

Minutes of a meeting of the PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held in the Beech Suite, George Reynolds Centre, Crewkerne on Monday 10 July 2023 at 18.45.

**PRESENT:**

Cllrs. S. Ashton, M. Best, T. Bond (Chair), K. Head, D. Livesley, J. Morris, J. Nathan, A. Samuel, and D. Wakeman.

In attendance: Town Clerk K. Sheehan, Deputy Clerk E. Wilkins, Operations Manager A. Cross and approximately forty-five members of the public.

**OPEN FORUM**

Cllr. Bond asked if anyone present wished to speak about anything other than the Tilia Homes planning application. Three residents submitted a question regarding Tilia, and it was proposed that they speak when the application arose on the agenda, other residents were invited to raise any unanswered questions at that point if they wished.

01 **TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

23/24

Apologies were received from Cllrs. N Draycott, P. Maxwell, A Stuart (all personal).

02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

23/24

Cllrs. Ashton and Best declared an interest in the planning applications by virtue of being on the Somerset Council Planning Committee.

03 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

23/24

It was **AGREED** that the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee held on Monday 15 May 2023 be **APPROVED**.

04 **TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S UPDATE REPORT**

23/24

The Deputy Clerk reported that Wessex Water will be submitting a request for a five-day road diversion from 21 August 2023 to allow for a sewer repair. The works will involve a one-way diversion on Market Street, no right turn from Church Street or South Street, with vehicles diverted around Market Square. Comments from Cllrs. were welcomed. Wessex Water were already aware of the Fair taking place shortly afterward.

The Deputy Clerk reported a meeting with the organisers of the Crewkerne Open Gardens. They hope to make the 2024 event larger and to last longer, involving more groups and different areas in town, for example allotments. They are in the process of writing and submitting a report to Crewkerne Town Council to consider. They also hope to tie in the opening of the St Barts annual Christmas Tree Festival with the Lighting up event on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**TO CONSIDER PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

23/01295/REM Land South of Kithill, Crewkerne, Somerset  
Reserved Matters Application for the appearance, layout, landscaping and scale pursuant to the Outline Planning Permission 18/01737/OUT for 150 homes, public open space and local equipped area of play (Allowed on Appeal).

A resident expressed opposition to the new Tilia Homes application, highlighting that no concession has been made to the number of dwellings, or improvement made on the previous plans; and they wished to focus on the environmental impact of the development. They urged Tilia to listen to the Natural England recommendation that the local wildlife site be upgraded to a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) to protect wildlife; correct management of the land; and allow the public continued open access to the area. They highlighted that plans only show possible links to the footpath, and the footpath would be fenced preventing the public to freely roam the site. They objected to the removal of ancient hedgerows and established trees. The loss of an entire connecting hedge would mean there are no complete connecting hedges remaining impacting on wildlife, for example Dormice. They wished to highlight the existing pressure on wildlife resources, and that Tilia have only provided vague ideas on how to manage the land. They urged the application to be refused until they have specified what they intend to do with the land. Finally, linked to a previous petition, they urged Highways to carry out new observations on the impact of construction traffic on Crewkerne, and to rethink their previous decision to discharge the Construction Traffic Plan Route. It was stated that the use of Hermitage Street, Lang Road, Lyme Road and any associated streets would adversely affect the town, affecting public safety and putting health at risk, potentially causing damage to property, vehicles and road infrastructure. The resident urged complete refusal of the development of this area of natural beauty and importance, and the preservation of it for the environment, current residents and future generations.

A second resident questioned the legality of Tilia proposing to use Kithill Lane for sewage drainage, as Land Registry state that this is unregistered land, and therefore not under Tilia ownership. Residents in the area have maintained this in the past for the good of the community.

A third resident questioned the progress of two questions they posed at the Councillors Surgery in June 2023, when they asked if the Town Council could take legal advice on the Kithill CIEMM decision. The questions posed were does the CIEMM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) decision that the ecologist breached his code of conduct offer any possibility of a legal challenge to the outline consent on Kithill? If not, does the decision place any duty on Somerset Council as the local planning authority to press for new surveys and reports, following correct CIEMM guidelines, for this reserved matters application? The resident stated they had submitted the questions as requested and received a response, but had received no further updates, they then questioned if the Council had taken legal advice. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the barrister had been contacted on numerous occasions but that we had received no response as yet. The Deputy Clerk will continue to pursue information.

