

Loughton Parish Council

Minutes of the extra ordinary meeting held on Monday 4th March 2013 8:00pm at the Loughton Memorial Hall, Bradwell Road, Loughton

Present: Cllrs Peter Todd (Chair), Simon Kirkman (Vice-Chair), Peter Ballantyne, Barry Barrington, Andy Dransfield, Hilary Dyer, Ray Harrison, Andy Sargent

In attendance: Brian Barton (Parish Clerk), Alexandra Werner (Intern)

Also in attendance: Adrian Christy (Chief Executive Officer – Badminton England), David O’Neill (Nortoft Planning Consultants), and over thirty-six (36) members of the public.

01. Apologies:

Received from Cllrs Don Hoyle and Andy Lovett

NOTED

02. Declarations of interest:

Cllr Andy Sargent declared a Pecuniary interest in the planning application 13/00266/OUT, National Badminton Centre 96 Bradwell Road Loughton Lodge Milton Keynes MK8 9LA.as he lives adjacent to the site, and took no part in the voting thereof.

NOTED

03. Questions from Members of the Public:

The Chair informed the meeting that members of the public in attendance would get the opportunity to ask questions regarding the planning application to be discussed; he would though first of all give the opportunity to the applicants to make a statement, and then ask for questions from the floor.

NOTED

04. To consider and determine the Parish Council’s submissions on the planning application by the Badminton Centre and action to be taken by the Parish Council in respect of the proposed gift to the Parish Council of Loughton Lodge Farmhouse:

13/00266/OUT, National Badminton Centre 96 Bradwell Road Loughton Lodge Milton Keynes MK8 9LA.

Demolition of the existing National Badminton Centre, health club and residential accommodation block and outline planning consent for a C3 residential development consisting of up to 104 units including the retention of the existing farmhouse building.

Pending Consideration by Milton Keynes Council.

Cllr Andy Sargent had declared a Pecuniary interest in the planning application as he lives adjacent to the site, and took no part in the voting thereof.

The Chair introduced Adrian Christy (Chief Executive of Badminton England) to make a short statement.

Mr Christy said that they had outgrown the present site as the demand for the use of the eight (8) courts is outstripping supply.

Mr Christy then contacted Milton Keynes Council to discuss improving the facilities and was very impressed as to how receptive they were about having a much improved sporting facility.

The planned new facility at the National Bowl will increase the Courts to seventeen (17), with an indoor swimming pool, Mr Christy felt Loughton was a very desirable area and that this planned facility would be an added attraction and will create between eighty (80) to one hundred (100) jobs.

There will be provision for local Schools to use the facility and to enjoy badminton, tennis and swimming, bringing in twenty (20) event days which will boost the local economy.

Mr Christy had spoken to the Parish Council about providing a community facility on the present site, and had listened to residents' concerns regarding the density and amount of housing proposed, but to have the finances to be able to build the new facility there has to be the maximum value and revenue generation to be able to achieve this objective.

The latest proposal reduces the amount of properties proposed by forty (40), if permission is not granted for this proposed development then Badminton England will have to look at alternative sites elsewhere in the Country.

This would mean that Milton Keynes would lose out on new jobs an Olympic facility, with community and School use, traffic calming and improved landscaping for Lodge Lake.

Badminton England will continue to have dialogue with local residents and the Parish Council and is confident that both planning applications will benefit not only the Loughton Parish Council area but the whole of Milton Keynes.

The Chair thanked Mr Christy for his presentation and then invited questions and statements from the floor.

A representative from the Woodward Place Management Committee had concerns about the provision of adequate parking, the potential for the increase in visitors to Lodge Lake and therefore losing its appeal as a quiet and tranquil area. The high density of properties proposed was mentioned, the increase in the speed and amount of traffic with the loss of the area having its rural feel. There is also no details as regards the profile of future residents the style of properties proposed or who the developer will be.

