

SANDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Parish Council Meeting** held at the **Howe Green Reformed Church** on **Monday 12th February 2024** commencing at 7.15 pm



PRESENT: Councillors:

- Dee Hyatt
- Martin Cross
- Cedric Calmeyer
- Gary Nicholls
- Darren Chaplin
- Charlotte Lyons
- Alan Kalbfell
- James Colbeck

In attendance: Clerk, one member of the public.

ACTION

010224 Apologies for absence – City Cllr Julia Jeapes

020224 Declarations of interest – None declared.

030224 Public participation session. – A member of the public updated the meeting about the request to bring back cricket to the sports ground.

040224 The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 8th January 2024 were approved. Cllr Hyatt then signed the minutes at the meeting.

050224 City Cllr update. Clerk read out the following points submitted by City Cllr Julia Jeapes in her absence:

The three local city cllrs had held a successful surgery at Danbury Sports Club 13th Jan. All three would like to hold such surgeries in Sandon in the future.

The recent request for a bus stop at Alexander Mews is being progressed with ECC. Julia is still chasing up the two outstanding LHP requests from ourselves.

There is an issue with the portakabins recently put up at Bridge Farm Clarity Independent School.

She has been vigorously chasing through our's, and our residents', concerns over the recent warehouse application.

The Redrow development off Molrams Lane is being delayed due to disagreements over the building styles and estate design.

060224 Clerk's Report. Summary of monies spent on grass cutting to follow.

Clerk

070224 Finance

(a) The following payments were tabled and approved.

sub total employee costs	£904.72
TalkTalk	£21.19
Andrew Eng maintenance	£272.90
Cedric Calmeyer	£79.00
Grasshopper	£87.60
EALC	£228.00
Bin shop	£222.49

(b) The budget to January end was presented.

(c) No need for a bank transfer this month as our precept will be received in April.

080224 Planning:

23/01930/OUT. Land North And East Of The A12 East Of Southend Road.

Outline application with all matters reserved for the commercial development of up to 120,000sqm of logistics/warehousing development (Use class B8 with ancillary offices) along with servicing and infrastructure including new site accesses, internal roads and footpaths, landscaping including earthworks to create development platforms and bunds, drainage features and other associated works. PLEASE SEE APPENDIX ONE FOLLOWING THESE MINUTES

24/00086/FUL. Ridgeway, East Hanningfield Road. Proposed detached garage to front plot. Sandon Parish Council considers the intended detached double garage in the front of the property is too domineering in this highly visible position. The Sandon Neighbourhood Plan states in Chapter 6.34 New development should have due regard to the density, scale, layout, and appearance of the surrounding area. It will be fully visible by its neighbours, The Chilterns and Dunbar, and does not blend in with the character of the surroundings.

The pictures are misleading as they do not show what is actually on the site at this present time. We cannot see in the documents the intended purpose of the second floor. In drawing P03 it shows two cars but no staircase to the upper floor, we therefore feel the height of the building is unnecessary.

We feel this application should be refused

090224 Current Issues.

(a) Maintenance – Clerk to look into the P.C. having its own trade waste litter bin. Meeting agreed the quote of £81.18 for two office mats. Cllr Calmeyer to look into the clearance of leaves from the Howe Green bus stop.

Clerk
Clerk
Cllr Calmeyer

(b) Conservation and sustainability – Cllr Chaplin to liaise with the Village Wildlife Champion with regards to next steps. Clerk to pass on the contact details of the Hatfield Peverel Wildlife Champion.

Cllr Chaplin
Clerk

(c) Allotments – Meeting noted that plot 7 may be vacated from April.

