

Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of Alpheton Parish Council
held on 4th January 2013 at 7.00pm

Present; Chairman Ken Watkins, Alan Ariss, John Holdway, Richard Kemp, Maureen Lankester, Graham Maskell, , Trevor Rix and the Clerk.

Also present 15 members of the public.

Apologies; None from the Parish Council
Danielle and David Gough from Bridge Street.

Declarations of Interest – none.

The Chairman opened the meeting by reminding the meeting of the planning Application under review;

B/12/1375/FUL

Rose & Crown, Bridge Street, Long Melford, Sudbury, CO10 9BQ

Erection of single-storey storage building in association with existing ancillary domestic use.

Erection of single-storey building to be used ancillary to existing commercial use. Erection of fencing. Erection of stainless steel flue to annexe (retention of).

Observations on the application were due by 27th December 2012. In view of the Public Holidays (Christmas and New Year,) this council had asked for an extension and this was given – deadline now January 10th 2013.

It was noted that the applicant had sought pre-planning advice from Babergh District Council officer, Alex Scott.

Alpheton Parish Council has been asked for views as a neighbouring parish as the Rose and Crown is in Long Melford parish. It is important to note that it is on the far boundary of Melford parish and has a much greater impact on the residents of Alpheton and most particularly Bridge Street where it is situated.

Long Melford's Planning Committee met (3 of 6 possible councillors) to consider this application. Their subsequent 'no objections' return should be considered in the light of their unfamiliarity with the site, and their short residency in this area.

There are three issues;

The retention of the flue – (retrospective)

The retention of the partition wall – (retrospective)

Storage units for domestic and commercial use.(New fence and hedge)

The flue was put in to service a wood stove in the barn; the partition wall is to sub-divide the bar area at quiet times and is said to be a re-instatement of a wall from 1964; the storage is to replace the portacabins. The new fence and hedge is to be visually more in keeping.

Councillor Trevor Rix said that he felt that the statement (in the planning documents) that the property does not flood is erroneous as 10-15 years ago he remembers that it did and that water ran into the bar. The whole area suffered. Figure 6 which is supplied with the plans shows however, that the property is considered to be outside the flood risk area.

Councillor Maureen Lankester said that she felt that the proposal was too big for the site and she wanted to know what the storage areas were for. She felt that the proposal should be discussed fully and she asked who from Long Melford had looked at the site.

District and County Councillor Richard Kemp replied and said that the Enforcement process initiated by Babergh District Council had not achieved the removal of the portacabins by the date demanded.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the floor. He asked that residents indentified themselves before speaking.

Brian Bailey – Chadfield, Bridge Street.

Mr Bailey has written to Babergh over his concerns generally and over the portacabins. He felt that the new buildings would not enhance the view of the site. He will contact Sarah Metcalfe at Rose Cottage as she is only being sent letters and not the plans and whose house is the nearest. He felt that it was overdevelopment and bad for Bridge Street. He felt that the flue was garish and ugly. He was surprised at the partition. He felt that it was peculiar to have the premises up for sale.

Brian Lankester, Meadow Cottage, Bridge Street.

He understood that the sale was for the whole unit, why then the need for additional buildings at this stage? Why was there need for a commercial preparation area when the pub was not open? It felt that it was unfair that his taxes were paid but that no action was taken to benefit residents. He also remarked that the enforcement date had been and gone.

Mr Kemp said that commercial buildings have to try to sell as going concerns for a year. This should be monitored by Babergh. After this they can be sold as domestic dwellings.

Mr Bailey said that the pub had no regular hours of opening.

Graham White, Smithy Cottage, Alpheton.

He noted that this is a Listed Building. He felt that the retrospective alterations were contrary to what was there before.

Annette Bailey, Chadfield, Bridge Street.

Mrs Bailey understood that the portacabins were to contain the items from the kitchens whilst they were refurbished. They had been completed for some time and there was now plenty of room to put things back. She saw no need for more storage space.

Mr White asked about the previous planning application for the holiday lets. It was understood that the barn was for extra residential use for the owners/occupiers and the stables converted to two B&B rooms. He said that the barn was listed on Babergh's website as a holiday let.

Richard Barraclough, Highcroft, Alpheton.

Mr Barraclough said that he had concerns for de-licensing and a change of use to residential. He acknowledged what the Environment Agency said with regard to flooding but felt that it was still a risk with Global Warming an issue.

Councillor Alan Ariss said that the map for this area shows that flooding is predicted to occur once in a thousand years.

Jeff BoBo, Byways, Bridge Street.

Mr Bobo suggested that we should ask for a change of boundary so that all of Bridge Street became Alpheton Parish. He also asked if the meeting thought that the owner would be influenced by these deliberations.

Mr Kemp suggested that there were some possible routes to follow;

Ask for a Site Meeting

Appeal to the Ombudsman if maladministration is suspected.

Mrs Lankester pointed out that the portacabins were supposed to be in place only for the duration of the building works.

Mr Lankester said that he had sent a separate letter to Babergh about the portacabins as he felt Babergh had shown a lack of care and attention towards Bridge Street residents. He felt that some sort of recompense was warranted. He hand delivered his letter on 21st December.

Mrs Bailey was distressed that a beautiful area was being spoiled. She said that it was well used with passing traffic, walkers and cyclists and the view was spoiled.

Jason Moorcroft, Spindrift, Bridge Street.

He asked who would make the decision about the de-licensing (Babergh) and would Alpheton pc have the chance to comment (Yes). He said that it looked as if the barn could be separated from the pub building and possibly sold off.

Mr Kemp remarked that it was possible – under the Freedom of Information Act – to inspect correspondence at Babergh DC about a contentious issue.

The Chairman, having made sure that everyone who wished to had a chance to speak, summed up the meeting.

There were three aspects to consider on planning grounds and he put it to the council that a Site meeting should be requested. This was agreed unanimously. The council would also ask again for the removal of the portacabins.

He asked Mr Kemp to request a Site Meeting for us and Mr Kemp will mention that in our opinion Babergh has been lax with regard to enforcement. He will also ask about advertising the property as a public house whilst it is closed.

The proposed new storage building is excessively high.

There is overdevelopment of the site.

The flue is unsightly without cladding.

The partition wall has been built without materials sympathetic to the age of the building.

The fencing is not attractive.

To sum up it is an undesirable development within the curtilage of a Grade II Listed Building.

Observations of this council will be sent in marked as ‘Interim Opinions’.

The council will ask that Babergh District Council puts this development on hold until the portacabins are removed, and there is compliance with Planning Regulations.

The public present were informed that they could attend the site meeting if they wished although they could not speak and that if they so wished they could write to Babergh District Council.

After thanks for attendance this meeting closed at 8.00pm.