



# Skipton Town Council

15/

Environment & Planning Committee  
Thursday 24 September 2015  
7.00 pm

- Present: Councillors Whitaker (Chairman), C Clark, Emmerson, Hickman, Harbron, Paton, Rankine and Bell.
- Other Members: Councillors W Clark, E Jaquin, Mrs P Heseltine and R Heseltine.
- Officers: Dave Parker (Chief Officer) and Les Chandler (Estate Manager).  
Ken Martin (North Yorkshire County Council).
- Press: Lesley Tate (Craven Herald).
- 48 members of the public.

1. To accept representations from the Public between 7.00 pm and 7.15 pm.

The Chief Officer explained that, in relation to planning applications, the Town Council is merely a statutory consultee and that the decision-making body is the local planning authority. He reminded the members of the public present that, as well as advising the Town Council of their views, they can also make representations in writing and in person to the District Council's Planning Committee.

The Chairman established that no-one wished to make a sound or video recording of proceedings. He also advised that, in view of the number of people wishing to speak on separate items on the agenda, he would allow for specific representations to be made before each item rather than all at the beginning of the meeting.

2. To accept apologies for absence.

None.

3. To record declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests of items on the Agenda.

None.

4. To consider the recommendations of the Chief Officer relating to requests for dispensations to Members on items requiring a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

None.

5. To accept the minutes from the previous meeting on 30 July 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the previous meeting held on 30 July 2015 as a true and fair record of what transpired at that meeting.

6. To report and receive information arising from the minutes of items not on the agenda from members and the Chief Officer.

None.

7. To consider planning application reference 63/2015/16113 – residential dwellings on Harrogate Road.

Several members of the public made representations to the Committee, all identifying reasons why the Town Council should object to the proposed development, as follows:

- The footpath links shown on the site plan emerge from the development onto busy roads with no pedestrian footway: the links on the south side will bring pedestrians face-to-face with fast-moving traffic on Harrogate Road; those on the north will bring pedestrians into conflict with traffic on the busy and winding Embsay Road.
- The town lacks the education, medical and other community facilities required to sustain the proposed development.
- The proposed development flies in the face of the 'Craven Local Plan' which has not designated the site for development – there are other parts of the town which are better suited for additional housing.
- The number and type of houses either planned or being built at present is sufficient for Skipton to meet the '5-Year Land Supply' target for housing development – there is no need for the development on Harrogate Road.
- There have been two previous applications for housing development on the site in the last 26 years, both of which were rejected as detrimental to what is a prominent and attractive landscape.
- The site is an important habitat for wildlife and should be protected - 55 bird species have been recorded there in the last five years.
- Another 83 car-owning households will add considerably to Skipton's already congested streets and create problems in the local area for elderly residents and for families accompanying children to school.

Signed by Chairman .....

- The proposal represents over-development: the District Council's 'land availability assessment' envisages only 40 houses on the site, not the 83 proposed.
- Although the developer has labelled the land as a brown field site (presumably because a corner of the site was used as a chicken farm) it is actually a green field site.

In addition to these representations Members noted a written submission from a local resident which reflected many of the same issues and also raised concerns about the developer's proposals for dealing with surface water run-off.

A member of the public also pointed out that the old barn on the site, which is to be retained under the proposed development, is structurally unsafe and a magnet for anti-social behaviour. Before the development can go ahead it will be necessary to allocate responsibility for the future maintenance of the barn.

Councillor Jaquin left the meeting.

Members acknowledged the issues raised by members of the public and noted, as well, that the development could result in the loss of valuable trees, many of which are covered by preservation orders.

Because of these concerns it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should object to the proposed development on the following grounds:

(a) Housing Land Allocation

The five-year housing allocation, as set out in the Craven District Council emerging Local Plan, has already been reached. So, although the land has been included within the SHLAA (with an estimated capacity for 40 dwellings) there is no evidence of need for an additional development of this size.

(b) Previous Planning Decisions

It is probably worth noting, at this stage, that an application for a residential development on this site was previously refused in 1989. Whilst one of the reasons for refusal (ie that the land was not, at that time, allocated for residential development in the then draft Local Plan) is clearly no longer relevant, the second reason for refusal, the Committee feel, is still pertinent.

The refusal states: "The District Planning Authority considers that the site of the proposed development forms part of an attractive open area which is important to the setting of the town by reason of its prominent location at one of the principal approaches to the town and its relationship to the immediate environs of Skipton Castle."

(c) Over-development

The Committee feels that the number of proposed dwellings is excessive and represents an overdevelopment of the site – particularly given that the emerging Local Plan acknowledges the suitability of the site as being 40 dwellings, less than half of that being proposed.

Signed by Chairman .....

## (d) Sustainability

The Committee feels that, given the proposed quantity of dwellings, the development is unsustainable in terms of local services. In particular, the Committee feels that already stretched local schools and doctor's surgeries would be unable to cope with the increased demand.

## (e) Highways Impact &amp; Road Safety

The Committee believes that there is already evidence of congestion on The Bailey, particularly at the point where it joins Skipton High Street. The development would add to this congestion and would put further strain on Skipton High Street, particularly at peak hours where both the roundabout at the War Memorial and the High Street itself are susceptible to delays.

Additionally, the Committee is concerned that a number of footpaths and access 'gates' to the proposed development indicate a lack of local knowledge. It appears that some of the suggested pedestrian entry points open up onto adjoining roads with little or no pedestrian footways.

Members of the public made representations to the Committee citing their concerns that additional traffic to and from the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on pedestrians using parts of The Bailey – and, in particular, school children who regularly use the route when walking to and from school. The Committee would ask that this concern be raised with the Highway Authority to ascertain their view.

## (f) Drainage &amp; Flood Risk

The Committee has some concerns about the water run-off provisions within the proposed development given that it would not benefit directly from the Flood Alleviation Scheme currently planned.

## (g) Trees

The Committee is concerned at the likely loss of established trees within the development site, many of which have existing preservation orders.

Councillor Jaquin re-joined the meeting.

8. To consider issues surrounding general advertising signage, including A-boards, in the town.

Several members of the public made representations to the Committee on the subject of advertising signage in the town, as follows:

- Pavements obstructed by advertising boards, café tables, market stalls, retailers' stock, and parked cars represent a very real hazard to the elderly and the infirm, especially those with sight issues.
- There can be as many as forty five A-boards on the High Street, at any one time.
- The legislation relating to obstruction of the highway, and to the display of advertising banners and posters, needs to be enforced more rigorously.

Signed by Chairman .....

- Only banners and posters advertising local events should be allowed, and a restriction should be imposed on the length of time that banners and posters can be displayed (there are currently signs around the town for places as far away as Pickering, some of them advertising events which are six months off).
- The County, District and Town Councils should work in concert to address this issue.

In addition to these representations Members noted a written submission from a local resident which echoed the points raised.

Given the need to reconcile public safety and the requirements of local businesses it was **RESOLVED** that the Council's Chief Officer and Town Centre Manager, as resources allow and in liaison with the County Council, should draw up proposals for resolving the issues created by A-boards and other footway obstructions and bring them to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

9. To consider the proposed prohibition of waiting at all times on Regent Road/Greenacres.

Several members of the public made representations to the Committee on the proposed parking restrictions on Regent Road and Greenacres, as follows:

- The proposals will address the safety issues created by cars parked on the corner of Regent Road and Greenacres but not the problems created for pedestrians at the entrance to the footway to The Bailey.
- The restrictions as proposed will not address the safety issues created by cars parked at the southern end of Regent Road around the Day Nursery, near the junction with Regent Drive.

Noting that the proposed traffic regulation order for Greenacres and Regent Road needs to address the safety issues created by day time parking along the full length of Regent Road it was **RESOLVED** to advise the County Council that the waiting restriction should be amended to provide for no waiting on either side of Regent Road from 14 Greenacres to 25 Regent Road between the hours of 8.00 am and 6 pm.

10. To note a change in the Planning Authority's procedure relating to Planning Application notifications.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chief Officer should inform Craven District Council that until the move to its accommodation at the Town Hall, where it will have the facilities to enable Members to view plans electronically, the Council wishes to receive physical copies of all planning applications.

**Meeting Closed at 8.53 pm**

Signed by Chairman .....