<p>(d) Community Centre – Metro Bank head office are still considering the request for setting up the bank account. Once agreement has been received, the Clerk to register the CIO with the Charities Commission.</p>	Clerk
<p>Cllr Cross temporarily left the meeting</p>	
<p>(e) Sports Club – Cllr Chaplin reported back that the initial request for cricket on the sports ground would be putting too much stress on existing usage. The cricket club will come back with a more modest proposal.</p>	
<p>(f) Village Hall – Next meeting 19th Feb. Meeting recognised their demand that their trade waste bin be not used by our litter picker.</p>	
<p>(g) PCC – Meeting agreed the Friends of St Andrews grant request form of £1,000. This will be used to repair the church roof. It was noted that Rev Brown’s last service before retirement will be 2nd June.</p>	All
<p>(h) The Warehouse Group – The key dates to note are 22nd March for comments to be received from residents/consultees and 19th April when the plan will be determined by CCC. The next internal warehouse group’s meeting will be 15th February. The current plan is to hold another public meeting 21st March at Howe Green Reformed Church, and 4th April at Sandon Village Hall. Cllr Hyatt to check with the group as these dates do not align with the last date for public comments.</p>	Cllr Hyatt
<p>(i) The Annual Assembly 11th April - The meeting agreed an agenda and potential presenters. Clerk to send out invites.</p>	Clerk
<p>(j) Hammonds Farm meeting 12th Jan. – Cllr Hyatt gave feedback from the event. We now need to wait to see whether it will be included in the Local Plan.</p>	
<p>(k) Cllr Code of Conduct – The revised Code of Conduct was agreed.</p>	Clerk
<p>(l) Future of the Topics – Cllr Calmeyer put forward the idea of revamping the Topics. To be discussed at more depth at future meetings</p>	All
<p>(m)W.I. request for £300 – The formal grant for monies to go towards the erection of a bench has now come through. Clerk to progress</p>	Clerk
<p>(n) Redrow Homes meeting – They would like to meet up with the P.C. and the NDP group. Clerk to arrange two meetings, one for March’s P.C. meeting, the other for the Annual Assembly.</p>	Clerk
<p>(o) Heritage Open days 6th to 15th Sept – Cllr’s Calmeyer and Chaplin to progress with the church.</p>	Cllr’s Chaplin & Calmeyer
<p>(p) Cllr training – Cllr Lyons updated meeting with her recent cllr training. Meeting noted her request to go on the Protection of Commons, Greens and Open Spaces course, the Public Rights of Way course, and the Understanding Annual Meeting course.</p>	Clerk

(q) Review of the Equal Opportunity policy and Dealing with Press and Media policy – Both were agreed as still valid

(r) Sandon Crown's request to use the green 24th and 25th Aug. – Meeting agreed to their request as long as the grass was not wet, and that they controlled the parking which led to the road being obstructed at last year's event.

Cllr Cross returned to the meeting

(s) Spam emails – Cllr Colbeck warned that any attachments linked to unknown emails should not be clicked on.

100224 Correspondence received and action required – Meeting thanked Cllr Cross for his hedge clipping work on Southend Road as requested by a resident. The resident is most grateful as he can now get to the bus stop unhindered.

110224 Items of report and potential matters for future agendas – Cllr Chaplin announced that this year's Open Gardens event will not be happening

120224 Items for the Spring Topics – All to note that articles need to be with the clerk 1st March.

Meeting closed at 9:21 p.m.

The next meeting will be held Monday 11th March 2024 at St Andrews Church Hall starting at 7.15pm.

APPENDIX ONE 23/01930/OUT Warehouses in Sandon

Land owned by representatives of Bretts Aggregates

Comments on the documents are in highlighted text:

THIS DEVELOPMENT IS NOT IN THE LOCAL PLAN! Should not even be considered!

Environmental Assessment

3 pillboxes and 6 electricity pylons on site

Medium to high potential for bats roosting on 43 trees within the site plus within the pillboxes. Rare

Nattheusius' pipistrelle found, and hedgerows show frequent activity of bats

7 ponds onsite and 13 in vicinity with high potential for great crested newts as found on the Quarry site next door.

Otter recorded in 2008 and highly likely they use the Sandon Brook, as are water voles

7 endangered Red listed birds were seen on site in 2023

Brown Hare, harvest mice and hedgehogs are likely on site and on the Species of Principal importance list

The number of endangered red listed birds and species of principal importance should stop this development.

Transport

1.9 states the Howe Green interchange will have traffic lights on all crossings.

3.2.3 Commends direct links to ports of London Gateway and Tilbury.

Cycle and Public rights of Way looked at, plus accidents.

4.3.4 Looking at enhancing the bus service 3 to provide additional journeys for site workers. **No circular route within the sites for the bus to enter and leave – not feasible**

5.2.7 states most HGV journeys will be via A12 and A130.

6.1.1 Howe Green Interchange considered a constraint to the development and would require major improvements to improve capacity. **ECC have currently no proposals to improve this junction.**

6.1.20 Proposed to widen entrance to Southend Road off roundabout, then widen road at entrance to the Southern site.

7.4 Northern parcel of land will be accessed via a new signalised junction on A1114.

Redesign of Interchange giving A130 to A1114 new access lane.

