Grindon and Thorpe Thewles Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 31 July 2024 at 3:30pm in Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles.

Present: Cllrs. Davies (Chair); Gillson; Moffatt and Rees
In Attendance: Simon Grundy (Stockton Borough Council planning); C. Chapman, Clerk; c. 28 residents

The Chair welcomed residents and introduced Simon Grundy (SBC Planning).

1. **Astral Park – amenity space**

Simon advised Stockton Council to continue dialogue with developer regarding the space. Agreement not reached so SBC have refused the planning application and commenced enforcement action with their legal department. Simon outlined once action is served the Developer has 2 options.

1. Comply with the notice and landscape the area as approved plans.
2. Appeal, following which National Planning Inspectorate would investigate and decide for the Council or the Developer. If sides with the Counsil the developer will have to landscape as plans, if side with the Developer, then the developer can leave the site as it currently stands.

Simon outlined timescales as the developer having 28-days to appeal from point they receive enforcement action, and any appeal process may take 6-months.

A resident asked why works were not inspected at the time, as it was clear what Developer was doing with the site.

Simon advised variations to plans are normal, The Council were aware early on and some work was done to address flooding in gardens. Appreciates it looks like action being done too late, but action was done at points within planning requirements. Surveillance is not as much as would like as resources do not allow.

A resident asked why you don't make developers stick to the original plan.

Simon advised they have a right to apply for variations, which have to follow due process in planning terms. Any action outside of planning is done at the Developers risk. Simon advised the planning system is set up to promote development, within the national framework.

A resident asked where the transparency is.

Simon responded that any formal responses are considered as part of the planning process.

A resident stated they were aware the Council had issues with sites in Carlton, with some houses built the wrong way.

Simon advised he was not aware of those specifics but reconfirmed anything a developer does without planning is at their risk, e g if building an additional 6 houses on site; or if built a 2m fence without approval, planners would asses specifics against permitted development which allows a 1m fence, in this specific Stockton Councils planners may enforce a change to do remedial work to reduce to appropriate level or may suggest because of the specifics a 1.5m or even 2m fence would be acceptable. Simon advised planning provides a framework rather than a specific defined list of what is or is not acceptable.

A resident asked if there were any regs.

Simon advised that there are permitted development rules about what is possible without planning approval, anything beyond needs planning permission, there are national frameworks and a local

Stockton Council Plan. e.g. anything beyond the village footprint / settlement limits – would have to be for agricultural purposes or meet some exceptional needs.
Simon stated that a lot is planner's judgement of the specific case, a scheme of delegation is in place with officers able to approve some issues and others needing approval of a meeting of the Planning Committee. All is considered against the National planning policy framework.

A resident asked if Astral Park goes down enforcement route, does it get resolved or get tied up for a long time without resolution.
Simon advised that normally there is a resolution, action will depend on the developer's response to Council notice.

The Chair asked about timelines as the Parish Council were advised at the start of the year that enforcement action was going to be served at that point in time.
Simon advised that dialogue was continuing, and a resolution may have been agreed, but this has not concluded so a notice will be served.

2. **Astral Park Sight lines**
Simon advised Stockton Council Highways team had been in discussion with the Mgt Company for Astral Park. It was now agreed Stockton Council will cut 1m from the highway edge twice per year. The Mgt company will maintain the rest.

3. **Vane Arms planning permission.**
Simon advised last week Vane Arms to provide correspondence to advise they will submit planning for decking and change of use at back to extend curtilage of formal beer garden, and for approval for temp events (28 per year) to be held.
Key consideration is what is acceptable in planning terms.
Once submitted residents can see the planning application and make comments.

A resident asked if there were any timescales for Vane Arms to submit an application as this had been going on for 4 years.
Simon advised there were no stated timescales, but Stockton Council would keep them under review. Stockton Council Planners and Environmental Health had attended and made it clear to the publicant what actions were needed, they always said they were going to submit planning applications.

A resident asked about parking for Vane Arms customers, with cars parking at Middlebank. The extra parking issues would have been raised as part of a planning application.
The Chair advised the Parish Council had raised safety issues caused by parking in this area, but the response has been that Stockton Council will not take any action as it is illegal to park at a junction so there is no need for double lines.
The Chair advised all we can do regarding illegal parking is to take a picture and send it to Stockton Council Parking Enforcement Team. Increased awareness may encourage some direct action.
Email to civic.enforcement@stockton.gov.uk

4. **Missing planning application 23/1988/OHL**
Simon advised this was not a planning application as such as statutory undertakers have certain rights, and this was a notice advising of an exemption they were going to invoke.
As meets the regulations it is exempt and therefore does not need further consideration once planners have confirmed such.

5. **Thorpe Paddocks – unsightly pedestrian entrance and frontage along Durham Road**

Residents outline the nature of the issue and the often response from Homes by Carlton that this was the responsibility of Stockton Council. Residents understood that this would be the case after the area was adopted by the Council.

Simon advised he was aware of complaints having been made.

Simon agreed to check current ownership and share the approved plan for the landscaping of the area, as it was known that variations had been made to the original plan for a footpath along the road.

