

Thurlestone Parish Council

Minutes of the special meeting of the Council, which was held in the Parish Hall, Thurlestone on Thursday 20th February 2020 at 7.30pm for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Present: Councillors Rhymes (Chair), Crowther, Munn, Marshall, Mitchelmore, Hurrell

Apologies: Councillor Williams

In Attendance: Helen Nathanson (Parish Clerk), District Councillors Pearce and Long, 4 members of the public

1. To receive apologies.

Councillor Williams gave her apologies and these were accepted.

2. To receive any amendments necessary to Members' Registers of Interests.

There were no amendments.

3. To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council site meeting on Tuesday 11th February 2020.

The Minutes were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed.

4. Planning

The following planning applications were considered

0227/20/FUL The Bantham Estate

Erection of new Estate & Harbour office; and granting of temporary 18 month consent for continued use of land for siting of portacabins and associated parking of vehicles for use as temporary estate office

Bantham Estate Yard, Bantham

Councillors had conducted a site visit to the proposed site of the new office on the morning of 20th February and notes of that meeting are attached.

The application was discussed in detail and the following points were made:

All agreed that discussion of the application needed to be based on the relevant headings within the NP.

Local Economy: The NP supports new business premises provided all the other policies in the Plan are met. The office is required to serve a dual function – the day-to-day administration of the Estate and the management of the beach and harbour -and needs to be close to its centre of operations. It was accepted that the NPPF and JLP permit development outside a settlement in the AONB, Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast provided it requires a coastal location and is limited in scale and extent. One councillor considered that existing buildings should be used instead of a new one but the majority were of the opinion that there are no existing facilities that are fit for purpose, in particular that Coronation Boathouse is not big enough or practical, given that the ground floor floods and a new access would be necessary. A comment was made that, for the diverse activities that the Bantham Estate has, and given the requirements of modern office buildings, the proposed size seems reasonable.

Residential amenity: The majority of councillors considered that the proposed building is not overbearing and does not have a dominant impact on the neighbouring properties. The Listed cottages are separated from the site by vegetation and the site is presently used for storage. They agreed that effort had gone into trying to conceal the building and, although some walkers may see it from the footpath above, this would be minimal.

Design

The style of the building is contemporary and was considered to be interesting and unobtrusive in its surroundings. In terms of scale, it is contained within the existing Estate yard and does not extend beyond the existing pay hut/gatehouse. This is critical given the proximity of the Ancient Monument, Undeveloped and Heritage Coast statuses. The height of the building is only 4.8m above the existing ground level of the yard which has been achieved by digging down and creating a subterranean, lower ground level. Having reviewed all the measurements on and off site, councillors considered that, although a few amendments could be made such as shaving a metre or so off the reception and having a single gender neutral WC, this alone would not be a credible reason to object to this application.

The building is set back from the road and the existing stone wall which extends along the entire northern boundary of the site is being retained. The design of the building is contemporary and, given that Bantham has a mixture of architecture and building materials, this is not inappropriate. Other efforts have been made to ensure it is sympathetic to its surroundings by using natural building materials (local stone), which are encouraged in the NP, and the roof is zinc in order to minimise the height of the building. Although there had been some objection to the use of zinc, it is considered to be an appropriate material for a coastal location. The design was compared to that of the school, which also has a modern feel and worked well.

Dark skies – floor to ceiling glass is mainly confined to the offices on the N elevation overlooking the Estuary and on the W elevation at the entrance of the building – and not unreasonably extensive. A condition can be applied.

Natural environment. The 43-page Landscape Visual Assessment Impact Assessment deals with mitigation and new landscape planting. All agreed that it will be good when the portacabins on the compound are removed.

Historic environment – a pre-commencement written scheme of investigation/proximity to AM should be conditioned.