Cllr. Bond invited anyone with further questions to speak.

A resident asked, considering the current situation of people converting to the use of electric vehicles etc, has all the infrastructure and information from this site identified the power requirements needed. It was asked if Crewkerne can supply all the energy requirements for the current population as well as this new development. The Deputy Clerk was asked to investigate.

A resident asked about Cathole Bridge Road and the possibility of widening it that had been previously mentioned. The resident stated they felt this was not a possibility. They highlighted the type and amount of unsuitable traffic using the road, for example coaches. They feel that the lane is not suitable for additional traffic.

Cllr. Bond announced the end of public participation and invited Cllrs. to express their opinions, with the exception of Cllrs. Ashton and Best in light of a previous declaration of interest. The public were urged to attend the next relevant Somerset Council Planning Committee meeting and voice their opinions to the planning authority. A member of the public asked to be informed of the next meeting, and it was agreed that the Town Council would advertise it. Cllrs. then commented as follows:

Cllr. Wakeman expressed his continuing opposition to the application on many points, including overcrowding, roads, structure and so on.

Cllr. Head stated her opposition based on the fact the traffic survey was carried out during lockdown when the road was naturally quiet. Cathole Bridge Road is unsuitable and should be downgraded to a lane. No further information has been provided in this new application, and the use of Hermitage Street as construction access route is unacceptable.

Cllr. Morris concurred with the previous comments, agreeing that Hermitage Street is totally unsuitable for construction traffic.

Cllr. Nathan noted that Tilia had claimed to listen to previous objections and adjusted their plans accordingly, but not enough in her opinion. The proposed tandem parking will not work, forcing parking onto roads. The proximity with neighbours parking in tandem is problematic, and the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO) has expressed reservations about this. Visitor spaces are too spaced out across the site and delivery drivers will not use them, parking in the road instead. The scale of the houses is not in keeping with local houses, they are much smaller with smaller gardens. Cllr. Nathan highlighted that just because they have permission to build up to 150 houses it doesn't mean that they have to do so. More space is needed for people's wellbeing for the future, with more trees included in the plans.

Cllr. Samuel agreed with the previous comments. The layout and size of parking is problematic; the garages are too small and will become storage, with people parking in the road. The planned construction route is too narrow and needs readdressing. The environmental issues are extremely concerning with the destruction of hedgerows and removal of trees, destroying years of wildlife habitats.

Cllr. Livesley concurred and thanked the public for attending the meeting and encouraged them to attend the next Somerset Council planning meeting. He expressed his amazement at the revised insensitive application, and what Tilia expect the community to accept or tolerate. He urged the public to voice their opinions freely and often.

Cllr. Ashton underlined the importance of attending Somerset Council Planning Committee meetings. He highlighted how the power of numbers attending can affect the outcome of an application. He also mentioned the issue of improving/widening Cathole Bridge Road, and the concern that it might not happen subsequent to building due to a lack of enforcement.

Cllr. Nathan acknowledged the power of the people attending meetings. She invited people to please come along, and to speak if they could, and the Town Council would inform people of the date.

Cllr. Best urged the public to email members of the planning committee to express their opinions, as well as attending meetings.

