



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Planning Meeting held in the Urchfont Village Hall on Tuesday 18th May 2021 (Version 2)

Present: Councillors: Botham (MB), Hollyman (MH), Stevens (DS), Rotherham (PR), Bamber (SB) and Turner (MT)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Councillor for Urchfont & Bishops Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Mrs M Kemp, Mr. R Kemp, Mr. L Cowen, Mrs C Cannon, Mr. T Hill, Mrs G Hill, Mrs B Potter, Mrs L Turner, Mr. G Day, Mrs V Day, Mr. S Clayton, Mr. P Cook, Mr. R Pirie, Mr. D Kinnaird, Mrs F Botham

1. **Declarations of Interest** – As a near neighbour, MH declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 4b
2. **Minutes of a meeting held on 14th April 2021**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	DS	MH	AGREED, two new councillors abstained

3. **Matters arising from Minutes of 14th April 2021** – Nothing raised

4. **Plans for discussion**

4a. **PL/2021/03176 - Proposed Timber frame garden outbuilding with pitched roof with clay pan tile roof at Margaret's Cottage, 3 Bulldog Lane , Urchfont, Devizes, SN10 4RS for Mr. Charlie Cook**

Site Visit: three councillors visited the site with the approval of but unaccompanied by the applicant on 17th May 2021.

Letters of Representation: none received or on the WC website

MT stated that UPC had been informed that a near neighbour to the property had consulted with the applicants and she had been assured that the plans are wrong, they quote the height of the roof to be 5.6m instead of 3.5m, and will be changed in due course. MH commented that UPC can only comment on the plans as submitted and not possible changes, he could not support this application. MB agreed with MH. MT commented that the proposal appears otherwise in keeping with the area.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To OBJECT to this application which has significant errors in the plans.	MB	MH	AGREED unanimously

4b. **21/01650/FUL – Proposed Installation of 18 roof integrated solar panels on south facing roof at 14 Manor Farmyard, Urchfont, SN10 4BA for Mr. Simon Clayton**

Site Visit: Two councillors visited and met with the applicant on 17th May 2021

Letters of Representation: 8 letters of representation are on the WC website, 5 objecting and 3 in support.

BL confirmed that all correspondence he had received on this application had been copied to councillors prior to the meeting.

Members of the public were invited to speak.

Mr. Clayton emphasized the need to stop emitting unnecessary carbon, good progress is being made generally but there is a long way to go to satisfy UK and local targets. He appreciated that his application is somewhat controversial in the conservation area in particular, but he is following the permitted development criteria requiring full planning permission. The properties in Manor Farmyard already benefit from good insulation and air sourced heating, but none of these generate electricity which can benefit the property owner and the wider electric grid and population.

Mr. Pirie is a close neighbour. He said that the front of his house would be overlooked from one side by the solar panels, and along with several of our neighbours, he objected strongly to the proposal. I notice that one supporter wrote saying they wouldn't be seen from outside the development – but for us who live there they would be an intrusive eyesore. My wife and family care deeply about the environment, and have done so for years. What sold us on Manor Farmyard was its location and the obvious combination of imagination, pride and environmental awareness that had gone into the development. This was thanks in many ways to the forethought and doggedness of locals that things were done right, and the sheer quality of the homes – both individually and as a grouping of new-build properties within a conservation area. Aesthetically and environmentally we were presented with what seemed like a perfect package, with air sourced heat pumps, generous insulation, substantial double glazing and large courtyards through which rainwater could actually pass (as opposed to block paving). Environmentally, Manor Farmyard already sets a very high standard. However, it would only take a misplaced roof-light or dormer window, a one-off coat of non-matching paint, or the construction of an unsightly building extension – and even an out-of-character array of solar panels – to erode the visual appeal of this asset to the village. Mr Pirie also questioned why the normal WC Green Planning Notice had not been displayed locally for this application, he understood that this was because of COVID restrictions and that neighbours had been directly informed by WC Planning. However, a public notice would have made the application more widely available for public comment.

Mr. Cook believed that the fact that you live in the conservation area should trump such an application which, if approved, may well set a precedent for a proliferation of panels within the community.

Mr. Kinnaird strongly supported all that Mr. Clayton had said at this meeting and in his application, he said that we do not have long to help the environment and believed that the use of solar panels will inevitably increase. This is something we all need to get used to.

Mr. Hollyman (MH) said that he lives next door to Mr Clayton and is generally in favour of solar panels. However, the Manor Farmyard development was subject to several planning applications over a number of years with strong objection from the public for a variety of reasons before it was finally approved. He believed that the installation of solar panels in the Farmyard would totally destroy the appearance within the conservation area and if approved by WC would set a precedent for the surrounding area in the Village. MH outlined the legal position, specifically that 'Solar panels are not prohibited in a conservation area, but must conform to strict rules'. With regard to this application, the following applies, 'The panels must not significantly alter the majority of the appearance of any buildings', which in this case it does.

DS believed that any environmental proposal should be supported, this proposal facilitates installation of up to date integrated panels rather than the old style of solar panels. He also pointed out that there are already solar panels elsewhere in the Urchfont conservation area visible from the highway, including in the road where he lives.

SB could understand the proposal better if the houses had old style heat sources such as oil, but these properties appear to be well served by environmentally friendly sources already. Mr. Clayton responded to SB by saying that all existing systems use electricity, they do not generate electricity as is the case with solar panels.

MT stated that after hearing the cases, both for and against the Planning Application he believed that the installation of the solar panels **will** detract from the original design and overall appearance of the Conservation Area of Manor Farmyard, which goes against the principles and conditions set out for it.

MB expressed concern that approval of this application by WC will set a precedent for the proliferation of solar panels within the conservation area.

Proposal	Proposer	Secunder	Resolution
Urchfont Parish Council OBJECTS to planning application 21/01650/FUL on the basis that it would spoil the appearance of the building within the Conservation Area.	MT	MH	AGREED, 1 vote against

5. Decisions received from Wiltshire Council up to 10th May 2021

5a. 21/01583/FUL - Rear oak framed extension at Spring Cottage, 1 The Bottom, Urchfont, SN10 4SF – APPROVED

5b. 21/01116/FUL - Formation of driveway. Erection of fence and relocation of oil tank at Carina, Uphill, Urchfont, SN10 4SB – APPROVE with conditions

6. Matters for Report – None raised at the meeting.

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting: Tuesday 8th June 2021 (pre-registration is likely to again be required to attend – see details on the agenda.