

WORLINGWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

All Councillors are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct Regulations.

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 4th April 2018 at St Mary's Church.

Attendance	Brian Smallcombe (Chair) (BS)	Juliet Pierce (Vice-Chair) (JP)
	Adrian Smith (AS)	Michael Howard (MH)
	Carol Garrett (CG)	

There were 16 parishioners present at the meeting, with apologies from 1 further parishioner.

Public Contributions

The Chair asked if anyone present wished to make any representations regarding the items for discussion on the agenda.

Concern was expressed that the site in question had been subject to previous applications that have been refused, (even after appeal) and therefore a query was raised about whether an application should even be allowed on the site. An explanation was given that despite previous applications having been refused anyone can put a further application forward and that in fact the application does not even have to come directly from the landowner. Once an application has been submitted the Planning Department is legally obliged to consider the matter, however, taking into account the history of previous applications on the site, it is highly likely that should this application proceed it would be submitted to a full District Council Planning Committee, whereupon the Parish Council would be able to make a representation and members of the public may be present.

A parishioner who had been a Parish Councillor at the time of the previously unsuccessful planning application, stated that at the time a strong point about the application, that he believed had been instrumental in the decision to refuse permission, was the visually important open space at the site. Upon viewing the new application online, he had become aware that the 'visually important open space' had been erroneously recorded as to the north of The Swan Inn, although the area in question before had also been the bowling green to the south of The Swan and which is the area currently under consideration. He believed that the error occurred from a misunderstanding of which side constituted the 'front' of the public house in relation to the road. The Swan is built in such a way that the front of the Inn overlooks the bowling green area and this is the visually important open space that needs to be protected. The Parish Council were urged to ensure that this mistake is brought to the attention of the District Council when the current application was considered.

Worries were expressed that the proposed development would cause problems for the Save Our Swan group (SOS), which was formed in early 2016 with the intended plan to bring The Swan Inn back into use as a Community Pub. To lose the bowling green area, an important asset to The Swan and regularly used for community events when the pub was open, would be detrimental to the village overall. The applicant has separated the bowling green from The Swan Inn, with both areas now under separate ownership, but as the bowling green was within the curtilage of the property at the time of listing it should be subject to the same constraints. To build housing on the bowling green, with shared access across the pub land would cause car-parking and traffic issues. Additionally, with dwellings close to the pub there would likely be issues with the pub being able to host live music events, which were an essential element of village life, the loss of which has been detrimental to village life. The SOS group are intending to revive the historical and cultural activities that The Swan has hosted for many years as part of the Community Pub project.

The listing of The Swan and associated land as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) was queried. The Parish Council confirmed that both were listed in June 2014, but the listing does not guarantee that the vendor has to take an offer from a Community Group. The ACV listing simply triggers a moratorium period to allow a Community Group time to organise and raise funds, this has not

happened yet as the property has not been offered for sale on the open market. As soon as the property is offered for sale SOS intend to lodge an interest.

As the property is both Grade II listed and a Community Asset, a query was raised about whether a protective preservation order be placed on the building. The Parish Council confirmed that the heritage team at the District Council are statutory consultees and would consider this matter, but that contact will be made with the Suffolk Preservation Society to see if they can also lend support to help protect The Swan.

Finally worries about protected trees on the property and resident bats and other wildlife were expressed.

The Chair finished by sharing a letter from SOS that had already been submitted objecting to the development of the site. Many of the points matched those already discussed, with the addition of concerns about site drainage.

The Chair thanked those present for their input and stated that the Council would take all the matters raised into consideration.

WPC 18-04-01 Apologies for Absence

Richard Quinton (RQ), Jackie Quinton (JQ) and Andrew Nunn (AN) offered their apologies due to prior commitments. The Council accepted.

WPC 18-04-02 Declaration of Interests

None were declared

WPC 18-04-03 To consider planning applications that have been submitted since the last meeting:

- DC/18/00787 Proposal: Full Planning Application - Erection of 2 No. detached residential dwellings at Swan Inn, Swan Road, Worlingworth

Councillors had all studied the application in advance of the meeting. After discussion, it was decided to submit **an Objection** to the application this decision is based on the following points:

- As per the previous application to build on this site the Parish Council believes that the proposal, by reason of siting, design and external appearance of the development would be inappropriate to its location, detrimental to the character and appearance of the settlement and seriously detrimental to the setting of the adjacent listed building. The Parish Council believe that the proposed development is contrary to the Mid Suffolk Local Plan.
- At the time of the previous application the bowling green area that is subject to the current application was deemed to be a 'visually important open space' at the site to the front of the Inn. It appears that this open space has been erroneously recorded on plans to be to the North of The Swan Inn, instead of the South. It may be that this was due to some confusion over the alignment of Inn, as the 'front' of the Inn does in fact overlook the bowling green, it does not face onto the road. This 'visually important open space' is still an important feature of the site and needs to be preserved for the benefit of the Community.
- The Parish Council is particularly keen to see the work of the Community Pub group, Save Our Swan, come to fruition and it is hoped that The Swan Inn will again become a hub of village life, as it was before it closed in early 2016. The Save Our Swan group was formed in early 2016, the only reason that The Swan has been standing empty since then is at the behest of the owner. There is no indication that it would not be a viable business if opened once again as a public house. The bowling green area, although now under separate ownership, was part of the curtilage of The Swan Inn at the time of listing and therefore, it is assumed, subject to the same constraints and restrictions of listing as The Swan itself. To lose the

bowling green area, an important asset to The Swan and regularly used for community events when the pub was open, would be detrimental to the village overall and would negatively affect the historical and cultural importance that The Swan Inn has held within the wider area. The Save Our Swan group are intending to revive many of the activities that The Swan has hosted for many years as part of the Community Pub project, including hosting live music events, the loss of which have been keenly felt by the community, with dwellings in such close proximity there would undoubtedly be conflict relating to noise issues.

- As per the previously unsuccessful application to build on this site, the access arrangements to the proposed development would likely lead to vehicular conflict between the means of access serving the development and that serving the public house.
- Finally, there are concerns about adequate drainage to the land, the protection of trees which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders and potential disturbances to bats which roost in the aforementioned trees and other wildlife that utilise this green space in the village.

JP proposed, AS seconded and **THIS WAS RESOLVED.**

- Any other applications received to date (if applicable)

There were no further applications requiring consideration.

WPC 18-04-04 Matters for consideration at the Parish Council meeting on 16th May 2018

Items already on agenda:

Worlingworth Survey – Next Steps

Public Access Defibrillator

GDPR update

Re-Adoption of Collated Standing Orders & Policies

Emergency Plan update

Council Display Boards & Worlingworth Celebrates Montage

Additional items for the agenda:

None

Grateful to PCC for use of Church

There being no further business requiring the attention of the Parish Council, the meeting was closed at 8.06 pm. The next meeting is set for **Wednesday 16th May 2018** at 7.30 pm.

Sarah Clare
Parish Clerk

Brian Smallcombe
Chair