that a highway consultation would be carried out as part of the planning application. With regards to vehicle movements they would be very similar to a family home with staff working shifts. The staff would have their own vehicles which would also be used to transport the youngsters. It was confirmed that there would be a resident Manager and Deputy.

Ms Vale advised that the homes were carefully selected by the Cambian Group with an assessment procedure for the youngsters to assess their suitability. These were not long term care homes. The youngsters had all experienced trauma (Child Sexual Exploitation). They would all attend the same school in Bedford and take part in the same activities as other children in addition to their therapy sessions. The Care Homes were governed by OFSTED and delivered good results.

The Cambian representatives were asked about the lack of care workers in the area. It was confirmed that there was currently a big recruitment drive for care staff and Ms Springett was confident that there would be adequate high levels of staffing.

Information on the training of staff was requested. Ms Vine advised that there was a 12 day induction off site, then further training within the house including office work and shadow shifts. All staff were enrolled with a level 3 Diploma and Managers at a level 5. The staff carried out all duties within the house including cooking, cleaning, gardening in addition to caring for the young people.

Concern was then raised over the future sale of the building to a different care organisation. Mr Deegan stated that this was not part of the Cambian Group plan or intention at the present time. It was stated that a C2 classification enabled care by a trained practitioner whatever care that may be. It was suggested that should the application be successful a condition could be put on the planning consent.

The representatives were asked if Cambridgeshire County Council supported the application. Ms Springett advised that the youngsters came from other counties so would not have any connections with Cambridgeshire childrens services.

Possible noise levels from the property was a concern as it was felt that the nice garden belonging to the property would encourage the youngsters to meet up there. It was stated that there had been no issues with noise in the other Cambian Homes which were situated in Potton and Cardington.

The representatives were asked why Steeple Morden had been chosen and how the property had been found. Ms Spingett advised that, as someone looking for their own home, the online sites and searches through the estate agents was made. A location

risk assessment then took place once a property was found. The CSE currently had three houses in Bedfordshire with the Station Road property as the 4<sup>th</sup>. A search was on for one more. One of the homes had an outstanding OFSTED report with the other two classed as Good. Ms Springett added that all homes should be at this level to provide the outstanding care to the youngsters. Attendees were invited to look around one of the homes once the Covid situation allowed. As advised earlier all the children attended the same school in Bedford. There were always two staff on duty during the night. Bedtime for the youngsters, whatever age, was 9.30pm.

A question on whether the abusers knew where the youngsters lived. Ms Springett reiterated that the youngsters were from all over the country and tracking them down would be difficult. With regards to visits from their families it was advised that the majority of these took place off site as not all youngsters had a supportive family. The Chairman thanked the representatives and residents for their participation. He then closed the meeting to members of the public.

### 3 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

#### 3.1 Planning Ref 20/04358/FUL

8 Station Road –Change of use from C3 (Dwelling House) to C2 (Care Home)

The Chairman reminded Councillors that they should consider material facts, and not emotions, when making the recommendation. He also reminded parishioners that the Parish Council was only a consultee and could only make a recommendation. The decision would be down to South Cambridgeshire District Council Planners. District Cllr Williams had offered her help if needed.

Cllr Bird expressed concern over the access to the drive from Station road where there was currently an electric gate which was only three metres from the edge of the road. It was recognised that this was a County Highway issue which should be part of their assessment for the consultation.

Cllr Traverse-Healy asked about the trip figures which Mr Deegan advised were between 12 and 20 per day. These related to staff trips to and from school plus weekly activity. Cllr Traverse Healy added that the average in the Cambridgeshire area was 8-10 but it was acknowledged that this was a large property.

The representatives were asked if there had even been a noise abatement order on any of the current properties. Ms Vine confirmed that there had not.

Cllr Belson asked if there was adequate parking for all the vehicles off road. The house was near a contentious junction and the situation should not be made worse. Ms Springett confirmed that there was adequate parking on site. She added that she had walked around the village and was aware that not all residents used their driveways. The Chairman concluded the discussion by stating that his view had changed during the course of the discussions and agreed that the young people needed to be helped and treated. He added that the main concerns relating to traffic on Station Road, the use of the home and staffing had been addressed in the discussions.

On a proposal by Cllr Traverse-Healy, seconded by Cllr Bird a recommendation of support was made with the following conditions –

**–the property to remain for CSE use only**

**–any changes to the permission would have to be via full planning application**

**–a condition be put on County Council Highways to carry out a full analysis of vehicle movements to make sure that there would be no inconvenience to neighbours**

**–a request for the application to go before the Planning committee is made and the Clerk to be involved with final discussions**

A vote was taken with all Councillors in agreement.

The Chairman concluded that if the application was approved by South Cambridgeshire District Council then he hoped this would help the young people coming into the village.

#### **Recommendation Support**

#### 3.2 Planning Ref 20/04302/HFUL

74 Station Road –Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and new front porch

Cllr Traverse-Healy reminded Councillors of the Walnut tree at the front of the property for which a TPO request had been made.

## Recommendation Support

### 4 OTHER PLANNING ISSUES

#### 4.1 Planning Application 8 Craft Way

The Clerk advised that she had received a letter from Stephen Kelly, SCDC Director of Planning, explaining that South Cambridgeshire District Council was again involved in a legal case relating to planning decisions. He offered to attend the next Parish Council meeting to explain further. The Clerk was asked to invite Mr Kelly to the remote Parish Council meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

#### 4.2 Housing Needs Survey

The results from the recent Housing Needs Survey had been received and would be circulated to Councillors. The Cambridgeshire ACRE Rural and Community Led Housing Development Officer, Jenna Brame, had offered to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss the results. This would be an agenda item for the Parish Council meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> December.

### 5 COUNCILLORS' ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND REQUIRING THE URGENT ATTENTION OF THE CLERK

#### 5.1 Footpath Tween Woods

There had been a complaint received over the condition of the path which ran along the stream. This wood was on the boundary with Guilden Morden. It was noted that some wood chippings had been put down. The Chairman asked Councillors to look at the path for a discussion at the next Parish Council meeting. **Action - Councillors**

#### 5.2 Covid Help

Cllr Belson confirmed that two referrals from South Cambridgeshire District Council, regarding support, had been dealt with.

### 6 Close of Meeting

There was no further business and declared the meeting closed at 8.35 pm

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Chairman

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Date