

PLANNING FORUM

Notes of the meeting held on Thursday, 24 October 2002 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Tamlin (Chair); Caborn, Mrs Compton, Darmody, and Holland.

(Councillor Caborn substituted for Councillor Coker).

OFFICERS: John Archer (Head of Planning and Engineering) and Daryl Davies (Members' and Customer Services).

Representatives of Town and Parish Councils and Other Organisations etc

Barford, Wasperton and Sherbourne Joint Parish Council – Alan Roberts
Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council – Graham Leeke
Bubbenhall Parish Council/Council for the Protection of Rural England – Mr M Jeffs
Central Leamington Residents' Association - Mr L F Cave and Robin Brabban
Leamington Society - Paul Edwards
Newbold Comyn Area Residents' Association – Sally Dewhirst
Ramblers Association – Mr S G Wallsgrove
Royal Leamington Spa Chamber of Trade – John Curtis
Warwick Society – Roger Higgins
Whitnash Society/Warwick Gates Residents' Association – Paul Yarwood

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Boad and Guest, and Mr Alan Moore - Warwickshire Association of Parish Councils.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor Tamlin was appointed as the Chair of the Forum for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Mrs Compton was appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Forum for the ensuing year.

3. NOTES

The notes of the meeting held on 21 February 2002 were accepted, subject to

[1] Mr Jeffs being added to the attendance list, and

[2] the spelling of Newbold "Common" being corrected in the attendance list.

PLANNING FORUM (Continued)

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – ON-LINE

John Archer drew attention to the fact that planning applications could now be tracked via the District Council's website (www.warwickdc.gov.uk) and he encouraged members of the Forum to take advantage of the new development.

5. MATTERS ARISING

Agenda Item No. 7 – Warwick District Local Plan

John Archer explained that the publication of the first deposit of the Warwick District Local Plan had been delayed by staff illness. It was anticipated that it would be available in early 2003.

5. AIRPORT CONSULTATION EXERCISE - VIEWS OF FORUM MEMBERS

John Archer advised the Forum that Warwickshire County Council had commissioned Jacobs Consultancy to evaluate the Government's consultation paper on the future development of air transport in the Midlands. It sought to identify potential issues in terms of air scenarios, economic impact, surface access, environment impact and health impact from a Warwickshire perspective. The deadline for responses to the consultation was 30 November 2002.

Warwick District Council had worked closely with the County Council and the consultants, and the views of this authority were taken fully into account.

He referred to the following key points:-

Although the study broadly accepted the government's forecast of demand for air transport nationally, it considered that the need for the new airport in Warwickshire on the basis of air travel demand is in doubt.

The three potential development options at Birmingham International Airport were considered to have minimal impact on the environment of the County, due to distance from the Warwickshire boundary.

Existing major airports, particularly BIA, were more accessible and likely to provide a more 'sustainable' transport solution, particularly for Warwickshire. The environmental and health impact conclusions weighed against the development of a new airport in Warwickshire.

The expansion of Coventry Airport would have significant adverse impacts on the environment within Warwickshire.

In conclusion, the consultant's believed that there was not a case to support the proposal for the new airport and demand could be met by the more effective use of Birmingham airport to meet the region's air travel needs.

Members of the Forum spoke in opposition to the new airport in Warwickshire. Mr Jeffs, Bubbenhall Parish Council, expressed concern

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about potential expansion at Coventry and sought a firm response to any proposal for development there.

6. WARWICK RETAIL STUDY 2002 - UPDATE

John Archer reminded the Members of the Forum that the Council had commissioned DTZ, a national planning consultancy, to undertake a retail study to look at the three town centres in the district and consider how the Local Plan could best deliver an approach that would secure their long-term vitality and viability.

Mr Cave of the Central Leamington Residents' Association expressed the view that the findings of the study, which state that an area three times the size of the Regent Hotel and Key site E would be required for Leamington to be competitive with Solihull, should be challenged.

