

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
**(Cadwell, Codicote, Graveley & Wymondley, Hitchwood, Hoo, Kimpton,
Knebworth and Offa Wards)**

**Meeting held in the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
On 27 April 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: *Councillor D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Mrs C.P.A. Strong (Vice-Chairman), Alan Bardett, Tricia Gibbs, D.J. Horrell, Sal Jarvis, David Miller and K. Omer.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Senior Planning Officer, Area Planning Officer, Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area and Committee & Member Services Officer.*

ALSO PRESENT: *15 members of the public.*

145. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

146. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

147. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

148. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made during the meeting.

149. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs Cleverdon had given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding traffic problems in Bury Lane, Codicote. She informed the Committee that there were frequent problems on that road with cars mounting the pavement when negotiating the bends in the road, which meant pedestrians were worried for their safety.

Mrs Cleverdon stated that, whilst there had not been a fatality in the road, there had been several accidents, including a serious incident in January which had left the victim unable to work and witnesses very shaken. However, when Hertfordshire Highways had been approached and asked for traffic calming measures in the road, residents had been told that they were not warranted because there had not been any fatalities, despite the road being used as a rat run for traffic travelling to and from Stevenage.

Mrs Cleverdon presented the Committee with a petition on behalf of residents of Bury Lane, requesting traffic calming measures in Bury Lane to prevent further accidents.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Cleverdon for her presentation and accepted the petition on behalf of the Committee. He informed Mrs Cleverdon that the petition would be forwarded to the meeting of the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel to be held on 26 June 2006 for consideration.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the formal receipt of the petition be confirmed;
- (2) That the petition be forwarded to the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel.

**RECOMMENDED TO THE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP
– JOINT MEMBER PANEL**

- (1) That the North Hertfordshire District Manager consider the details contained in the petition requesting traffic calming measures in Bury Lane;
- (2) That after investigation of the above recommendation, the North Hertfordshire District Manager be requested to present a report to the next meeting of the Joint Member Panel to be held on 26 June 2006.

Mr A.M. Harcourt had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00369/1 – Gosmore Hill Wood, Preston Road, Gosmore. Mr Harcourt was speaking as an objector to the application.

Mr Harcourt stated that he felt that close study of the conditions showed that they could be misapplied to allow permanent letting and extension of the existing log cabin. He particularly drew the Committee's attention to the applicant's request to erect a shed on the site for storage of play and garden maintenance equipment and rotary washing lines (as required by proposed condition 2 in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control). As no size, design or restricted use of this shed was specified, Mr Harcourt felt that this could result in a second cabin being built.

The Chairman thanked Mr Harcourt for addressing the Committee and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered by the Committee when determining the application.

Mrs S. Wilyeo had given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00324/1 – 14 Bedford Road, Ickleford. Mrs Wilyeo was speaking as an objector to the application.

Mrs Wilyeo informed the Committee that the proposed development was not in keeping with the surrounding properties and that numbers 12 and 14 Bedford Road were built as semi-detached houses and should remain so. She also expressed concern that the development would result in additional traffic accessing Bedford Road, which was a very busy road that was also used by people walking their children to school.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Wilyeo for addressing the Committee and informed her that the points she had raised would be considered by the Committee when determining the application.

Mr Martin Ledger had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00339/1 – Greenacres, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn. Mr Ledger was speaking as the applicant's agent.

Mr Ledger explained the applicant's personal circumstances to the Committee, which had resulted in the need for alterations to the properties. He informed the Committee that the applicant had unsuccessfully looked for alternative suitable properties in Hertfordshire, or for an appropriate plot of land that was big enough to accommodate the construction of the two new properties required.

Mr Ledger further stated that, whilst there was a slight increase in the size of the buildings, the application would result in an improvement to the overall appearance of the site, more in keeping with the rest of the surroundings. He also stated that other properties in the area had been granted permission to make alterations which had resulted in increases of size greater than this application, and the applicant felt penalised by the officer's recommendation in this instance.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ledger for addressing the Committee and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered by the Committee when determining the application.

150. NAMING OF NEW DEVELOPMENT AT LAND REAR OF 123 LONDON ROAD, KNEBWORTH, HERTS

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services, which asked the Committee to determine the name of a new development of 22 flats at land to the rear of 123 London Road, Knebworth.

