

CARLTON cum WILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held in St Peters Church On Tuesday 3 September 2024

Present: - Kate Homan, Polly Fenwick, Paul Archer, Robert Foster, Nicki Whetstone, Robert Ensich, Gregory Franco, Edith Osborn as Clerk, Henry Batchelor - County Councillor,

The Applicant and Agent. Some parishioners.

A quorum was established.

1 Apologies: Geoff Harvey – District Councillor

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no new Declarations of Interest.

3 Open Forum for public participation

The Chair requested that councillors allow the parishioners to have an opportunity to speak and this was approved by all councillors.

Comments on the application were made and relevant responses noted as below:

One parishioner noted that the tone of the Agent's email on the SCDC portal was not acceptable. She raised points relating to increase in traffic and that the land had not been used as a scrapyard for years.

The Agent's response was that under planning law, the use of the land was as a scrapyard even if not being used as one. The Highways Officer has checked the traffic levels and the impact of movements by church attendees is less than movements arising from a dwelling.

The Agent also noted that there is no restriction in planning for days when the building is useable. The proposed days of use are Sunday at 6am and one other day. Planning can restrict the use on certain days.

Parking – are the parking spaces sufficient? Yes

Would a 6am service be disruptive? – Freedom of Interest requests at other halls has shown they haven't led to any disruption. A comparison was drawn to Button End, Harston.

Would there be a change in the catchment area feeding the chapel at Weston Colville? -The Church like to keep the congregation to circa 35 people attending and Weston Colville has become too large now. The Church at Quy was set up to alleviate the area.

It was noted that there were no Church residents in Carlton.

Would the size of the building restrict the number of people attending – the building is set up for a few families only.

In planning law, a place of worship has value to the community.

Can you join the religion as an adult? Yes

The building is not in alignment with the others in the street.

An empty building is an issue in terms of security – a local family in Brinkley would attend if an alarm went off. There have not been break-ins at the other churches.

What is the rationale for leaving the building empty. – Part of the belief is to have exclusive use.

CARLTON cum WILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The building will not be part of the community – the site has planning permission for a house to be built but it has not been built.

The National Planning Framework wants villages to thrive. Under Para 83 the building would not be in keeping with the framework.

A place of worship will benefit the village, people have to travel locally to shop etc. It is a benefit as many churches are closing.

The Planning Officer has to consider the definition of community which is a narrow view. There is confusion between planning policy and planning statute.

It is hard to prove that the Church will not inconvenience people.

The view from Willingham Green residents is that housing is preferable to a church. Material planning considerations need to be taken into account.

The new government is reforming planning nationally and in Carlton housing would be the likely need on that site.

A Neighbourhood Plan could be set up in order to designate areas for housing.

The land at the rear of the site could not be developed for bio-diversity reasons.

What about lighting? – security lighting would be installed

Do members of the religion speak to their neighbours? – The Applicant had approached the parishioners and attended this meeting

Will there be signage on the building? – there would be a small name sign.

In the application there is a fence around the site – Hedging would be more acceptable.

Was Pre-app advice sought from SCDC? - No

4 Planning applications

24/02823/FUL Demolition of existing buildings and development of place of worship, with car parking and associated landscaping.

Site address: Land south of Willingham Green Road, Carlton, Cambridgeshire

It was clear that the community preference for use of the plot was housing.

The Parish Council represent the Parish so support the residents' views.

A reply to this planning application citing objections will be submitted from the Parish Council.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

The Meeting closed at 9.22pm