

MINUTES of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 257-540-285) of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held on Monday 27 July 2020 at 5.30pm.

PRESENT Cllr Sarah Williams (in the chair)

Cllrs:	Geoffrey Ackerman	Julian Jones
	Sarah Carney	Anne Rickard
	Kelvin Clayton	Dave Rickard
	Barry Irvine	

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr Gill Massey, Will Austin (Town Clerk), Daryl Chambers (Town Surveyor) and two members of the public.

PUBLIC FORUM

Laurajane Miles addressed members on the subject of the staging of the Bridport Farmers' Market in Barrack Street. She commented that:

- The first event had been held on 11 July
- Laurajane had been a resident of Barrack Street for 30 years and considered the location to be wrong. It was a narrow thoroughfare and there were other suitable places.
- The process of establishing the market had been underhand. There was no consultation; a letter was sent to residents but the event had already been decided upon.
- This was a precursor to pedestrianisation.
- There had been no social distancing at the Farmers' Market.
- The street was classed as part of the town centre but it was a residential street with businesses on it, and not vice versa.
- She was concerned there would be other markets.
- She only found out about this by speaking to the Town Clerk.
- Millennium Green was an alternative location.
- 6.30am was too early, and this had prevented Laurajane from sleeping and working.
- The Melplash Showground could be used for the market.
- There was no access or parking and residents were not informed properly.
- The event had severely impacted on residents' living arrangements.
- The market had been slipped in while people were not here.
- Barrack Street would lose its charm as a result.
- The changes were unfair on residents.

The Chair thanked Laurajane for her address and advised that he would propose bringing forward item 8 on the agenda, Farmers' Market, to follow immediately after item 5.

Cllr Sarah Williams spoke in respect of planning application WD/D/20/001421. As a near neighbour she would declare an interest and leave the meeting for discussion of the application. She commented that:

- She lived directly opposite the development site.
- The proposal was in effect a two storey extension on a very small site.
- The proposals were overdevelopment of the site, near listed buildings that would be affected.

- There had been a building on the site in the 1960s but since then, eleven new properties had been erected and there had been other nearby developments.
- There was restricted parking available.
- The proposals would impact on the junction with Cordova Gardens.

Cllr Williams asked members to recommend refusal.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Williams for her comments.

20. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Dave Bolwell. In his absence, Committee Vice-Chairman Cllr Sarah Williams assumed the chair.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Sarah Williams declared an interest in agenda item 4(A4), planning application WD/D/20/001421 as a near neighbour, and would leave the meeting during discussion and voting.

Cllr Sarah Carney declared an interest in agenda item 7, Vearse Farm, as a member of ADVEARSE.

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 June 2020 were confirmed as a true and correct record, and that the Chairman should sign the minutes at the earliest available opportunity.

23. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED: that the recommendations set out in column 4 of the attached Schedule A be forwarded to Dorset Council.

Cllr Sarah Williams left the meeting prior to discussion and voting on application A4, WD/D/20/001421 and it was

RESOLVED: that Cllr Anne Rickard be elected chairman for discussion and voting on application A4.

Cllr Sarah Williams returned following voting on application A4 and assumed the chair.

24. PLANNING DECISIONS

The Town Clerk reported for information, the planning decisions received relating to applications previously considered by the Committee, ENCL: 3523.

RESOLVED: that the planning decisions be noted.

25. FARMERS' MARKET

The Town Clerk reported on feedback from the staging of the Farmers' Market in Barrack Street on 11 July 2020. He read a letter of objection from Sadie Miles, and

reported on feedback from residents and businesses in Barrack Street. From 12 responses, 10 felt it was a suitable location with one disagreeing. 10 felt it complemented the street market with one disagreeing. 10 felt the stalls were suitably positioned with two disagreeing. 9 said they would like to see the Farmers' Market held regularly, one did not mind and one opposed this. 6 would like to see acoustic music added, two did not mind and three opposed.

The Town Surveyor reported that:

- He had been approached by Dorset Council with regard to safe staging of markets.
- Space for the street market had been very much reduced due to the requirements of social distancing, and this had led to the use of Bucky Doo Square and the Arts Centre forecourt for stalls, displacing the Farmers' Market, which could not operate indoors as the Arts Centre was closed.
- Millennium Green had been considered, but this would conflict at times with its use as a wedding venue.
- The process was not meant as underhand.
- Barrack Street seemed the right place to trial as pedestrianisation of the street had previously been discussed.
- Further space was now being sought to bring the market up to capacity.
- Spacing for the Farmers' Market stalls would not have been possible at the Arts Centre.
- A trial music event was to be held at Millennium Green on a Sunday.
- The COVID-19 initiatives were aimed at supporting businesses at this challenging time.
- The road closure applied every Saturday.
- Indoor space for the Farmers' Market would be available at the Lyric Theatre.
- This was a genuine attempt to help the high street.