Cllr. Bond expressed her view that few issues have been addressed by Tilia and those they have, are unsatisfactory. The original application was refused because of many issues such as density, layout, parking etc but they simply responded with the comment they have been given permission to build this number of houses. The permission was gained during Covid, and it was hoped that now they can see the constrained plot they would consider building less houses. They must see the impact it would have on the surrounding areas. For example, the three-storey block of flats is out of keeping for the area, this should be reduced to two-storey. The parking is still unacceptable and will require a great deal of cooperation between neighbours and is unlikely to work in practice. People would simply park on the road. They may have addressed the issue of visitor spaces reversing into the road at the development entrance, however, properties over road have tandem parking and so have to reverse into the road. Tilia suggest the use of thirty-five garages to store bicycles, turning them into storage rooms instead of parking spaces therefore losing spaces. The visitor spaces are too spread out, and delivery drivers will not use them. Various objections have been raised by various statutory consultees for example, the CPO, Somerset Council Ecologist, Fire Officer. It was highlighted that there is still time to make points regarding this application. The proposals to remove hedgerows, despite any mitigation proposals from Tilia, will not protect the communities of wildlife currently living in them, dormice for example. The distance between some houses is unacceptably close, some being 3m apart. It was noted that the fact they are no longer phasing is a positive improvement. Regarding the attenuation basin, where is the data to prove it will work? The proposal of a sewer on the edge of the buffer zone of the badger setts creates questions as there is a black line shown which is actually a hedgerow but is not shown as a hedgerow. Cllr. Bond wished to reassure the public there are other issues not mentioned at the meeting that the Town Council is aware of and would produce as many valid planning oppositions as possible in their response. At the time she had read up to 73 comments on the portal. A further point was made regarding social housing, which has a minimum size requirement. Tilia have resubmitted plans to increase the size of affordable housing properties. However, the properties for sale are still the smaller scale. Surely, if they are substandard for social housing then they are substandard for all. This needs to be addressed and the only way this can happen is to finally accept that, whilst they have permission to build up to 150 properties, it is not sustainable and should consider building less.

Crewkerne Town Council AGREED to recommend refusal, with two abstaining due to a previous declaration of interest.

Cllr. Nathan also wished to highlight an issue regarding affordable housing stating that the proposed narrow roads might not be adopted by Somerset Council. Therefore, will the amount of affordable housing be reduced, contrary to planning quota requirements.

Cllr. Bond again reiterated that Crewkerne Town Council have taken on board comments from residents, agreeing with public opinion, and shall continue to express their opposition to this planning application.

23/01261/DOC1      Crewkerne Key Site 1 Land East of Crewkerne Between A30 And A356 Yeovil Road Crewkerne, TA18 7HE  
Discharge of condition No.24 (Travel Plan) of planning application 19/03483/S73 (as amended by 21/01152).  
NOTED.

- 23/01484/HOU 21 Bincombe Drive, Crewkerne, TA18 7BE  
Extension and conversion of existing detached garage to the side of dwelling into an annex for the provision of ancillary accommodation to be used by a disabled child.  
RECOMMEND APPROVAL.
- 23/01424/COL Wadham Community School, Yeovil Road, Crewkerne, TA18 7NT  
Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed installation of multiple canopies at 3 separate locations within the school premises.  
RECOMMEND APPROVAL.
- 23/01255/HOU 68 Hermitage Street, Crewkerne, TA18 8ET  
Demolition of a side extension and the erection of a single storey side extension to dwelling house.  
RECOMMEND APPROVAL, with caveat that the internal wall to provide storage for cycles and bins is included.
- 22/03032/FUL Press-Tige Print Services, North Street, Crewkerne, TA18 7AW  
Change of use from a mixed office/light industrial building formerly used as a printing works to a single dwelling including changing one window to a door and the addition of two velux style windows to a bathroom (retrospective application).  
Crewkerne Town Council commented that they have reservations for approval as no proof that the business is no longer viable has been provided. There is also a query regarding surface water.
- 23/01224/HOU High Acres, 48 Barn Close, Crewkerne, TA18 8BN  
Single story rear extension to dwelling.  
RECOMMEND APPROVAL.

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23/24 **TO RECEIVE PLANNING DECISION NOTICES FROM THE SOMERSET COUNCIL**

The following planning decision notices were noted:

- 22/01684/FUL Crewkerne Key Site 1 Land East of Crewkerne Between A30 And A356 Yeovil Road, Crewkerne, TA18 7HE  
Full application for the installation of an electricity substation.

APPROVED, with conditions.

- 23/00535/HOU 46 Bushfield Road, Crewkerne, TA18 8HW  
Two Storey side extension and porch to existing property.