He feared that as there would be difficulties in achieving this in the urban area, this could lead to a large out of town shopping area and do nothing to enhance the viability of Leamington Spa.

Mr Archer stressed that the study was prepared to assist with Local Plan work. It suggested that for Leamington to maintain its role as an important retail centre it would be appropriate to consider the development of a significant additional amount of retail floor space in the Town centre. The report suggested that this may be up to 25,000 square metres. The report did not constitute Council policy. The issues it raised did require public debate and it was intended that this could take place through the development of the Local Plan.

7. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR ROGER HIGGINS ON BEHALF OF THE WARWICK SOCIETY

Roger Higgins of the Warwick Society asked the Forum to consider the apparent deterioration in a number of the listed aspects of Warwick's conservation area and what action could be taken to rectify it.

The Society maintained that there significant deterioration in the Warwick conservation area citing the general decay and encroaching foliage on some listed buildings. He also made specific reference to the Westgate Hotel site and the Eastgate clock tower.

He referred in particular to the view of Warwick Castle and the spoiling of it by car parking in public view. It was the society's view that persuasion should be used to address this issue.

John Archer did not accept that little work had been done in this area and highlighted a large number of examples where the Council had acted to undertake significant environmental improvement including the Market Place redevelopment and the Woolpack site. He stated that the Westgate Hotel site had secured the restoration of the buildings and advised the Forum that the Eastgate clock tower was the responsibility of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

8. ENVIRONMENT AND ROAD MARKINGS - WARWICK GATES RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

PLANNING FORUM (Continued)

Paul Yarwood introduced this item on behalf of the Warwick Gates Residents' Association, as the Chair was unable to attend the meeting.

Mr Yarwood accepted that some steps had been taken since the last meeting in terms of grass cutting and hedge maintenance. However, a number of the street had yet to be adopted and hoped this could be resolved without further delay. He referred to a copse area around which incidents of anti-social behaviour had occurred and asked whether this issue could be addressed.

In general, he expressed concern over a lack of co-ordination and sought a more proactive stance from the District Council in bringing this development up to an acceptable standard.

Mr Yarwood then made specific reference to a need for the reduction in the speed limit along Harbury Lane in light of the proposed sports development. He was particularly concerned by the potential danger to children and the elderly and referred to meetings involving the Police and the County Council concerning this matter.

In view of the concerns expressed, he asked that Warwick District Council write in support of a reduction in the speed limit.

In referring to the sports development, he requested that an awareness raising presentation be made to the community, so they are fully informed of these proposal.

Graham Leeke of Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council supported the comments made and suggested that a joint response to the County Council may be of use.

John Archer stated that the Council could not adopt roads until they were up to the required standard but did not have any powers to make the developers bring the road up to that required standard within any specified period.

Mr Archer gave an undertaking to examine the Planning Brief for the Heathcote site in respect of any speed restrictions referred to and advise Mr Yarwood accordingly. He also agreed to contact Leisure and Amenities in relation to the clearing out of the copse area.

9. A3 FOOD & DRINK CHANGE OF USE - CENTRAL LEAMINGTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Robin Brabban, on behalf of the Central Leamington Residents' Association introduced this item by referring to their concern regarding the proliferation of clubs, pubs and bars in Royal Leamington Spa.

He referred to a number of cases where the intended use shown on the planning application had been shown as a restaurant when in reality the premises had been a pub. He used the Slug and Lettuce as an example of this and indicated that this had caused a great deal of stress to local residents.

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CLARA requested that where the intended use was shown as being a restaurant, then a suitable condition should be applied, and he expressed concern that planning officers seem reluctant to do this.

During his presentation, Mr Brabban drew parallels with a case in Worcester where specific conditions had been applied.

In responding, John Archer stated that he understood the concerns of CLARA and suggested that it would be appropriate to meet with representatives of the Association to discuss this in more detail if they wished.

10. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Wednesday, 19 February 2003 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 7.00 p.m.

(The meeting ended at 9.20 p.m.)

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