

Minutes of Tilehurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held 17th November 2021 at the Calcot Centre, High View commencing 7.30pm

1. Present: Kevin Page, Peter Cross, Alan Wade, Joan Lawrie, Clive Taylor, Nick Pflaeger, Sandra Vickers and 5 other members of the public
2. Representations from members of the public
Nick speaking on behalf of residents living close to Calcot Golf course raised the following points - all in italics below

Letter from Penningtons Manches Cooper

First para - There is confusion about how the response is structured. PMC state they are a client of Bewley Homes, whereas Pegasus state they are a client of both Calcot Golf Club and Bewley Homes. There are inconsistencies between the PMC and Pegasus documents, these are detailed later in this document. We assume TPC will address these issues with CGC

Page 2, 4th Para starting, 'For the reasons set out...'. – PNC state that 'and more recently has been used to deposit soil from other parts of the golf club land, ...' whilst Pegasus 3.11, bullet points 2 and 3 provide a different explanation. We believe this is an inaccurate representation of the facts. Local residents contacted the Environment Agency regarding the importation of a very large amount of low grade soil onto the site which was buried in the practice ground and also used to build an earth bank. Local residents have reported through the Rt Hon Alok Sharma, MP, our local MP, concerns about the fact this importation was carried out without an EA Licence and that the removal of trees and building of an Earth Bank was carried out without prior planning approval. We don't believe any of this is relevant to the application to designate the site as Green Space

Page 2, para 5 – 'to stop development rather than to ensure proper green space provision'. Local residents have not received any communication from either CGC or Bewley about any proposed development on this site.

Furthermore we have checked with TPC, WB Planning, our local WB Councillor and our local MP and all have stated that they are unaware of any development plans for this site. Furthermore the site is not included in the WB HELAA nor is it included in the current development plan. It would be helpful if CGC are able to reference any document or formal communication to local residents that mentions proposed development plans for this site.

Page 2, para 6 – this is not our understanding, we leave this with TPC to resolve.

Page 3, penultimate paragraph, 'We ask this is received within 21 days of the date of this letter'. As Bewley is not the owner of the land and only has an option, residents question whether Bewley can issue such an ultimatum.

Pegasus Report

1.4 – residents have commented that they are unclear what point Pegasus are making by stating BH is a South – East based builder. We note they did not explain that BH is owned by a trust located in an off shore tax haven.

1.7 – ‘BH has actively promoted this land through WBC’s plan-making process.’ We have been in contact with the CEO of West Berkshire through our local MP, Rt Hon Alok Sharma. We have been informed in writing that neither knows of any development plan for this site. There has been no communication to local residents.

The land is not included in the HELAA or DPD plan.

1.8 – is there any link from this assertion to an application for Green Space ?

3.3 – ‘has been deliberately and onerously applied to such a small and focused area of land’ - local residents are willing to fund through TPC an independent assessment of the area of natural habitat and have them report on biodiversity. Regarding size we are most focused on the area of natural habitat and from pictures available from Google we calculate this is a significant portion of the site.

3.9 – ‘Whilst detail of a proposed residential development ...has been readily available within the public domain since 2018’. Residents are incensed by this statement. As previously detailed in our response residents have consistently reported that enquiries about this site have been blocked. Not only has there been no response from direct enquiries, there is no information about this site in any WBC plan or call for sites document. We ask TPC to check with CGC whether they have communicated any messages to members about the release of information concerning their development plans.

3.10 – we repeat, local residents have absolutely no information about this site and this issue has been included within correspondence with our local MP, so can be easily checked.

3.11, bullet points 2+3 – please refer to our earlier response, the statements in this section are inaccurate. We also repeat all of this work was undertaken without planning approval and we are in correspondence with the CEO of WB and our local MP about this situation.

3.11, page 12, bullet point 1. ‘Essentially the only beneficiaries of the LGS in terms of protect of views and any associated visual amenity are the occupiers of Kendrick Gate’ - this statement is not correct. During the production of the application for Green Space a representative from TPC viewed the area of natural habitat from New Lane Hill in addition to Kendrick Gate. We have attached a google diagram which shows that the viewing access area from NLH is much larger than KG. This site can also be accessed by members of Calcot Golf Club and until recently members regularly used the practice area.

Section 4, Second paragraph – ‘Bewley Homes PLC is a regional housebuilder...’ residents are unclear what relevance this has to an application for designation of Green Space. The key comment from local residents about BH is that they are

owned in an off shore tax haven whilst at the same time are benefitting from UK tax payers through the 'Help to Buy' scheme.

Further discussion followed around the above points and also covering the potential access from New Lane Hill which local residents viewed as dangerous with some history of past accidents.

Regarding nominations to the Steering Group, the Steering Group needed to clarify the number of vacancies on the committee. The New Lane Hill group indicated they could nominate up to two new members. Later in the meeting it was clarified that the committee had nine members so we would advise Nick that their group could nominate one formal steering group member to be endorsed at the next meeting.

Clive advised that he would be meeting with Calcot Golf Course staff later in the week to view the site, possibly with Alan and would report back. It was also anticipated that a meeting would shortly be arranged involving residents, CGC, the developer and the steering group.

3. Apologies: Fred Williams, Julia Gentle, Liz Alexander.
4. Declarations of Interest : None
5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th October had been distributed and were approved.
6. Matters Arising:
 - Clive advised that his FOI request for the Pincents environmental report had been rejected on grounds that it contained sensitive information. It could be taken to an appeal stage but it was reported that a copy might be accessible from when the report had previously been published. Joan agreed to pursue this.
7. Progress of the Plan:

Discussion took place on progressing through the WBC comments and incorporating feedback from Liz. Discussion turned to the prospect of proposing recreational land owned by TPC and WBC as Local Green Space. Clive was actioned to identify the land areas concerned and then to liaise with Peter for inclusion in the plan. It was noted that caveats might be possible for recreational development only eg replacement of the Cotswold Centre.

Kevin reported that he had posted a project plan on Teams taking the project right through to referendum. Kevin outlined the key milestones (see Teams for details).
8. Budget & Finance - Peter reported on the need to provide evidence of expenditure for grants received which he was working on providing

The meeting closed

Next monthly meeting: Wednesday 15th December 2021

Additional Clarification to item 7 (Kevin P)

It was agreed that Kevin would approach Liz to review section 8 and the Design Brief, following on from her valuable input on previous sections.

Clive agreed to review and update section 9 with the revised Local Green Space information. Kevin also agreed to contact Fred to ascertain his availability to continue membership of the steering group.