APPROVED, with conditions.

- 22/02864/FUL 29 Market Square, Crewkerne, TA18 7JU  
Retain part of former building to form lobby to rear of shop (retrospective application).

APPROVED, with conditions.

Cllr. Bond wished it to be noted that Crewkerne Town Council had agreed to be guided by the Conservation Officer in this matter.

22/02865/LBC                      29 Market Square, Crewkerne, TA18 7JU  
Retain part of former building to form lobby to rear of shop (implemented)

APPROVED, with conditions.

23/00931/HOU                      The New Bungalow, 33 Chubbs Lawn, Middle Path, Crewkerne, TA18 8BH  
Erection of a rear Conservatory.

APPROVED, with conditions.

23/00840/COU                      Sectional Buildings, South Street, Crewkerne, TA18 8DA  
Temporary change of use of house for use as an office and a flat.

APPROVED, with conditions.

23/00785/HOU                      44 Bushfield Road, Crewkerne, TA18 8HW  
The erection of two storey side extension to dwelling.

APPROVED, with conditions.

23/00695/R13                      Ashlands Primary School, North Street, Crewkerne, TA18 7AL  
Replacement of 4No. timber frame windows with new aluminium double-glazed installations and structural opening for a new fire exit door.

APPROVED, with conditions.

Cllr. Bond wished it to be noted that Crewkerne Town Council had agreed to be guided by the Conservation Officer, and there was some surprise that this decision had been agreed.

22/02302/DOC1                      Crewkerne Key Site 1 Land East of Crewkerne Between A30 And A356 Yeovil Road Crewkerne, TA18 7HE  
Discharge of Condition No. 6 (LEMS) of Planning Application 19/03482/S73.

Conditions Discharged.

23/01237/DOC1                      Crewkerne Key Site 1 Land East of Crewkerne Between A30 And A356 Yeovil Road Crewkerne, TA18 7HE  
Discharge of Condition No. 10 (CEMP) of Planning Application 19/03483/S73.

Conditions Discharged.

23/01007/TPO                      4 Aspen Way, Crewkerne, TA18 7DG  
Application to carry out tree surgery works to No.02 trees included within South Somerset Tree Preservation Order (CREW 1) 1998 and 2007.

APPROVED, with conditions.

Cllr. Bond wished to express satisfaction that the Crewkerne Town Council recommendation that trees should be replaced had been included in the approval.

23/01161/HOU 16 Willow Way, Crewkerne, TA18 7DS  
Proposed single storey rear extension.

APPROVED, with conditions.

22/02478/DOC1 Land South Of KitHill, Crewkerne, Somerset  
Part Discharge of Conditions No.6 (Construction Traffic Plan), No.8 (Water Drainage), No.9 (Internal Ground Levels) and Full Discharge of Condition of No.7 (Scheme of Investigation) on Planning Application 18/01737/OUT.

WITHDRAWN.

21/02193/S73A North Street Trading Estate, North Street, Crewkerne, TA18 7AW  
S73A application to vary conditions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 29, 31, 32 34, 35 and 36 of planning permission 18/02363/FUL (Demolition of 1 No. dwelling and the erection of 44 No. dwellings and associated works, including vehicular and pedestrian access onto North Street, a new school playing field and parking for Ashlands School (revised application of 15/04770/FUL).

APPROVED, with conditions.

Cllr. Best wished to comment that now the Taylor Wimpey development is occupied, the CLR condition has been triggered, giving four years to complete the road.

07 **TO RECEIVE THE UPDATED ACTION STATUS REPORT**

23/24

Updates to the Action Status Report were noted.

Cllr. Head requested that the Deputy Clerk obtain regular updates regarding Millers Garage, prior to each P&H meeting.

08 **TO RECEIVE A PROGRESS REPORT REGARDING THE PROPOSED LOCAL NATURE RESERVE AT KITHILL**

23/24

The Deputy Clerk reported that, as directed, she had contacted relevant landowners, and Tilia Homes had confirmed they would consider the LNR proposal. They would be open to investigate how it can be implemented once planning consent is achieved. There had been no response from the other landowner, and the Deputy Clerk would continue to pursue a response.