ECC letter points out the traffic lights at entrance to Northern site are too close to the roundabout and unlikely to be accepted. Electricity lines at entrance will need to be relocated or diverted underground.

Highways have concerns about the proposed junction to Southern site, it appears to be too narrow to accommodate 2 way in and out traffic. Suggested right turn only from site is likely to be ignored if driver wishes to travel via Howe Green. They will all ignore it if the traffic is backed up from the roundabout!!

No matter what the changes to the roundabout which will cause huge disruption, the sheer volume of traffic at this point will continue to be an issue. There is a big problem in the area when they close the A130 and all the traffic comes down Southend Road, which is a regular occurrence, or there is an accident on the A12.

The existing junction at Howe Green is already under pressure and does not have the capacity to accommodate the proposed development. There is insufficient land available to provide the necessary mitigation/junction improvements that would be needed. In addition, the site is remote from existing settlements and therefore options for sustainable transport are limited.

Design Access Document

States 46.85 hectares of Greenfield site.

Flood risk high. Need to raise ground by 150m in places and Flood Risk Plan required.

3.71 Plans to divert bus routes through the sites? The road plan does not show a circular route for buses?

Therefore not practical

3.8 states the Proposed Development will contribute to health and well being? **Cannot fathom how!**

Warehouse Design similar to that at Junction 19 on A12 Springfield Business Park and considered a Landmark feature to the landscape?

5.5 states mixture of B8 logistics including warehouses, ancillary offices, and related facilities? **Does this mean: Petrol station (no local fuel stops available to huge lorries!) Food outlets for lorry drivers and staff? (no local facilities close by) Overnight rest areas? Security? Footpath looks as if it is being re-routed through the Northern site around one of the warehouses? Security?**

5.13 Access to Northern site via A1114 dual carriageway and new traffic lights? **Very close to the Howe Green Interchange traffic lights, and can see traffic backed up across the entrance?**

Access to Southern site via Southend Road, single carriageway which will be widened to 7.3 **but totally unacceptable in this residential narrow roadway often blocked by traffic at rush hour?**

Statement of Engagement

3.9 Pre-application consultation will be carried out before a planning application is made usually by developers. **Surely this should have been carried out, even for an Outline Planning application?**

Planning Statement

Development can be refused if unacceptable impact on the Highway safety, and cumulative impact on the road network. **This is definitely going to cause a huge impact on our roads, where we already have regular crashes especially on the roundabout, can only get worse.**

5.27 Says should take into account effect of pollution on health, living conditions, noise and light pollution and air quality. **With 24/7 lorry movements this is bound to affect the local residents health, and the noise and lighting will impact on their living conditions. A huge concern. We have wide open spaces now, the sites will become huge commercial areas seen from everywhere which will affect our living conditions, with pollution, noise, light and air quality.**

Acoustics

Lots of jargon here – minimise impact, prevent unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution **wherever possible ? Does not give us confidence they will prevent impact.**

Potential impact listed during build on bats especially, which is not acceptable.

Lighting

For 120,000 sqm of warehouse development. **Huge site, serious lighting required. Bound to have an adverse effect on animals, insects, aquatic life in Sandon Brook and ponds and the local residents. Night sky glow, light spill, will all have an impact on residents and animal life. Serious concerns for those using the Sandon Brook as a wildlife corridor, especially the bats.**

Logistics (Landscape and visual effects)

Access according to 1.8.2 to Northern site via A1114 with traffic lights. Access to Southern site via the A130 Rettendon Bypass? **No idea how? Perhaps they are hiding the fact the road access is via the very narrow Southend Road at Howe Green, with single lane at the proposed entrance to the site.**

4.2.3 Visual Receptors classed as Medium to High for the whole area. **This means it will have a huge visual impact on our area. Will damage the rural atmosphere of Sandon Parish.**

4.3.28 Agrees residents and walkers on Sandon Bridleway will have views of the upper parts of the Warehouses (plus all the lighting attached), and residents and drivers will have views of the Northern site. **No amount of screening will hide any of the warehouses from the general public and residents.**

Maximum Building Heights

41 to 56 metres above sea level! Very unhelpful. **Believe 14 to 25 metres actual, which is very high.**

Heritage

Ancient hoard of 2,000 year old gold found in Great Baddow in 2021 by illegal metal detectors, **Perhaps the Northern Site needs a full Archaeological Survey.**

Sandon Hall Farm on Sandon Bridleway is a listed building with protected views. No commercial development should be permitted in its vicinity.