Traffic and Transport - according to the traffic survey undertaken on last year's August Bank Holiday, the impact on traffic was minimal and there is parking on the site (2 disabled parking bays) and on the adjoining land (albeit informal and mainly for local residents) which potentially needs regularising. It was confirmed that the back covered area is not going to be an entrance.

Councillors also supported the granting of the temporary consent for continued use of land for portacabins and parking as a temporary Estate office, provided the land is returned to farmland.

A vote was taken and the decision was in favour of supporting the application by 5 votes to 1.

The Parish Council supported the application as follows:

For the avoidance of doubt, this is the first time that Councillors have seen this proposal. There has been no pre-application meeting with the Parish Council and no community meeting save for an informal meeting with local residents held by the applicant and by invite only.

The Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan supports proposals for new business premises provided other policies are met (NP Policy 8.1). Councillors accepted that a new office is needed to serve the Estate and that it should be located close to their centre of operations, the beach and the estuary. The existing office is too small and not 'fit for purpose' and the nearby estate-owned Coronation Boathouse was not considered a practical alternative option as the ground floor floods and a new access would be necessary.

Under the NPPF and JLP development is permitted adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and within the AONB, Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast, if it requires a coastal location and is limited in scale and extent.

Following their site visit, Councillors considered the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties as it is located on the Estate yard presently used for storage, separated from the village by vegetation and set back from the road and bordered by an old stone wall (NP Policy TP1.1). Although they felt that the building could be smaller, measures had been taken to limit its scale and massing by creating a split-level design and digging down to create a subterranean lower ground level; the zinc roof has been used to minimise the height and the local natural stone, textured render and larch boarding were considered appropriate building materials (NP Policy TP1.2). In terms of the visual impact of the building upon the AONB and the landscape character of the area, this proposal had been subject to detailed assessment and mitigated by new landscape planting along the southern boundary and partial screening by existing shrubbery (NP Policies TP1.5 and TP22.1).

Councillors also supported the granting of temporary 18 month consent for continued use of land for siting of portacabins and associated parking of vehicles for use as a temporary estate office, provided that a condition is imposed to ensure the farmland is restored to its original condition. Conditions are also requested to secure (1) a pre-commencement written scheme of investigation due to its proximity to the Ancient Monument, (2) the retention of the existing stone wall and vegetation bordering the northern boundary of the site, (3) to implement the new landscape planting along the southern boundary of the site and the findings of the Green Ecology Report dated January 2020, and (4) to address the potential for any light nuisance due to the sensitive location of the proposal within the AONB.

1720/19/FUL Mr T Hassell - Thurlestone Estates Ltd

**Proposed erection of 10 self-contained holiday lets, the re-siting of the Badminton Court and the creation of an additional restaurant and associated parking and landscaping
Thurlestone Hotel, Eddystone Road, Thurlestone, TQ7 3NN**

Councillors had carried out a site visit on 11th February and notes of that meeting are attached.

The Parish Clerk read out letters of objection from residents which had been received via email.

Councillors discussed the application and the following points were made:

Local Economy: The NP supports tourism and the PC accepted the hotel's argument that the business needs to evolve to keep pace with market trends and changing needs by offering self-contained accommodation for larger families and multi-generational occupancy. However, this application marks a substantial expansion of the hotel, with the addition of a further 30 bedrooms to its existing 65 rooms and 12 suites.

The NP policy that supports the expansion of tourism is based on the community's vision that all development should be 'proportionate' given the sensitive location within the South Devon AONB. The concern is that the scale of this proposal in this particular location is too large, notwithstanding

it is the hotel's long-term strategy to reduce the number of bedrooms in the hotel. It was felt that 6 units would be more reasonable and that the design could be improved if there were fewer to fit on the site.

Design: The design of the buildings was generally not liked and compared with blocks of flats or university halls of residence. Although one councillor felt that effort had been made to screen and soften the appearance, it was not generally considered to be locally distinctive or enhancing the AONB. Some councillors considered that this did not matter because the buildings cannot be seen but there was disagreement about this and some felt that they would be highly visible, especially in the winter. It was also considered that the new leisure complex, with the restaurant on top, will be highly visible even from the coastal path.

