

Kelvedon Parish Council

The Old Fire Station, 102 High Street, Kelvedon, Essex CO5 9AA

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD

26 JULY 2016

Present: Cllr Buttery (Chaired in Cllr Martin's absence)
Cllr Hooper, Cllr L Humpington, Cllr Tremain,
Jill Hinds, Catherine Evans, Feering Parish Council

78/16-17 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Martin, Minns, Lancaster, Pilbeam, Anderson and W Humpington.

79/16-17 Declarations of Interest

None

80/16-17 Public Discussion

A query regarding the suitability of the blue cycle signs within the conservation area was raised. The Clerk will contact ECC to find out if there are any other alternatives.

81/16-17 The Parish Council sets out their opinions below, regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the following sites for residential development:

KELV335 – Monks Farm, land south east of Coggeshall Road:

Advantages:

The site is close to the railway station and bus routes – the promotion of the use of public transport is supported by the Parish Council. The site is non-intrusive in the sense that it would not be highly visible from the surrounding area.

Disadvantages:

The biggest objection to development on this site is the impact on traffic and congestion, especially at the junction of Station Road and the High Street. This is an existing problem area, with major congestion at this point during the rush hour at its peak and to greater or lesser degrees at other times of the day.

Due to the nature of this junction, as a staggered crossroads beside a bridge, with an incline up to the junction, no solutions have yet been found to ease the problems. This area has been acknowledged by ECC to be a problematic and heavily congested junction and many attempts to find a solution have been fruitless. The impact of a further 300 homes with access and egress onto this junction would be immense and unsustainable without a scheme to alleviate it.

It needs to be acknowledged that not all of the people who will live in this development will be commuters, therefore there will be a large number who need to leave and arrive by car.

It was also felt that this site would evolve as a separate community from the rest of the village due to its site and nature as a possibly large community of commuters. This would be undesirable to the village as a whole, if integration into the community became an issue.

Traffic to and from the site will need to access and egress via Coggeshall Road. As acknowledged in the BDC recommendation, this is a fast road with tight bends and limited visibility. It then narrows to almost a single carriageway underneath the railway bridge.

There is already concern about the speed and volume of traffic along this stretch of road, without the addition of a junction and/or mini roundabout for 300 more houses to add to the existing congestion. The recommendation reports that the applicant has agreed with owners of properties along Coggeshall Road to demolish them to create an access. The details of where this would be and in what form is not currently available. This makes it difficult for the Parish Council to make an informed decision as to the merits or otherwise of any proposed junction.

This area floods regularly. Water runs down from the area of the proposed site, through the properties onto Coggeshall Road. This creates a further hazard on this road in the vicinity of the proposed development and access. This road is also very difficult to cross as a pedestrian and to navigate to walk to the station due to the lack of pavements and narrowness of the road.

It was felt that at a recent public meeting in Kelvedon, that this site is overwhelmingly objected to by the residents of Kelvedon and the Parish Council supports this view. It was agreed to object to this site on the grounds laid out above.

KEL337 and 338 – London Road

Advantages:

The site north of London Road is located at one end of Kelvedon, on the A12 junction towards Chelmsford and London. Therefore, any traffic wishing to access the A12 at this point would not need to drive through Kelvedon or Feering, therefore not adding to any traffic congestion and the potential for a four way junction here would be highly advantageous. The site has more space around it and would not overcrowd the village as it currently is. The Parish Council agreed that there seemed to be less overt objection to this site, than for Monks Farm.

Disadvantages:

The parts of these sites which are in the flood plain should not be built on. The site is visually intrusive as you enter Kelvedon and would be set apart as a separate community from the rest of the village, with potential problems around integration into the existing community.

Traffic wishing to travel north on the A12 would need to drive through the entire length of the village and into Feering for access, adding to the existing congestion. There are also concerns that residents would not walk to the railway station but drive, which will add to the parking problems and congestion at the station and at the Station Road/High Street junction, as described above.

FEE232, FEE233 and FEER230 – Strategic Growth Location to the south of Feering

The comments put forward above, regarding traffic congestion, parking problems, pressure on local services and rail capacity are all relevant to these sites. The impact of 1000 homes on this site on the current road and rail network will be severe.

It is imperative that there are improvements made to the A12, with regard to capacity and that the installation of a four way junction here are secured and delivered before development can begin.

There is concern that if this site has Strategic status, the Neighbourhood Plan currently being produced by Feering Parish Council will not be able to influence the location, type of development or supporting infrastructure. There is a particular fear that promised infrastructure will either not be delivered, or will be put in place long after the site is inhabited, creating pressure on the current local amenities and road capacity. Either without, or with a reduced, influence from the Neighbourhood Plan, it was felt that these issues could slip through the net.