In the Historic Character Assessment in the adopted Local Plan the area F12 East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland is also of archaeological sensitivity.

Travel Plan

Agree the present bus/rail options are poor and sites may have to provide a transport service for the 1200 estimated staff who will arrive by their own personal transport which will mean many more cars on the local roads to add to all the lorries. They are looking to encourage, walking and cycling and car sharing, **but walking and cycling on local roads is highly dangerous and car sharing is proven to not work in general. No viable Plan in place.**

Flood Risk/Drainage Strategy/Pollution

There is no flood risk apparently from Surface water. They plan 4.3.8 to direct any surface water to Sandon Brook. **However, we know that when Sandon Brook is in full flood it will not be able to cope with any further water? Also surface water will contain contaminants which will go straight into the river system?**

There is a 25 to 50% flood risk from groundwater, and it is recommended that all ground floors are 150mm above ground level to cope. 4.6.5 states the site is in Flood Alert/Warning Area.

There are no public sewers therefore private treatment plants will be needed with the **treated effluent being discharged into Sandon Brook another possibility for contaminants to go straight into the river system!**

Flood risk very high with added pressure to the system.

Economics

Reasons for warehouses – excellent links via A12 major ports and cities. Close to Stanstead airport. Excellent recruitment opportunities.

However, do we really need another warehouse site? There is already Springfield Business Park due to be completed in 2/3 years, and the Sandon Business Centre next to the Sandon Park & Ride agreed. There is space in the sites at Boreham, Grays, Brentwood, Southend, Leigh on Sea. Witham, Colchester, Marks Tey and Great Notley.

There is no identified need for employment in the area.

Design and Access

Design to be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, a strong sense of place.

The site at present is rural, an active farmland with country footpaths. This will be gone forever! This was a buffer zone between Sandon and Great Baddow/Chelmsford, which will be eradicated. Habitats will be lost. Ancient trees removed and replacement new trees planted elsewhere. Air quality will drop following the build, Noise will be increased, light pollution a given. How can warehouses be called attractive? There are 3 site design choices but No.3 shown throughout this application. No decision on type of energy to be used to heat the offices, why not?

Concerns that the proposal is for very large buildings in the landscape, which would be harmful to the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Outline plan is unacceptable as lacking in vital information and description. How can a decision be made on such sketchy information?

Arboriculture Impact

Plan to protect all retained trees after the build. Removing 10 high quality trees (Cat A) 2 moderate quality trees (CatB) **A further assessment needed if full planning agreed.**

Air Quality

The overall decision is that the operational air quality effects of the development are 'not significant'! **Really!**

Additional traffic, heavy diesel vehicles, against the open airy farmland?

Even taking into account the move away from petrol and diesel to electric, this will not help the community with the air quality in the near or foreseeable future.

Guidelines say that in vicinity of residential properties, avoid polluting emissions, noise, light, smell, fumes, vibrations, or other issues. All of these will be present on a warehouse site. They should be built in an industrial area, not residential and open farmland.

Agricultural Land Classification

Classed as 3a/3b Good to moderate quality agricultural land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of arable crops. **So no problem with the land for agriculture. Why are we using it to build Warehouses?**

Minerals

Part of the site falls within a minerals consultation area therefore we would need to consult ECC Minerals Authority on the application. ECC state:

‘We are now proposing to extend the Plan to 2040 covering a 15-year period from 2025. New sites will be needed to meet the forecasted demand for aggregates (sand and gravel) over this period. Doing so will ensure that the Plan is robust and can help maintain a ‘steady and adequate’ supply of aggregates and meet the relevant ‘tests of soundness’ as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.’

Therefore the minerals under this land are definitely a valuable resource.

Gravel extraction is a valuable resource, why therefore are they being allowed to sell this valuable mineral rich land off for warehousing when there are several very large warehousing sites in the vicinity already? There is so much building anticipated in the future, surely we need to protect this resource.

In the Landscape Character Assessment which forms part of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan, it highlights the designation of this landscape and its sensitivities to change. The site falls within the most northern tip of the landscape designation known as ‘F 12 East Hanningfield Wooded Farmland! This landscape therefore needs strong protection, not commercial buildings.