Mr David O'Neill (Nortoft Planning Consultants) responded that there would be less traffic movements than there are now, as advised by traffic and transport officers at Milton Keynes Council, at present there are 120 traffic movements per day by staff

and users of the centre, this would decrease to 80 with the proposed new development, there would be introduced a 30MPH speed limit a pedestrian crossing opposite Lodge Lake with access to Woodward Place.

There will be no social housing and the majority of properties will be four (4) – five (5) bedroomed houses.

A resident asked how had Badminton England persuaded Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Parks Trust to give them the land for these developments?

How is Badminton England funded is it a registered charity?

How will Badminton England fund the extra landscaping for Lodge Lake?

Also the same resident was concerned about the loss of open space and did not like the proposed fencing around some of the site.

Mr Christy responded that funding is received by 60% of membership fees, 40% from commercial fees, a grant from Sport England and UK Sport.

Funding has been cut from both of these bodies but Badminton England is not funded from the public purse, this is why it is important that the proposed development goes ahead.

Badminton England is not a registered charity.

Mr O'Neill said that the Milton Keynes Parks Trust reinvests any monies raised back into the parks and open spaces in its care and is a registered charity.

The proposed development will have an eight (8) to ten (10) meter high fence with trees along the boundary and the mound will be reduced with open space for public use situated near to the apartment blocks.

Another resident felt that this development will have no benefits for the area, and has set up a petition and so far has signed up 112 residents.

No one she has approached is in favour of the development; she was concerned about additional traffic and recently there had been an accident on the junction to Danstead Way it is already difficult to get out on to the grid road in the morning rush hour.

One resident supported the proposed new facility as it would be good for the area and for young people to use.

Another resident was concerned about the footpath proposed and that the development appeared to be ignoring pedestrian safety.

Mr O'Neill responded that the design team had worked on the footpath to access Bradwell Road and to extend the redway to the proposed pedestrian crossing.

A resident was concerned about the density and additional traffic of the proposed development and lack of parking for the apartment block.

Where would the Children go to School and would they not be even more traffic with parent driving their Children to School?

Can Badminton England not find a way of retaining the site as it is?

Mr Christy responded that Badminton England had two (2) options, option one (1) to extend the present site, this was impossible as the area is landlocked and would require additional parking to be provided.

Option two (2) to develop the present site to release monies to invest in a much bigger and better facility on another site this was the only feasible option and one that was viable after speaking and consulting with Milton Keynes Council.

Mr O'Neill repeated his earlier comments on traffic flow as advised by Traffic and Transport Officers at Milton Keynes Council. Also any redevelopment of the present residential block would be subject to an additional planning application.

A resident asked why develop on the Parks Trust Land?

Mr O'Neill responded that the Parks Trust land is undeveloped on the Badminton Centre site and its release would raise more money from the properties proposed to be built on it.

The Chair informed the meeting that he had been informed that the Parks Trust would not benefit financially from releasing this land, they were doing this as they perceived it was in the interests of the City.

One member of the public was concerned that the Parish Council may be influenced by the offer of a community facility for their use and it would not be a benefit to residents.

Mr Christy also said that the present facility is open to the public to use when not in used by members; Sport England has invested six (6) years of funding into the building.

There will be an Increase in public usage with the new building and hopefully with better training facilities, and that this could mean more medals being won at the next Olympics.

The Chair thanked the public for their questions and comments and then asked the Parish Councillors present for their views.

Cllr Andy Sargent spoke from the floor and said that he was concerned about developing the Parks Trust land and that they seemed to be just giving the land away, Cllr Sargent was sympathetic to having the new facility built at the National Bowl.

Cllr Sargent felt that due to the contour of the land it would be more expensive to build on, would require expensive piling and was unsuitable.

The development on the present site and on the Parks Trust land in his view should be two (2) separate planning applications, and that the Parks Trust land should be left undeveloped.

Cllr Hilary Dyer asked Mr Christy how would Badminton England receive the funding to build a new facility outside of Milton Keynes?

Mr Christy replied that the site will still need to be redeveloped, although the Badminton Centre has been on the present site for thirty (30) years the building has been extended, the ambition is to develop the best training facility there is, Badminton England could stay with the present facility but is not prepared to do so.

