

Minutes of a meeting of Bucklebury Parish Council Planning Committee at All Saints Church Hall, Upper Bucklebury on Monday 27th September 2021 at 7.45pm.

Present: Cllr. J. Brims (Chairman); Cllr. B. Dickens; Cllr. P. Spours; Cllr. L. Clarke; Cllr. D. Southgate; Cllr. A. Hillerton; Cllr. R. Ranken; Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).

Also Present: Oliver Shute and James Murray.

Apologies of Absence.

Apologies of absence were received and accepted from Cllr. H. Cairns.

Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

Public Session.

1. Bucklebury Farm Park.

Cllr. Brims welcomed Oliver Shute (Manger of Bucklebury Farm Park) and James Murray (one of the owners of Bucklebury Farm Park) to the meeting.

Councillors were reminded that this was not an opportunity for pre-application advice to be given, but an opportunity for councillors to ask questions about the proposals for the Farm Park.

Mr. Shute gave a presentation of the proposals for the Farm Park:

Ownership of the Farm Park changed at the end of March 2021. The Farm Park has good potential, but many of the facilities are very tired, and the spaces need to be better utilised. Since taking over the Farm Park, they have welcomed school parties, parties of OAPs and many families.

In order to provide better facilities, there are plans to build a new agricultural barn for the secure storage of machinery, develop the farm workers dwelling (which already has planning permission), cover some of the children's outdoor play area and add flexible sides so that it can be used for more of the year, and replace the portacabins at the entrance with a permanent modern structure. A covered area has already replaced the marquee, which will be the subject of retrospective planning application.

The large slides will be removed from the barn, more slides will be installed elsewhere, and the barn converted into a café seating area, toilets and a mezzanine floor. Currently there is no recycling or ecological initiatives on site and the buildings flood when it rains. It is planned that refreshments will be available to both people visiting the Farm Park and those who are not. There are plans for the shop to stock a wider range of food items, but not be on the scale of Cobbs Farm Shop at Englefield.

A new website has been developed, which encourages people to book online. A limit of 400 guests per day has been set, ensuring that everyone gets a good experience and that staff are on hand to support everyone. The aim it to maintain visitor numbers (not increase them), but to encourage them to stay for longer.

The parking area needs to be managed and used more constructively. Matting is being considered for the grass areas which are used for parking on an ad hoc basis.

The term of the agreements with Featherdown to provide the glamping terminates in 2024, however the future for this initiative is uncertain. Commercially the contract is not beneficial to the Farm Park.

Glamping visitors are in the Farm Park at night when no staff are present, which poses a security risk. There is a lot of work to do on the woodland areas of the Farm Park and much dead wood has already been removed. It is planned to plant 500 new trees. More hedging will also be planted to screen the Farm Park from residents of the parish.

There are plans to reroute the public footpath, which goes through middle of the Farm Park, to the western boundary. This will reduce the risk of walkers leaving gates open potentially resulting in loose animals.

There are no plans to open an evening restaurant, but there may be some evening events. A very

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successful two-day popup market was held recently and raised funds for the Charlie Waller charity. The site does have the benefit of a premises license for the sale of alcohol, clarification of the conditions will be forwarded to BPC.

The intention is that someone will live on site, mainly for security reasons.
Mr. Shute and Mr. Murray were thanked for sharing their plans with BPC.

Minutes of meetings.

2. It was resolved that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 24th August 2021 were a true record of the meeting and were signed by Cllr. Brims.

Planning applications WBC has consulted BPC on:

3. 21/02233/HOUSE Folly Cottage, The Avenue.
Single storey rear extension.
This application will be considered at the BPC meeting on Monday 11th October.
4. To receive an update from the Opposition to NE Thatcham Development Working Group.
Cllr. Spours reported that there is no update from the Working Group.

Round Table Comments:

5. Coffee Morning – Thursday 30th September.
Those present, were reminded of the Coffee morning to take place in the Oak Room on Thursday at 10.30am.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Date of forthcoming Meetings:

Bucklebury Parish Council: Monday 11th October 2021 7.45pm (All Saints Hall, Upper Bucklebury)

Bucklebury Planning Committee: Monday 25th October 2021 at 7.45pm (All Saint Hall, Upper Bucklebury)

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Date.....

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