A resident asked about speeding, which was a significant problem along this stretch of Durham Road.

The Chair advised the Parish Council had raised this several times and had recently been advised that a chicane at this end of the village would not be introduced. The 30mph signs would move to cover the stretch from the Hamilton Russel down past the vehicle entrance to Henley Drive.

The Chair also advised that the Parish Council had approached the Police regarding speeding, they advised pending the decision regarding any chicane or speed signs from the Council they could look at undertaking a SpeedWatch – the Parish Council will progress this now decisions regarding any chicane have been made by Stockton Council.

6. Land for sale along Durham Road

Simon advised he had checked, and Stockton Council have not approved any residential development on the site, nor has any informal decision been provided.

A resident asked what an informal decision re pre-planning was.

Simon advised the informal process is to give pre application advice – e.g. if proposals in principle would be acceptable. It is only an informal officer opinion and is still subject to the planning process.

A resident asked about the balance between the Labour Govt policy to build 1.5m houses and Stockton Council plans,

Simon advised the Stockton Council Plan sets out where they would wish to see development; the Labour Govt aspiration will need to be assessed for its implications on the local area; a new local plan will need to be produced as a result of govt announcements around house building and planning policies.

A resident asked if a stipulation can be made on the type of houses for land sale e.g. the number of bungalows which are needed.

Simon advised that a stipulation cannot be made unless it's part of current policy. E.g. it is part of the current policy for certain accessibility standards to be met, but there is no definitive requirement for bungalows.

A resident asked if there is a policy of using brownfield sites.

Simon advised brown filed sites have been supported historically; but such needs to be deliverable, e.g. as many are heavily contaminated with large remedial costs that make schemes not viable financially. This has been the case in Stockton, hence the building around villages locally.

A resident asked if there was any funding to help with remediation of these sites.

Simon advised this would need to be reviewed as part of new Labour Govt plans for Housing.

A resident asked if an archaeology survey would be taken e.g. as iron age crop circle and WW2 pill box are in the area.

Simon advised this would be the case. A series of reports would be taken, and impact assessment undertaken which is routine and considered before any decision, Simon also advised any decision may include some sort of preservation and visitor information e.g. to the WW2 pill.

A resident asked if the land was suitable for residential development.

Simon stated that no formal or informal view has been provided by Stockton Council as surveys and other work would be needed to reach an opinion. The current advertising as suitable for Housing is the Estate Agent view.

Simon stated the land is currently outside local plan development limits and not within the current local plan, but such may change when the Labour Govt policy for housing re-evaluated for impact locally.

A resident stated the site was previously a gravel pit and would the ground conditions be considered.

Simon advised this would be assessed as part of survey activity for any planning application submitted. Simon advised planning is about land use, will the land be suitable for proposed development. If structural engineers, consider work is needed such as pilings then that needs to be considered by developers in order to build and to meet building regs etc.

A resident asked if a new local plan would be produced.

Simon advised the govt have said period of local plan will be extended and a review is needed every 5 years. Simon advised the current plan goes to Dec 2026 and an extension or new plan will be assessed as full implications from Labour Govt are understood.

A resident asked if the infrastructure would be considered as this is already under strain from recent developments and can't support further demand. E.g. the doctors are in Stillington which has significant new demand from new residents; there are no schools, traffic is high at peak times etc.

Simon advised infrastructure could be improved through s106 agreements and also developers may propose infrastructure enhancements as part of their application.

A resident asked if there should be a register for pre planning conversations to provide transparency.

Simon stated there may be some commercial sensitivities; or proposals may not progress. Planning is set to encourage proposals. Anything that does progress is subject to formal processes.

7. Thewles stud

Simon advised this is going through due process, its outside limited development so has to be some reason for residing on site. Now awaiting a few matters before being able to take a decision.
In responding to 4-year timeline, Simon advised there are some statutory deadlines, e.g. 13 weeks to take a decision, but often due to varying and sometimes changing conditions and evolution of proposals it can take a long time from initial application to conclusion.

A resident asked if approval was given for a caravan, would that then make it easier to vary to a house.

Simon advised the reason for variation would need to be assessed, one of the issues is the future business viability which may suggest temporary accommodation is more suitable, if the business is proven in future may lead to permanency.

8. Land rear of Astral House

Simon advised this is under consideration.

9. Any Other Business

A resident asked about the double yellow lines outside the Hamilton Russell which were ignored as cars parked in the area.

It was advised the Parish Council has raised this and Stockton Council Parking and Highways were reviewing.

A resident suggested inviting the Community Police to meetings.

The Chair advised we do. However, at the last meeting only one resident attended so specific issues were not raised. It was subsequently agreed for attendance quarterly. They will be in attendance at the September meeting of the Parish Council

The advice was for residents to ring 101 or use the COPA App so that a case file is built on specific issues; at present there is an absence of recorded incidents, so it looks like we don't have issues needing attention.

Meeting closed at 5:00pm

Minutes Authorised By:
Minutes Seconded By:
Date: