

Wilstock and Stockmoor Forum

Notes from the meeting held on 24th September 2018 at Somerset Bridge School

Attendees (who signed the attendance record)

Cllrs A Bradford (Chairman), A Fraser, L Spelman Ives and R Ives.

P MacLaurin, C Taylor, N Taylor, L Pickersgill, S Pickersgill, D Barge, J Barge, J Harrison, J Boulton, S Boulton, F McAlorum, E Kay, D Weeks, and H Phillips, R Latham (Town Clerk).

- 1. Country Park** The Clerk updated the meeting on the current position with regard to the completion of the Country Park, based on information received from Sedgemoor Planning Department. The Council and developers are currently working on agreeing the commuted sum. This process has so far involved costing up the site as specified on their plans and relative to the developers' management schedule (which was the point they were at when we were last updated), a site visit to assess current planting and discuss management regimes and a meeting to agree different maintenance approaches to these areas and connectivity within and through the Country Park. They are now awaiting a revised plan specifying these areas and a management schedule to confirm the different requirements to agree the figure. The meeting involved Dawn de Vries, Stuart Houlet, (Planning) Larry Burrows (County Ecologist), Scott Mason and Dave Aggett (Parks and Gardens), Paul Moody from Persimmon and Ian Gazzard from Bloor. Once a commuted figure has been agreed they should be able to move the 106 agreement and the site forward.
Notwithstanding this hold up, a degree of work is being undertaken currently by the developers on the site to deliver the Country Park and there are three wooden bridges to the western edge of the site due to go in before the end of October. Works are also underway on the pond areas at the moment before the winter hits. There are a couple of bridges to the east of the site that are not able to be put in at the moment due to ecological constraints restricting timing of works although these are being lined up to go in when they are able. The poor condition of the steel bridge over the rhine was remarked upon.
- 2. MUGA.** Questions were raised about progress on the Multi Use Games Areas. It was understood that, as groundworks were underway by Bloors, something could be expected next spring or summer. Nothing was known about the one in Stockmoor. The absence of anyone from either of the developers meant that this could not be taken further. The Town Clerk agreed to let them know how frustrated people were by this non attendance.
- 3. Gateway development.** The Clerk reported on information he had received from Phil Wade about progress with the development. They have now completed all of the infrastructure to serve the business park, including new estate roads, cycle and footpaths and all the necessary utilities to serve each of the development plots including cctv. The footpaths and cyclepaths will remain closed to public access until such as time as it is safe to open them; this will be on a phased basis as buildings are delivered. They are currently out to tender for the first phase of the landscape planting of new trees that they hope to plant over the dormant winter season.

They have recently commenced with the building of the first hotel on site a 100 bed Premier Inn; the foundations were poured the previous week and this will be completed by early Summer next year. It was pointed out that local people had been promised site visits and a request was made that the linkages to the Hinkely Point project should be clarified, as this had been a key part of the grant of planning permission. The Clerk agreed to forward these issues on, and it was hoped that someone from Gateway would be able to come to the next meeting.

4. **Police matters.** It had been hoped that someone from the Police would attend the meeting to explain how the new proposals on community policing would affect the villages. However, again unfortunately, no one had come. The Clerk stated that his understanding was that the new team would cover both Wilstock, Stockmoor and the rest of the North Petherton area.
5. **Parking.** This continued to be a major issue with a number of examples being cited. Police had visited some problem areas, but, as regular enforcement was not taking place, nothing was really changing. The continuing delay in road adoptions by the County Council was clearly making it difficult to achieve progress.
6. **Highways.** It was pointed out that, despite being asked, Bloors had done nothing to improve the appearance of the “bus gate” and Persimmon had not taken down the main Stockmoor advertising hoarding, nor removed the redundant street furniture. Problems were still occurring with the traffic light system on the Huntworth roundabout leading into the villages. Whilst grounds maintenance work was being undertaken, a number of areas that were not being addressed were pointed out.
7. **Planning and development.** It was understood that the land adjacent to the shops in Stockmoor was due to be cleared soon. There was some confusion about whether or not the new primary school in Wilstock was going ahead, given the financial situation of the County Council. Work on developing the Wilstock Hub was proceeding, particularly in relation to submitting grant bids.
8. **Conclusion.** Cllr Bradford commented on the lower attendance than usual, both among town councillors and residents. Although he believed that good progress had been made in solving some of the problems, it was clear that issues remained and it was, therefore, important that momentum was maintained and that key players, who had the power to do things, should be strongly encouraged to attend future meetings. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 26th November 2018.

The meeting closed at 8:35 pm