In view of the officer's recommendation that developments should only be named after people who were deceased, the Committee felt that it might be a fitting tribute to name the development after County Councillor Robert Ellis, who had died on 21 March 2006, in recognition of his long service to the parishes of Knebworth and Codicote. The Committee requested the officers approach County Councillor Ellis's family to discuss the matter and gain their approval.

RESOLVED: That the development at the rear of 123 London Road, Knebworth be named Robert Ellis Court, subject to the agreement of County Councillor Ellis's family. Should that name not be agreed, the development shall be named St Martins Court.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the formal naming of the development.

151. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee heard the following oral representations:

- Mr A.M. Harcourt – planning application reference 06/00369/1 – Gosmore Hill Wood, Preston Road, Gosmore
- Mrs S. Wilyeo – planning application reference 06/00324/1 – 14 Bedford Road, Ickleford
- Mr M. Ledger – planning application reference 06/00339/1 – Greenacres, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn

Details of these representations can be found above at Minute 149.

RESOLVED: To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Planning & Building Control as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

SCHEDULE

Reference Number	Description of Development and location	Decision
06/00369/1	Gosmore Hill Wood, Preston Road, Gosmore Change of use of overnight sleeping accommodation for private recreational use to holiday letting purposes.	REFUSED (See (a) below)
06/00324/1	14 Bedford Road, Ickleford Two storey extension to side of existing dwelling to provide two 1 bedroom flats with two car	GRANTED (See (b) below)

parking spaces.

06/00132/1	Land at 6 Raymond Cottages, Upper Green, Ickleford Two storey 3 bedroom dwelling following demolition of existing single storey side extension to existing dwelling (as amended by drawing nos. 2005/29/SK02 Rev A and PL 001B received 28/03/2006)	GRANTED (As per report)
06/00247/1	6-12 (even); 18-24 (even); 26-32 (even); 34-40 (even); 42-52 (even); 5-9 (odd); 13-19 (odd); 21-27 (odd) Strathmore Road, Whitwell External repairs and replacement cladding	GRANTED (As per report)
06/00339/1	Greenacres, Pottersheath Road, Welwyn Demolition of existing structure and construction of two storey 4 bedroom welling and 3 bedroom bungalow.	REFUSED (As per report)
06/00291/1HH	Red House, Gustard Wood, Wheathampstead Two storey rear extension and rear conservatory. Two storey front/side extension incorporating double garage. New vehicular access and entrance gates.	GRANTED (See (c) below)

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00369/1, planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason:

By reason of the likely increased activities and other paraphernalia resulting from the use of the building for commercial holiday letting purposes, in comparison with its lawful use for overnight sleeping accommodation associated with its private recreational use, the proposal would have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. As a result no very special circumstances exist to allow a relaxation of Green Belt policy and the proposal is contrary to the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991-2011, Policy 5 – Green Belt and the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with alterations, Policy 2 – Green Belt, Policy 12 – Landscape conservation, Improvement and Creation and Policy 25 – Re-use of rural Buildings.

- (b) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00324/1, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control and the following additional conditions:

5. *The development shall not be brought into use until the proposed access has been constructed to the current specification of the Highway Authority and to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.*

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and amenity.

6. *The access works shall not be commenced until detailed plans are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure the access is constructed to the current Highway Authority's specification in the interest of highway safety and amenity.

7. *Before the access is first brought into use 2.0 metre x 2.0 metre pedestrian visibility splays shall be provided and permanently maintained on each side of the access. They shall be measured from the point where the edges of the accessway cross the highway boundary 2 metres into the site and 2 metres along the highway boundary therefore forming a triangular visibility splay within which there shall be no obstruction to visibility between 600mm and 2.4 metres above the carriageway/footway level.*

Reason: To provide adequate visibility for drivers entering and leaving the site.

8. *The development shall not be brought into use until a properly consolidated and surfaced turning area has been provided within the curtilage of the site.*

Reason: So that vehicles may enter and leave the site in forward gear.