Concerns were expressed about the potential noise element coming from all the terraces because people will be on holiday and wanting to have a good time; the units are next to a residential area in a bowl from which the sound will carry. There is also an issue around light spill from the many windows and terraces.

Longer term, there is concern that while it may be possible to fill the units with families in the summer months, it is less certain that it will be able to do so in term-time and over the winter. If so, and the venture proves unviable, then the hotel may have no alternative but to sell the units off on the open market (as has happened elsewhere in the South West). Being already classified as C3 residential dwellings, this would mean they may well be able to circumvent the NP policy to ensure they are occupied by permanent residents and become second homes. Councillors were very concerned about this and wanted a legally binding agreement to ensure that this could not happen. The applicant has stated that it is not the intention to sell off the units but all agreed that we have to look at the future possibility.

A vote was taken and the decision was in favour of supporting the application by 4 votes to 2.

The Parish Council supported the application as follows:

The Council supported the application subject to the description of the application being amended to *"Proposed erection of hotel guest accommodation comprising 10 self-contained holiday lets, the re-siting of the Badminton Court and the creation of an additional restaurant and associated parking and landscaping"* and to a condition being imposed *"to ensure the lets would be occupied as hotel guest accommodation and not as market dwellings."* The Thurlestone Hotel is the largest business and employer in the parish and Councillors accepted the hotel's case that the business needs to respond to changing market trends and demand by offering self-contained family accommodation. Policy TP9 of the Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan (NP) supports such expansion and the future sustainability of the hotel to the parish is paramount. Councillors were, however, concerned about the scale and design of the proposed development and expressed their preference for a reduced number of lets and more sympathetic design (NP Policy TP1.2). Conditions are requested to address the potential for any noise and/or light nuisance due to the proposal's sensitive location within Thurlestone village and the South Devon AONB.

5. To note the date of the next Council Meeting: Monday 2nd March 2020 at 7.30pm.

This was noted and the meeting ended at 8.15pm.

Councillor Rhymes
Chairman

Thurlestone Parish Council

Notes of the site meeting of the Council, which was held at Bantham Estate Yard, Bantham, on Thursday 20th February 2020 at 9.00am for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Present: Councillors Rhymes (Chair), Mitchelmore, Munn, Marshall, Hurrell, Williams and Crowther
In Attendance: Helen Nathanson (Parish Clerk), District Councillor Long and Ryan Hooper (Bantham Estate Manager)

1. To receive apologies.

Councillor Williams gave her apologies and these were accepted.

2. To receive any amendments necessary to Members' Registers of Interests.

There were no amendments.

3. To consider the following planning application:

0227/20/FUL The Bantham Estate

Erection of new Estate & Harbour office; and granting of temporary 18 month consent for continued use of land for siting of portacabins and associated parking of vehicles for use as temporary estate office

Bantham Estate Yard, Bantham

Councillors had agreed at the parish council meeting on 3rd February 2020 to hold a site meeting and to discuss this application in more detail before submitting a response by the statutory deadline (28th February 2020).

The purpose of the meeting was a fact-finding exercise. Councillors met Mr Hooper (RH) in one of the portacabins to discuss the following points:

Employment: The Estate currently employs 10 staff, including RH and 3 gamekeepers. There are a further 5 part-time gatekeepers (on rotation) plus trades, builders etc working there. RH deals with the day-to-day administration of the Estate and is also the harbourmaster. He spends at least 80% of his time in the office. The Estate's role is evolving and it has recently taken on the Avon patrol and running the ferry to and from Bigbury. There was some discussion about funding for the patrol and the ferry. A question was also asked about whether the Bantham Estate still came under Great Tew and RH said Bantham was now almost self-sufficient. Accounts are still dealt with by Great Tew but are to be dealt with by Bantham.