Members considered and commented as follows:

- The atmosphere at the Farmers' Market had been good and the event was well received.
- There was a need to consider routes for mobility scooters.
- The venue was good and the Lyric Theatre added capacity.
- Concerns of residents needed to be considered including the start time, which could be later.
- Concerns about social distancing might require a statement from the Council about wearing of masks, which would encourage support for the Farmers' Market in Barrack Street.
- Town Council officers were to be congratulated on a quick and well thought out plan.
- Plenty of social distancing signs were in place.
- Alternative venues were hard to find, and Millennium Green was too far from the town centre.

The Town Surveyor clarified that no stalls arrived before 7.00am and there had been no activity at 6.00am. He advised he would inquire about a later start time and look at the thoroughfare issues raised. His main concern was to restore the 40 lost market stalls.

The Town Clerk reminded members that a clear majority of residents and businesses in Barrack Street was in favour of continuing the temporary staging of the Farmers'

Market there, and that no indoor space was available at Millennium Green. He asked members to consider approval for the continuation of the temporary arrangements.

RESOLVED: that the Town Surveyor inquire about a later start time for the Farmers' Market, and look into thoroughfare issues.

26. LICENSING POLICY

Consideration was given to the Dorset Council consultation, ENCL: 3524.

RESOLVED: that members should send comments to the Town Clerk by 31 August, and a formal response be delegated to the Town Clerk, Leader and Chairmen of the Planning, Best Value and Scrutiny and Finance & General Purposes Committees.

27. VEARSE FARM

The Town Clerk reported on an informal meeting of members that considered the most appropriate means of engaging with the Vearse Farm development. The meeting had proposed the reinstatement of a working group that last met in 2017, administered at that time by Hallam Land Management. The Clerk also reported that the designated Planning Officer for the development had indicated a willingness to attend such a group to provide information on process and means of engagement.

Members considered the possible membership of a working group and

RESOLVED: that a Vearse Farm Working Group meeting be arranged incorporating the previous membership except Bradpole Parish Council, and with the addition of Dorset Council, Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan JCC, the emerging Community Land Trust for Bridport, and any developers identified for the site.

RESOLVED: that Cllrs Sarah Carney, Dave Rickard and Dave Bolwell attend as representatives of Bridport Town Council.

28. SOCIAL DISTANCING

The Town Clerk reported on informal email discussions between members on social distancing, and in particular whether the Town Council should make a public statement about the issue, advising the public to wear masks. The discussion had not been conclusive and the Clerk asked for clarity in its instructions:

Members considered:

- Whether the Council should erect signs and make a statement as a Rights Respecting Town asking people to wear masks in shops and in busy pedestrian areas on market days.
- Whether the Council had the appropriate expertise to give advice on an already confused message to the public.
- The Council's role in looking after the community, and to give gentle direction.
- The possibility of antagonising the public through council signage.
- The possible need to keep changing the Council's position as Government advice changes.
- The lack of powers to enforce any Council guidance.
- Concerns about mixed messaging from different bodies.

After a vote with four members in favour and four against a proposal to make a public statement, on the casting vote of the Chairman it was

RESOLVED: that no public statement be made or signage erected by the Council giving guidance on social distancing and the wearing of masks in shops and busy pedestrianised areas.

29. COMMUNICATIONS AND ONGOING ISSUES

The Town Clerk reported on concerns raised regarding motorcyclists' behaviour in West Bay. Recent complaints had opposed the principle of accommodating the motorcyclists at the 'Welcome Hub', and raised issues in respect of noise, speeding and social distancing. He asked for members' guidance on possible actions.

The Town Surveyor asked whether the barriers erected at the Welcome Hub to promote distancing be removed, as these were possibly causing additional issues.

RESOLVED: that Standing Orders be suspended to allow Simon Miles to address the meeting.

Mr Miles said he had run a business in West Bay for 20 years and noted a growing disrespect for the motorcyclists, with concerns about noise from the motorcycles, speeding, and free parking for motorcycles. He considered that the revenue generated by the motorcyclists was not huge, and suggested that Poole be considered as an example. He was hearing more negative than positive feedback.

Members considered:

- The disrespect shown by those with noisy motorcycles.
- Why motorcycles were not required to pay for parking.
- Approaching the Police to be more involved in addressing speeding and noise.
- Possible provision of a parking area away from the Welcome Hub, which was not now working as intended due to the number of motorcycles.
- Whether removing the temporary barriers might be beneficial.
- The difficulties of enforcement if motorcyclists were required to pay.

The Town Surveyor said he would remove the barriers and assess the impact. The Town Clerk said he would engage with Dorset Council and the Police in respect of parking, noise and speeding.

Cllr Sarah Carney asked about an issue relating to Magna Housing Association. This would be included in the next meeting agenda.

The meeting closed at **8.43pm**.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 7 September 2020