9. *The development shall not be brought into use until the proposed parking spaces have been provided and permanently maintained thereafter.*

Reason: To ensure the development makes adequate provision for off-street parking and manoeuvring of vehicles likely to be associated with its use.

- (c) With regard to planning application reference 06/00291/1HH, the Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the applicant had amended the application to remove the entrance gates.

The Committee then **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control.

152. PLANNING APPEALS

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 16 March 2006:

Appellant	Mr N. Morter
Reference number	05/01513/1
Address	Land between public footpath 19 and 2 Danesbury Lane,
Proposal	Welwyn
Method	Erection of 4 bedroom detached dwelling with attached garage and new vehicular access off Danesbury Lane. Written representations.

Appellant	Mr P. Gallagher
Reference number	05/01453/1
Address	Land at Meadowcroft, Mangrove Road, Cockernhoe
Proposal	Outline application: One dwelling with detached double garage
Method	(design, external appearance and landscaping reserved)

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 16 March 2006:

Appellant	Odyssey Group Ltd
Reference number	05/01111/1

Address Odyssey Health and Fitness Club, Old Knebworth Road Lane, Stevenage
Proposal Formation of new vehicular access and ancillary engineering operations to facilitate construction of associated internal link access road.
Decision Appeal DISMISSED.

Appellant Mr & Mrs Dixon
Reference number 05/01207/1
Address Land rear of Elm Cottage, Chequers Lane, Preston
Proposal Outline application: 4 bedroom dwelling with detached garage (siting, design and external appearance reserved)
Decision Appeal DISMISSED

153. SOUTHERN RURAL CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area since the meeting of the Committee held on 16 March 2006, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area drew the Committee's attention to the different types of Parish funding that was available for the 2006/2007 financial year. In response to questions from the Committee, he confirmed that additional help would be given to Parish Councils and other organisations applying for funds, and that the guidance notes on the application process for those funds were available on the Council's website. Councillor Sal Jarvis suggested that an additional web page with a very basic summary of each of the different types of grant was required, so that people could tell which to apply for without having to read through each detailed set of guidance notes.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural area communities be endorsed;
- (3) That officers be requested to produce an additional web page for the North Hertfordshire District Council website to provide an outline summary of each of the different types of Parish funding available.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in the Southern Rural area.

154. SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT & AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2006/7

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) The report was intended to apprise Members of the financial resources available to this Committee. It drew attention to the current budgetary situation, assisted in the effective financial management of the Committee's budget and ensured actions were performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure;
- (2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

155. ENFORCEMENT ACTION UPDATES

The Chairman introduced an additional item of business relating to updates on enforcement action. He stated that when the Committee authorised enforcement they had requested reports to be brought back to subsequent meetings to update Members on the outcome of that action, and asked the Area Planning Officer why those reports had not come to Committee.

In his response, the Area Planning Officer made reference to the new practice following the Area Governance review of circulating information-only items through the Members Information Service rather than at Committee. He also stated that there were resourcing problems in the planning enforcement section at the moment, following the retirement of John Cole, and that an improved system for monitoring and updating Members on enforcement action was required.

The Committee expressed their dissatisfaction with the current situation as regards providing updates on enforcement action authorised by Committee and asked that a report detailing the current situation on enforcement actions authorised by the Committee be brought to its meeting to be held on 1 June 2006. They also suggested that an ongoing monitoring system in the form of a table in the Members Information Service could be used to track progress on enforcement action throughout the District in the future.

156. IDENTIFICATION OF OFFICERS IN MINUTES

The Chairman introduced a further item for consideration by the Committee. He explained that he was concerned that officers were only identified in Minutes by their job titles and not by name. This would mean that people looking at the Minutes at a later date would not be aware of the exact people who were present if, for example, more than one person had the same job title (such as the Area Planning Officers and the Committee & Member Services Officers), or if a person had been newly appointed to a post.

The Committee acknowledged the concerns of the Chairman and supported his desire for officers to be identified by name in Minutes, as well as by job title.

157. ELECTIONS 2006

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Councillors D.J. Horrell and K. Omer, who were standing down at the elections on 4 May 2006, for their work and input into the Committee during their time as Councillors. He wished them all the best for the future.

The Chairman also wished all those standing for election on 4 May 2006 good luck.

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

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Chairman