

Contact Details

Clerk: Mrs Elizabeth-Anne Broad
JP, LLB (Hons), MA, CiLCA
1 Pinewood, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6UZ
Telephone: 01695 557678
Mobile: 07973340254
Email: lathomsouthpc.clerk@yahoo.com
Website: www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk

Your Parish Councillors are:

- Alison Whitehead (Chairman)
- Diane Ingrey (Vice Chairman)
- Carol Blackledge
- Roger Clayton
- Andrew Beeston

All contact via the Clerk

Meetings:

Wednesday 14th December 2016
Wednesday 11th January 2017
Wednesday 15th February 2017
Wednesday 15th March 2017
Wednesday 12th April 2017

Monthly meetings usually start at 7:30 pm in the Community Meeting Room in Asda, Statham Road. The agenda is posted on the Parish Council notice boards prior to the meeting.

All very welcome to come along
Please check out the Parish Council Website at

www.lathomsouthpc.co.uk



Newsletter

No. 20

November 2016



Lathom's Rural Pathways

The Parish Council has responded to a planning application (2016/1027) by Bellway Homes to develop land between Firswood Road and Blaguegate Lane. See inside for full response.

Firswood Road Development

In the limited time available, Lathom South Parish Council has gathered the following comments about this proposed development, most of which were voiced at the Parish Council meeting dated 12th October 2016. First, however, the Council draws attention to the comments about pre-application consultation contained in the Planning Statement submitted by Bellway Homes.

The first sign that an application was pending came in a leaflet that was hand-delivered to 300 residents of Lathom and Skelmersdale on 5th September. The Council received a copy of this leaflet later than the residents, as it had been *posted* to the Clerk.

The leaflet contained some text and a very small scale “artist’s impression” of the layout of the site. It contained no details of house types proposed, no ‘key’ and no indication that planning permission was about to be sought. The Clerk invited the company to make a presentation of its proposals at the September meeting of the Parish Council but that was not accepted. Instead the company agreed to send representatives to the Council’s October (12th) meeting. The Parish Council wrote to the applicants’ agents (Pegasus) after its September meeting, raising eleven questions about the proposals but no written answers were given. The company’s response had to wait until the 12th October meeting.

Westhead Village Hall

The village hall committee has supplied the following report: Westhead Village Hall is no longer for sale. A new management committee has been formed working alongside many volunteers, cleaning and brightening up the hall and gardens. During the successful relaunch/ open day in October, over coffee and cake we gathered plenty of great ideas for both the refurb and future community use, and at the same raised over £450. 5 new trustees have been appointed, all residents of the village. Next priority is to apply for charitable status which will help us bid for grant funding. We hope that over time we can improve the amenities for the benefit of all and deliver a community facility that Westhead can be proud of.

Warbreck Garden Centre

Warbreck Garden Centre on Lyelake Lane has been granted a premises licence subject to a number of conditions. The property can be open Monday to Sunday from 9am to 11:30pm, with sale or supply of alcohol and provision of live and recorded music up to 11pm. After 8pm customers will not be permitted to congregate outside the premises other than for the purposes of smoking, windows and doors will be closed and no disposal of refuse, such as bottles into receptacles outside is permitted between 8pm and 8am. The Subcommittee recommended that a residents meeting take place to discuss any issues every six months, organised by the Premises Licensee.

Tree warden report: Tree Walk August 2016

Well, a walk took place. Just nine of us set off from Plough with strong chilly wind but, despite weather forecast, dry. One dropped out because arthritis playing up. Rest of us walked from Sefton Brook bridge through wood - not half as muddy as I had feared - past quarry and up into Swells Wood, where decided not to attempt a path through wet willow growth but to stick to clearer route between new planting and railway line. On out onto FP21, then FP23 through potato field and to South West Lancashire Farmers on Blaguegate Lane, where the rain arrived - no-one lingered to relax on the Jubilee bench and Halfpenny Lane proved even wetter, so the bulk of the party - all Tom Holland's family with two young, wet, grandchildren opted to take the short cut home along Lyelake Lane, leaving Heather Doyle from St. James Westhead and me to continue to the church and very welcome tea/cake - and understanding of why only the two of us (indeed some surprise there were any at all).

Now largely - no, somewhat - drier, and rain largely stopped, Heather and I moved down School Lane -she lives in Westhead and turned off there, while I carried on to Dicks Lane, checked in with Bliss and up to the Plough to update them, and collect my car after necessary rehydration.

Another time with better weather..?

By that time the application had been validated and the plans were publicly available on the Borough Council's website. It follows naturally that the Parish Council cannot endorse the company's claims about pre-application consultation.

Turning to the plans, the Parish Council is shocked to find that a permanent, and far from secondary, access is proposed from Firwood Road, with no provision made for a direct line of access for pedestrians and cyclists to Neverstitch Road. It remains a matter of concern, also, that it appears that the construction phase will cause problems for the residents of Firwood Road and that the line of the linear park has not been facilitated by the plans for this development.

It appears that this proposal takes no account of the wider site and is aimed squarely at being separate in every way from that site. The reasons supporting the Local Plan Inspector's release of the site for development are being ignored, which rather tends to invalidate the application.

The Parish Council takes the view, therefore, that the plans must be re-thought to take account of the real effects on Firwood Road and its residents and also to provide better access for future residents of the site.