This development will double the size of the parish as it currently stands and would create a separate community, which would not integrate easily and therefore cause division within the parish, which would not be a desirable situation

General Comments

The Parish Council considers that Kelvedon and Feering should be seen as two separate villages, not as one Key Service Village. The two villages see themselves as separate entities, with separate Parish Councils etc. The site in Feering should be looked at with regard to its impact on that village alone, when taking into account services such as education, health, without reliance on services in Kelvedon. The existing amenities are currently at capacity, which makes the delivery of those amenities at the Feering site extremely important.

The impact on schools was a frequent objection at the recent Public Meeting. It is unclear what proposals would be put forward to mitigate the impact at Kelvedon St Mary's Academy, if the Monks Farm site goes ahead. This school is at capacity, with children living in Kelvedon not currently able to get a place at the school. This situation can only be heightened if 300 further homes are built here.

The sites at London Road are promising a 'campus' for the local school, which seems to be putting forward ideas of the one school being a split site. There are issues surrounding this idea, not least if families end up with one or more children at different sites and the difficulty this will cause with transport and punctuality but would also cause further traffic travelling to the site at London Road, rather than as is the case at present, with most children being able to walk to the school as it is fairly central in the village.

The impact on the environment is also a concern. The Parish Council recognises that there needs to be development in the short to medium term but are extremely disappointed that such a large number is being proposed for allocation in one green space. The Council would like to have seen smaller numbers being distributed more evenly amongst towns and villages, so that no one place has such a huge change to its make-up and character as is being proposed in Feering.

In addition, the site at Monks Farm has a greater number of trees than that at London Road and the site is traversed by public footpaths which mean the location is currently an amenity of open space, and is visually attractive within the village. The London Road site has fewer trees, no existing footpath access and offers little visual amenity currently.

Overall, there seems to be less objection to the site at London Road, however, the emerging Kelvedon Neighbourhood Plan needs to be taken into account when determining the type of development, amenities and traffic solutions for all proposed development within the parish.

Traffic, road congestion, rail capacity and parking are the major sources of concern with any development within Kelvedon and Feering and the need for the A12 to be improved with four way junctions is imperative to any of the proposed sites being successful. The impact on the two villages from increased traffic and parking problems could be very serious, especially as Kelvedon High Street is an old, fairly narrow road full of listed buildings, in a conservation area. The Parish Council would like to see that investigations and solutions are forthcoming with regard to the A12, local roads, congestion and parking, before development is sanctioned.

82/16-17 High Street – Traffic consultation

It was proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan group engage an independent Traffic Management Consultant to look at the whole of Kelvedon's roads, parking and other traffic issues and provide models of different solutions. This will enable the Neighbourhood Plan to be able to put forward viable solutions which are backed up by a professional report. It was Proposed Cllr Humpington, Seconded Cllr Buttery and unanimously agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan group obtain and come back to the Parish Council with quotations for this service.

83/16-17 High Street Car Park – refund policy

A permit holder recently requested a refund of the remainder of her High Street Car Park permit, as she was no longer to be employed in the village. The permit states that it is non-refundable. However, the permit holder pointed out that these terms and conditions were not advised before she entered into the contract (i.e. before the permit was paid for and issued). The Parish Council discussed the request and it was Proposed Cllr Humpington, Seconded Cllr Buttery and unanimously agreed that the system was not correct and the refund of the remainder would be made, subject to a £25 administration fee.

It was further agreed that an application form would be drawn up setting out the terms and conditions for car park permits, to be returned completed, signed and with payment.

84/16-17 Bellingham Place Car Park – white lining project

The white lines and bay numbers at the Bellingham Place Car Park have almost entirely faded. It was Proposed Cllr Humpington, Seconded Cllr Buttery and unanimously agreed that these should be re-done. Cllr Pilbeam has arranged for white-lining equipment and paint to be purchased so this can be undertaken.

The Clerk will arrange for letters to be sent to the permit holders giving notice of the date and providing temporary permits for the High Street car park for the duration of the works. It is expected that this work will take place in August.

85/16-17 New electricity contract – office & pavilion

The fixed term contract with E-On has come to an end. It was Proposed Cllr Buttery, Seconded Cllr Humpington and unanimously agreed that a new contract needs to be looked at and comparisons done with other companies. Therefore, the Parish Council will move onto a variable contract with E-On until a decision is made.

86/16-17 Quotation for grass cutting/strimming/spraying on Recreation Ground

The areas of the recreation ground backing onto Easterford Road needs some attention, as the vegetation around the edges is encroaching on the field and onto the gardens behind. The trees in this area also need trimming and the dividing hedge also needs cutting.

A quotation was received from D W Maintenance, for £480, to do the remedial work necessary to bring the area back to a maintainable level, which would be on top of their current contract to cut the grass on the field. It was Proposed Cllr Buttery, Seconded Cllr Hooper and unanimously agreed to accept this quote and the Clerk will arrange for the work to be carried out, after the nesting season.