18SLAA17 Land North Of The A12 East Of Southend Road, Great Baddow CFS73, 21SHELAA68 11.034 189 Amber GF Site scores poorly against criteria, is contrary to local policy, and faces moderate constraints that would require mitigation. As this site has scored poorly in the SHELAA report, and does not appear to have taken into account the F12 status why is it being considered?

Area of Outstanding Beauty We understand there has been an application for an AOB on Hammonds Farm which will have an impact on this development.

Local Plan

STRATEGIC POLICY S1 – SPATIAL PRINCIPLES

The Council will require all new development to accord with the following Spatial Principles where relevant:

- Optimise the use of suitable previously developed land for development
- Continue the renewal of Chelmsford City Centre and its Urban Area
- Locate development at well connected and sustainable locations
- Locate development to avoid or manage flood risk
- **Protect the Green Belt Respect the character and appearance of landscapes and the built environment, and preserve or enhance the historic environment and biodiversity**
- **Focus development at the higher order settlements outside the Green Belt and respect the existing development pattern and hierarchy of other settlements**
- **Ensure development is deliverable**
- **Ensure development is served by necessary infrastructure**
- **Utilise existing and planned infrastructure effectively.**

This type of development should be on brownfield sites not on agricultural useful land. The sites do not have good connections by public services to local towns or stations. This development will take away the green buffer between Sandon and Great Baddow/Chelmsford.

STRATEGIC POLICY S11 – THE ROLE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

When determining planning applications, **the Council will carefully balance the requirement for new development within the countryside to meet identified development needs in accordance with the Spatial Strategy, and to support thriving rural communities whilst ensuring that development does not have an adverse impact on the different roles and**

character of the countryside. All new development within the countryside will be considered within this context and against the specific planning objectives for each of the following areas:

- A) Green Belt The openness and permanence of the Green Belt will be protected and opportunities for its beneficial use will be supported where consistent with the purposes of the Green Belt. Inappropriate development will not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- B) Green Wedge The Green Wedge has an identified intrinsic character and beauty and is a multi-faceted distinctive landscape providing important open green networks, which have been instrumental in shaping the City's growth, character and appearance. **These networks prevent urban sprawl and settlement coalescence and provide for wildlife, flood storage capacity, leisure and recreation, and travel by cycling and walking, which allows for good public access which will be further improved through the requirements of development allocated in the Local Plan. Development which materially harms the role, function and intrinsic character and beauty of the Green Wedge will not be approved.**
- C) Rural Area The countryside outside of the Urban Areas and Defined Settlements, not within the Green Belt, is designated as the Rural Area. **The intrinsic character and beauty of the Rural Area outside of the Green Belt, and not designated as the Green Wedge, will be recognised, assessed and development will be permitted where it would not adversely impact on its identified character and beauty. The relevant Development Management Policies set out what development is appropriate in each of the above areas and provide detailed criteria by which development proposals will be assessed.**

POLICY DM8 – NEW BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES IN THE RURAL AREA

- A) New buildings and structures Planning permission will be granted for new buildings and structures in the Rural Area **where the development will not adversely impact on the identified intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside:**

None of the examples match our development with Warehousing, therefore should not be permitted! The warehouses will definitely have an adverse impact on the character and beauty of the countryside by virtue of its size, scale, massing and spread compared with the existing.

Sandon Neighbourhood Plan Policy H1

- Development proposals will be supported which
- i. **Demonstrate how the proposal safeguards the open character of the setting of Sandon village;** and
- ii. **Maintain the separate identity of Sandon Village and do not, individually or cumulatively, result in coalescence with neighbouring settlements;** and
- iii. **Where possible, make use of previously developed land and existing buildings;** and
- iv. **are of a scale and visual appearance which will not detrimentally impact upon the rural character and appearance of Sandon Parish.**
- B. Proposals for major development (as defined in the Glossary of the NPPF) in the setting of Sandon Village, see Map 3, will need to be accompanied by a visual impact assessment that clearly indicates the impact of development on the character and appearance of Sandon village and the surrounding countryside, and which shows how this will be mitigated

This development does not safeguard the open character of the area. Nor the separate identity of Sandon Village. The scale and visual appearance will have a detrimental impact on the rural character and appearance of Sandon Parish

For all the highlighted reasons above and the fact that this will greatly devalue our area, Sandon Parish Council request the Outline Planning application is refused.