This would involve taking a wider view of the possibilities for this development and a preparedness to acquire the means of meeting the requirements of the Development Brief, which was drafted on the premise that the South West corner of the whole site might be developed first (not in isolation).

Vehicles moving south along Firswood Road tend to approach and cross the old railway bridge 'blind' and at higher speeds than the 30 mph limit at that point.

The incline from the crest of the bridge is quite steep and the proximity of a junction so close to its crest would be dangerous, even at 30mph.

So far as traffic generation is concerned, every development site has its own characteristics and this one seems to have a propensity to generate more traffic movements per dwelling than most: fifty percent four bedroomed houses, only ten percent affordable housing, no provision for elderly residents and an "aspirational" overtone. This ignores the firm aspirations of the development brief and would seriously affect the current country lane character of Firswood Road.

The Transport Assessment assumes that all vehicles will turn left from the development into Firswood Road. However, in practice a proportion will turn right in the

"The judge said that this case has implications for other nationally significant infrastructure projects elsewhere and needs to be heard in full because it could set an important precedent.

"The judge agreed with the legal team that the resident's case was arguable and gave him permission to proceed to a full judicial review."

ARROW campaigner Del Ellis said: "This is an important milestone, as it allows us to continue our challenge of this unwanted hazardous waste tip extension that is so close to people's homes and children's playing fields. However, we have not won the case yet. We will also continue to fundraise for the legal bills incurred so far."

The full judicial review is expected to be heard next spring in the Court of Appeal in front of three High Court judges..

ARROW–No Whitemoss Landfill is a campaign of ARROW North West. Action to Reduce and Recycle Our Waste (ARROW) is a not for profit company limited by guarantee with no paid workers committed to achieving its aims through peaceful and legal means. Registration no. 3792757 (England and Wales). Registered address Beacon House, Willow Walk, Skelmersdale, Lancs WN8 6UR

Judicial Review of Whitemoss

In the Court of Appeal at the Royal Courts of Justice in London the local resident opposing the Whitemoss hazardous waste tip extension was successful in gaining permission to bring a judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision to allow the extension to go ahead.

Previously the resident's attempt to gain permission to bring the judicial review was refused several times in various courts. However, the resident's legal team had the chance to explain the case more fully and was successful. The judge, Lord Justice Lindblom, was a planning expert and was interested in the case. Claire Robinson of ARROW (Action to Reduce and Recycle Our Waste), which is supporting fundraising for the resident, said: "We are delighted with this verdict and would like to thank the legal team and all those residents and employers who have helped us get this far.

"The main issue was that the planning policy says there is a need in principle for hazardous waste sites, but the resident's legal team argued that this did not mean that a developer could claim that there was a need for a site of any size in a specific location without proving that this specific site was needed.

"There was a question as to whether the Secretary of State was misreading the National Policy Statement for hazardous waste.

busiest morning periods to reach various schools, Burscough and Parbold (for trains to Southport and Manchester and also to commute via Burscough to Southport and Preston) or to travel north to junction 27 of the M6 motorway. In the evenings traffic will travel the reverse journeys.

The development will thus have an impact on Firswood Road to the north of the old railway bridge, as well as to the south. Any further use by vehicles on that section of the road would increase the risks to pedestrians, dogs, cyclists and horse riders who currently regard it as a pleasant country lane. The road is bordered by mature hedges and is in private ownership so there is not the opportunity to widen the road to provide a footway where there is none and the carriageway is particularly narrow in places.

A blind bend in the road close to the old Comet warehouse is especially dangerous because it is narrow and two cars can only just pass at a point where the national speed limit applies. This bend is characterised by 'slow' signs in recognition of the hazard which it presents.

Firswood Road has a limit of 7.5 tonnes along its whole length to reflect the nature of the road and the Parish Council assumes that this limit would apply to construction vehicles.

The Development Brief also states that houses/development would reflect the rural character of the area and local need but this development proposal fails those objectives.

The plans show standard house types that can be seen in any town. Half of the existing dwellings on the southern end of Firwood Road and also along Blaguegate Lane around the site are bungalows of various sizes that are suitable for elderly residents.

As the area of Lathom South Parish is comprised of over 52% pensioners, much of the local demand is for fairly small bungalows for older people downsizing but none of the houses in this development would be suitable for these elderly (or disabled) people without substantial adaptations. Every such larger house released would be available for families to buy.

The area suffers from power cuts at any time of the year. However the plans provide for pumping the foul water to a gravity main on Blaguegate Lane. The company's representatives were unable to say what would happen to the foul water if a power cut occurred and the Parish Council is still waiting for an answer to this important point.

Bellway representatives explained that a Management Company would maintain the public open space, as well as the pumping station, and that the new home owners would pay a management charge to fund the costs.

Provision for the protection and long term maintenance of all existing hedgerows and trees, on all boundaries is also required. The Council wishes to receive assurances that any Management Company would ensure management in perpetuity (ie. they cannot be a company that may go into liquidation without provision for this eventuality) and they should be a not-for-profit organisation, so that the residents' service charges are fully spent on these commitments rather than having a profit element.

The Parish Council is reassured to note the content of a letter sent by the current Director of Planning and Regeneration (Mr Harrison) to the applicants in November 2015, which emphasised the need for the company to abide by the terms of the Development Brief. However the plans presented depart considerably from those terms and so this Council expects that the submitted plans will need to be changed substantially, in order to comply. The development brief is itself a compromise document and therefore no dilution of requirements can be justified.