

## **LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2012 AT THE PAVILION, LITTLE MARLOW**

**The purpose of this meeting was to recommend to the Parish Council what to do about the pre-application consultation for an Athletics Track on land owned by Little Marlow Trust adjacent to Westhorpe Farm Lane.**

**Present: Councillors: Mrs. B.K. Wallis, Chairman of the Planning Committee, D.D. Banfield, Chairman Little Marlow Parish Council, and Councillors Mrs V.A. Brownridge, P.C. Emmett, G.A. Fitchew, R. Mash, Mrs. R.R. Taylor, C.S. Innocent (from 8.30pm) and Mrs. G.J. Barclay, Clerk to the Council.**

**Also present were 31 members of the public and one member of the press.**

**Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. H. Midgley.**

#### **Welcome and Outline of the Meeting**

Mrs Wallis welcomed those present and gave the following introductory remarks:

1. This is not a planning application, so we must not come to a decision as to the merits or otherwise of the case for the Athletics Track.
2. Our comments should be sent to the Property Department at WDC with copies to Norman Weiss, the running and athletics clubs, Savills and our District Councillors.
3. I have looked at Wycombe District Council's information about the need for public consultation and I think that the interested parties (for want of a better description) have probably followed the correct procedures for a Tier 2 application
4. However, I am disappointed that following the exhibition and the Community Partnership's questions little was done to provide the evidence base to show that there are very special circumstances for the development to take place in the Green Belt and adjacent to the Chilterns AONB.

#### **Planning Application**

A planning application should therefore include

- maps showing the places from which people travel to the present athletics track (the two running clubs could organise this);
- evidence that other possible places for an athletics track have been investigated and the reasons for rejecting them;
- numbers of people using the Handy Cross track and the days and times they go there;
- a list of schools that use the track and accurate information on the days and times they use it and how the pupils get there;
- accurate information on the number of weekend events and the numbers of spectators;
- vehicle figures for the present use of Winchbottom Lane and Marlow Road;
- large scale accurate maps showing the access to the site and possible solutions to the entrance and exit from Westhorpe Farm Lane;
- evidence that there is adequate parking for users and spectators on site
- photographs of the site from various places including the AONB; it should be

possible to do a photomontage showing how the athletics track would fit in the landscape;

- a statement of plant and equipment needed to maintain the site and where this is to be stored
- evidence that the supply of fresh water and the treatment of foul water have been adequately dealt with
- an assessment of noise pollution and light pollution locally
- a fully researched assessment on the effects on the habitats of local wildlife and what solutions are proposed to preserve these
- an undertaking from the landowner that he would provide other benefits for the Country Park e.g. community football pitches, permissive footpaths and cycle paths and evidence that current paths will be maintained;
- information from other consultees e.g. Thames Water, the police, the Environment Agency as to what they think of the site.

### **Questions and Comments from Little Marlow Parish Councillors**

1. Sustainability of the Site  
How will the site be funded in the longer term after capital costs have been paid?
2. Security of the Site  
How will the site be secured? It would likely need some sort of lighting, so how would this affect light pollution over and above that used for the events on the track?  
Security measures would also contradict the site facilities being usable by the public as part of the Country Park.
3. Can the existing building really be converted? Details will be needed as part of the planning application.

### **Questions from the Public**

1. The car park could be used by travellers
2. The access road needs confirmation in any planning application. It needs confirmation that Westhorpe Farm Lane cannot be used for access.
3. Will the access road be tree-screened?
4. Concerns were raised about parking in Winchbottom Lane and other nearby roads.
5. Where footpaths open onto roads they should be clearly shown on any plans with accurate drawings of where such paths would be for safety reasons,
6. Concern that they may be future 'add-ons' at the site
7. This is seen as an 'enabling' project so that the land at the current site at Handy Cross can be used for development.
8. The Marlow Football Club inquiry mentioned a 'sports hub' east of Marlow. Could this proposal open up the site of the refused football stadium?
9. What is the difference between this proposal and the football club proposal? – the answer is that this proposal does not include new buildings and is better screened.

10. Is the land to be purchased or leased? It is believed that it is to be leased for a 30 year period with the intention of extending this to a longer period.
11. Detailed drawings of how the barn would be used are required from WDC showing accurate internal layouts.
12. An Environmental study should be included in any planning application when or if it is submitted.
13. At the public exhibition, Charles Brocklehurst, WDC, said that the funding could go elsewhere, but is funding for this project specified?
14. Westhorpe Farm is not in the Country Park area.
15. Will the site need a custodian's house? If the site is to be properly secure, it would need someone on-site all the time.
16. At the public exhibition, a building near to the Queens Head was shown on the drawings. Is this part of the proposals?
17. The running track is generally supported, but it is not considered that this is the best site
18. There was concern over timings for the proposal. Mr Brocklehurst had said to a member of the public that the application would be fast-tracked so that work could start in April 2013, but Mrs Wallis explained that any application would need to go through the usual processes which would take longer than this suggested time period.
19. In a letter from Alex Collingwood, leader of WDC to Dominic Grieve, MP, it was stated that he believes the application will be placed in August.
20. Who will submit the application? Would it be Wycombe District Council, Norman Weiss, the running clubs or Savills.
21. Concern was expressed that WDC/BCC have not planned properly after the selling off of school playing fields for development and then requiring land to re-locate the running track.

## **Summing Up**

Residents can set up an Action Group. The Parish Council will respond when a planning application is received.

**Resolution: That the committee recommends that the Parish Council thanks WDC Property Services, Mr Norman Weiss and the Running and Athletics Clubs for consulting the residents of Little Marlow and suggests that they include the above evidence in any subsequent planning application so that the Council may make an informed decision on the merits of the case.**