Siting: The Estate want the Estate Office to be in the same location as the Harbour Office for practical reasons. They need welfare facilities that meet Health & Safety requirements. Coronation Boathouse is not practical - too small and the ground floor floods. Councillors were shown a photograph of the recently flooded ground floor.

Residential amenity: The owner of the upstairs flat at Whiddons is the only resident whose amenity may be affected and he was consulted. His view (in winter) may be affected (not a planning consideration) but he is happy that the existing Estate Yard will be tidied up.

Design: Every effort was made to ensure the building would be low profile. The palette of materials could be used was limited by the design.

Scale: Questions were asked about the size of the reception area and if the building was going to be used to entertain shooters. RH said that they needed a waiting area for visitors and was emphatic that the building was not going to be used for the shoot.

Moorings: There have been 20 new moorings and there are now 127 moorings in total. Any need for additional parking for boat owners does not affect this application or vice versa. The moorings have been realigned because they were previously chaotic and needed to be organised. *[More people are using the river for swimming and paddle boarding]*

Councillors then walked around the site with RH to consider the location of the proposed building and measured its footprint. RH confirmed that the old wall bordering the northern boundary would be retained.

4. To note the date of the Special Council Meeting to decide the above application: Thursday 20th February 2020 at 7.30pm in Thurlestone Parish Hall.

Councillor Rhymes
Chairman

Thurlestone Parish Council

Notes of the site meeting of the Council, which was held at the Thurlestone Hotel on Tuesday 11th February 2020 at 9.00am for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Present: Councillors Rhymes (Chair), Mitchelmore, Munn, Marshall, Hurrell, Williams and Crowther
In Attendance: District Councillor Pearce, Tim Hassall (Estates Director), Matthew Grose (Thurlestone Hotel), Jon Capel (Harrison Sutton Partnership), Derek Barton (agent) and one member of the public

1. To receive apologies.

There were no apologies.

2. To receive any amendments necessary to Members' Registers of Interests.

There were no amendments.

3. To consider the following planning application:

1720/19/FUL Mr T Hassell - Thurlestone Estates Ltd

Proposed erection of 10 self-contained holiday lets, the re-siting of the Badminton Court and the creation of an additional restaurant and associated parking and landscaping

Thurlestone Hotel, Eddystone Road, Thurlestone, TQ7 3NN

Councillors had agreed at the parish council meeting on 3rd February 2020 to hold a site meeting and to discuss this application in more detail before submitting a response by the statutory deadline (21st February 2020).

The purpose of the meeting was a fact-finding exercise. Councillors walked around the site and the following points arose:

Noise: The 10 self-contained lets have been grouped together and located close to the hotel in order to minimise noise disturbance.

Elevation: The 10 lets are unlikely to be much more than 2 metres higher, on average, than the existing badminton court building, which is being demolished. There was also discussion about the height of the new leisure complex and restaurant.

Staff: Up to 10 extra staff may be needed at the height of the season but they are likely to be local, so no additional staff accommodation would be required.

Design: The individual units have been designed for multi-generational occupancy (a growing trend) or for families to share. Hence, the sunrooms on the 3rd floor of units 2,3,5,6, 8 & 9 which provide for additional living space.

To reduce the massing, the overall scheme comprises a stepped elevation. Light spill has been reduced by recessing the windows and overhanging the lintels. Roofs are either zinc, which is considered well suited to the area, and green roofs to provide variation and break up the general vista.

The hotel has carried out its own studies that justify the number of units, whilst retaining the golf course.

Councillors then visited neighbouring premises, Toyes Orchard and nos 6 & 7 Old Rectory Gardens. The elevations of the proposed units and new leisure complex and restaurant were considered in the context of the location as a whole, loss of view not being a material planning consideration.

4. To note the date of the Special Council Meeting to decide the above application: Thursday 20th February 2020 at 7.30pm in Thurlestone Parish Hall.

Councillor Rhymes
Chairman