The Deputy Clerk reported a conversation with Somerset Wildlife Trust who are looking into the matter further, but they have no advice at this stage. The Deputy Clerk reported continuing contact with Natural England had been taking place, but at this stage they have no further advice. It was noted by Cllr. Bond that in the Tilia application Somerset Council had expressed an interest in taking the LNR on if successfully declared. Cllr. Bond will investigate who made the comment.

09 **TO RECEIVE NOTES FROM THE RECENT HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEETING**

23/24

Notes received.

Cllr. Bond reported a productive site meeting with Somerset Council Highways and Traffic Management Officers who now regularly attend at Crewkerne Town Council's request; and the continued building of a good relationship with the team at Somerset Council.

Cllr. Nathan expressed thanks to Space4Crewkerne for all the information and assistance contributing to the meeting with Highways.

The Deputy Clerk asked when councillors would like the next site meeting to take place.

Cllr. Nathan then reported on various issues and outcomes, as detailed in the agenda pack.

Cllr. Head noted that as Highways don't inform CTC when they are carrying out drain clearance works certain areas cannot be cleared etc due to parked vehicles. Pre-warning would allow bollards to be placed to alleviate this issue. Cllr. Nathan suggested that perhaps if only yearly drain washing can be carried out then some areas have parish led clearing, who can attend to issue, and perhaps information can be gathered when other Highway clearing is taking place.

Cllr. Nathan wished to highlight the issue of the damaged pavement outside the George Hotel where repairs are due, and that bollards will be installed to prevent vehicles parking in future and damaging the pavement again. Cllr. Livesley stated that very evening a bus had parked on the pavement in question.

Cllr. Bond highlighted there are various issues around town that are due to be addressed soon: noisy drains, wobbly road lines, debris clearing, parking issues around Ashlands School.

Residents were invited to inform Town Council of any further issues they wish to have addressed.

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#### **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group gave an update, stating that draft aims and objectives have been drawn up and sent out to the households of Crewkerne for feedback. There was an option to complete this online, as well as some drop-in sessions. It was reported that the feedback received was as expected and mostly reflected the opinions of the residents of Crewkerne. Most residents agreed with everything. It was reported that the next stage would be drawing up the policies, forming the bulk of the plan. When completed the information would be submitted to the local authority for approval, as well as to a public referendum for final approval from the town residents. Once hopefully agreed the process is complete. There are not many stages left but the next stage is the lengthy one, writing the policies to make the objectives happen.

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#### **TO RECEIVE DATA FROM SPEED INDICATION DEVICE (SID)**

Cllr. Bond expressed amazement at a recorded speed of 127mph, it was highlighted that the data is not always accurate but SID acts as an effective speed-deterrent.

Cllr. Ashton expressed his concern that Somerset Council Executive are considering removing parking requirements from planning applications in a drive to reduce reliance on cars. This will be something for the future consideration more than the present and whilst it may be appropriate in large towns and cities, in towns like Crewkerne it would not be appropriate.

Cllr. Ashton finally stated he and Cllr. Best had both tried their best to fight the Goldwell Farm development unfortunately to no avail. He explained they propose to install double yellow lines at the top of Ashlands Road, causing drop-off but mainly the pick-up of Wadham school children to be chaotic, with parking spreading down Ashlands Road and surrounding cul-de-sacs, and also creating danger for children crossing the road. Suggestions were invited from the public as to how to alleviate this, perhaps the Pill Box area could be utilised.



Cllr Best highlighted that in order to install the lines a Traffic Regulation Order needs to be approved, and when the TRO application is issued the public can object to it. Town Council will monitor and when the TRO is issued would inform the public who could then object. A meeting with Wadham has taken place to address the issues. Due to the change in the school tier system the school now has more pupils, and a considerable number are bussed over from Ilminster. This has led to more buses in the Wadham drop off area and so no cars are permitted to enter for drop off or pick up.

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23/24

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023, 18.45 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 19.56.

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:** .....

PL10JULY2023