Cllr Dyer was also concerned about the loss of trees and the mound being reduced, which would mean less protection from noise generated by traffic using the grid road.

Cllr Dyer did not wish to see the Parish Council appearing to be the villains if they voted against the planning application to redevelop the Badminton Centre site and therefore losing out on the new facility for the National Bowl.

Cllr Dyer was also concerned about the visual impact to Lodge Lake and is against the Parks Trust land being developed on.

There would be a big impact on traffic movements and that there should be a left turn only slip road on to the exit to Danstead Way or a roundabout installed.

Cllr Andy Dransfield Supports Milton Keynes being a sporting city and although the proposed new facility at the National Bowl will be of a neutral benefit to the Loughton Parish Council area it should be a benefit for the whole of Milton Keynes.

The Traffic and Transport Officers will put a report in regarding the traffic movements to the Milton Keynes Council Development Control Committee, and that the new facility will provide jobs and much improved sports facilities it should be supported as the building can be used by the community.

Many of the children in the proposed new housing development would walk to school.

Cllr Simon Kirkman was swayed by the proposed new facility at the National Bowl and the need for Badminton England to raise the revenue, but would hate to see the Parish Council voting against the redevelopment of the Badminton Centre for NIMBY reasons, and that the Parish Council could be seen as the villains if the planning application was rejected by Milton Keynes Council's Development Control Committee and jeopardise the new proposed facility at the National Bowl. However, nevertheless he had concerns which he would explain.

Cllr Kirkman felt that the density proposed is out of context compared to what is there already in Loughton.

Cllr Kirkman said that the exit junction to Danstead Way will not help traffic flow and is too close to the expansion area.

The Badminton Centre could still get the same amount of revenue with fewer properties proposed.

Cllr Peter Ballantyne expressed concern about the extra traffic movements including parents driving their children to school, residents have expressed their views and the Parish Council must listen to them, and the Parish Council must try to protect the area from against overdevelopment.

Cllr Barry Barrington felt this was an emotive issue and that there is a price to pay for having this facility at the National Bowl of which he welcomed.

Cllr Barrington is uncertain of what the new development will look like and its effect on the local environment and has concerns about the development on the Parks Trust land and the traffic flows.

Cllr Ray Harrison said that the density proposed is similar to that of Great Holm and is content on the information regarding traffic movements, and car parking near to Lodge Lake, Cllr Harrison is also in favour of the facility proposed at the National Bowl and is generally in favour of the development.

Cllr Peter Todd said that the Badminton Centre is an important Stakeholder in the Loughton Parish Council area, and that the new facility planned for at the National Bowl will provide additional jobs and recreation assessable for the local community to use, which would be a great asset with the proposed swimming pool badminton and tennis courts.

Cllr Todd was comfortable in developing the Badminton Centre site as the centre itself is not overly attractive apart from the heritage assets and therefore has no objection to that part of the site.

Cllr Todd however has concerns in relation to the barn being demolished and would like it to be retained although he was pleased that the farm house is staying. Milton Keynes Council should be lobbied for the barn to be preserved.

Cllr Todd wished to support the stakeholder but was concerned about the loss of green open space, and was grateful for the generous offer of the Parish Council having the use of the farmhouse as office space, but was unsure if the Parish Council could take this up as there would be a lot of expense in having a lift and toilets installed, there also is not enough space for a meeting room. The barn would though be a better community facility.

Cllr Peter Todd proposed and Cllr Andy Dransfield seconded “that Loughton Parish Council will make a submission to Milton Keynes Council incorporating all the views for and against from residents and Parish Councillors on the planning applications [ie 13/00266/OUT and 13/00267/FUL]as submitted by Badminton England”

This motion was put to the vote and was as follows:

For: Six (6)

Against: One (1)

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED

That Loughton Parish Council will make a submission to Milton Keynes Council incorporating all the views for and against from residents and Parish Councillors on planning applications 13/00266/OUT and 13/00267/FUL as submitted by Badminton England

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10:00PM

Signed _____ Chair Date: _____