

Minutes of Bucklebury Parish Council Planning Committee

Meeting held on Monday 25th February 2013 at 8.00pm in The Victory Room, Bucklebury.

Present: Mr. B. Dickens (Chairman); Mr. J. Brims; Mr. P. Brook; Mr. A. Gilbert; Mr. A. Dunkerton; Mr. T. Slatford; Mr. A. Stott; Mrs. H. Cairns; Mrs. L. Clarke; Mr. T. Banks; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).

Others: John Page; Andrea Newill; David Carrier; Alistair McOran-Campbell; Jonathan Steward; Elizabeth Fenston; Simon Hunt; Piers Allison; Willie Hartley Russell; Camilla Kingham.

Apologies: Mrs. P. W. Frankum.

Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

P1. 13/00019/FUL

The Watermill, Bucklebury.

Restoration of derelict watermill to known original condition. Restoration of complete mill base, super structure and cladding and roof to original known condition, retaining all original machinery returned to working condition as a complete conservation project.

Mrs. Clarke said that she had received a number of emails about the application which she didn't read out because they had not been sent to WBC. The emails were not against restoration of the mill, although concerns were raised about the impact of the proposal on the flood alleviation works. Concern was also raised about the number of visits to the mill after restoration and how these could be managed. The emails showed a level of concern about the safety of the existing structure and the potential for it to fall into the river.

The meeting was **closed**.

Mr. Hartley Russell said that his open letter to residents of Bucklebury village and copied to BPC clarified the proposals for visits to the restored mill. In 2007, planning permission was granted for restoration of the mill; this application is for the same structural work, but includes education visits which will be run in conjunction with the John Simonds Trust. Last year over 10,000 people visited the John Simonds Trust at Rushall Farm which has toilet and hand washing facilities. It is proposed that groups will be transported from Rushall Farm to the mill for demonstrations (this will mean that they don't travel through Bucklebury). The John Simonds Trust takes groups of 8 to 12 children on accompanied visits to the river Pang to carry out river studies.

Mr. Hartley Russell said that in the five years he has been dealing with the Environment Agency, the safety of the mill structure has never been raised.

Mr. McOran-Campbell said that he had contacted 4 or 5 local schools who were all very enthusiastic about the restoration of the mill. He said that it would be the last working mill on the river Pang. Mr. McOran-Campbell has contacted Veolia about how much the mill would need to be open in order to qualify for a grant; Veolia would require the facility to be "reasonably" available. A restriction on the number of visits a year would be an acceptable outcome. The parking facilities and toilets in this application have been removed after discussions with the planning officer, however it is likely that hardstanding will be added for 1 or 2 cars at the end of the track to the north of the river adjacent to the mill building. This track is generally dry from May to September.

Mr. Hartley Russell clarified that a maximum of 40 visits to the mill would take place between May and September each year. It is proposed that these visits would be organised by the John Simonds Trust.

Signature.....

Date.....

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Mr. Allison then read two letters he had received about the proposal. The first was a very nostalgic letter from Gordon Munroe-Ashman which referred to a number of places which he used to visit as a child in the local vicinity; most of these places are now either gone or closed to the public; his plea was to “save our mill”. The second letter was from Andrew Peddie who is concerned about the impact of the mill on the flow of the river and on the quiet, peaceful, domestic village of Bucklebury.

Mr. Allison said that for developments within 8m of the river, Flood Defence Consent is required in addition to planning permission. WBC is understood to have consulted with the Environment Agency, but they will ultimately either permit or deny the Flood Defence Consent. Around 2009, an orange notice was pinned up near the mill stating that Flood Defence Consent was required; this related to some work to stabilise the mill structure.

Mr. Allison said that he personally felt that the restoration project did not feel like a community project. He raised concerns that even if the project is given the go-ahead, it may be a number of years before anything is done and during that time, the safety of the mill structure is paramount. There has already been a certain amount of clogging of the mill and the front of the mill structure is understood to have dropped.

Mrs. Clarke commented that in the Parish Plan Refresh, there was an open question about whether the mill should be restored or not. Of the 23% of the parish who responded, 247 were in favour of restoration, 33 were against and 135 didn't answer.

Mr. Page commented that during 4 of the last 12 years, the river has been dry. If this happens again it would not be possible to demonstrate the mill.

Mr. Carrier asked where visitors would be coming from and where they would park. There was some discussion around the distance from Stanford Dingley and the lack of toilet facilities at the mill. It was estimated that the duration of visits would be about an hour. It was noted that the Recreation Ground car park is a public car park.

Ms. Kingham commented that the John Simonds Trust normally use tractor and trailer for transportation of people and raised concerns about access from Old Hawkridge House onto the road from Stanford Dingley with the additional traffic. She also commented that access to the track leading to the mill (adjacent to the bridge and bend) is very dangerous and has limited visibility. Additionally she mentioned that there are views in the valley of the cars parked at the farm park; to prevent further views of parked cars at the mill she asked for screening to be planted.

There was a question about whether the mill would be grinding corn when not open and therefore over time require the facilities of a shop and possibly a tea rooms. Mr. Hartley Russell said that there were no plans for commercial use.

The meeting was **reopened**.

Mr. Dickens summarised that Mr. Hartley Russell's letter had clarified a number of points about visits to the restored mill and the possibilities of using an S106 agreement to make any restrictions. There are a number of community based concerns about traffic levels, parking and the impact on levels of the river as referred to earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Brims proposed that BPC make **no objection** to this application but recommends restrictions on visits after restoration to a maximum of 40 each year between May and September, that any advice received from the Environment Agency must be included in any permission granted and that Flood Defence Consent must be sought. This was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried with 8 members in favour and 1 against.

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It was subsequently agreed that a third condition be added; that a parking plan and traffic management plan should be produced.

It was noted that there is no public right of way to the mill and that insurance for the restored mill and on-going maintenance will be the responsibility of Bucklebury Estate.

P2. 13/00201/FUL

Travellers Rest Farm, Southend (Adjacent Parish).

Change of Use of former agricultural building to car panel repair workshop (Retrospective).

BPC had **no objection** to this application.

P3. Review of list of sites where land usage is to be monitored.

In view of the time, it was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

There was some discussion about the rules regarding domestic and agricultural curtilage, certificates of lawfulness, how agricultural land can become equestrian, what the position is about agricultural land which cannot be seen from public rights of way and what actions should be taken where agricultural land is being treated as domestic.

It was agreed that the Clerk would invite Graham Tandy to attend the next Planning Committee meeting to help the committee understand the situation more clearly.

The meeting was closed at 9.45pm.

Next Planning Committee Meeting:	Monday 25 th March 2013 at 8pm, Victory Room.
Next BPC Meeting:	Monday 11 th March 2013 7.45pm, Memorial Hall.

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