

LONGNEY AND EPNEY PARISH COUNCIL
Planning Meeting
Wednesday 11th April at 7.30pm

Attendees:

Cllr. Godwin (Chairman)
Cllr. Wingrove
Cllr. Harvie
Cllr. Everett
Cllr. Russell
6 residents

Declaration of interest:

Cllr. Harvie and Cllr. Wingrove declared a potential declaration of interest being near neighbours to some of the applications to be discussed.

This parish council meeting was being held to discuss some planning applications, particularly due to the significance of one of the applications to be reviewed. In general planning applications are not contentious and the parish councillors come to a decision without the need for lengthy discussion.

Planning coordinator

The role of the planning co-ordinator is to co-ordinate the views of the parish councillors and draft the response, this response is a collaboration of all opinions. The response is then passed to the Clerk to submit. All agreed that this system was working well and was bringing about fairness and consistency regarding the staffing of planning applications. Cllr. Wingrove agreed to continue in this role.

Moving forward, planning applications will be discussed at Parish Council meetings if they fall in line with regular Parish Council meetings.

Applications discussed:

S18 / 0614/ FUL – New farm track from the Epney Saul road to existing farm buildings

The reasons for requesting the application seem reasonable. The track would be safer than the current access. As long as Highways have no concerns then this should be an acceptable solution.

Unanimous decision to support this application was reached.

S18 / 0537 / FUL – Solar Farm Application

The Parish Council needs to decide if we are supporting or objecting the application. If we are objecting there will be some research required into the necessary PPGs that we will need to add to the response.

There have been lots of responses so far on the SDC website.

The response from the village survey was as follows:

Yes = 52

No = 82

Neutral = 23

Non responders = 89

Total responders = 157

Knight Frank have been instructed to act on behalf of the Parish Council. Knight Frank will communicate with the Parish Council as a whole so that all Councillors receive the updates at the same time.

David Meehan stated in writing that he would provide LEPC with a letter prior to the last planning meeting and this letter has not yet been received. The community benefit fund offer will stand regardless of whether the Parish Council support or oppose the application. Elgin will make a contribution towards the fees incurred by using Knight Frank to negotiate for the PC. According to the District Council, there are no planning grounds on which to object to this application. There have been several objection letters from the parish which cite planning grounds on which to object to the application. There are several statements within the Village Design Statement which could be used to object, there are also several statements that could be used to support the application. The size of the installation was discussed at length. This will be one, if not the largest installation in Gloucestershire. The Parish Council would like the installation to be much smaller, and contain a condition to prevent further development once it is established. The Stroud Local plan states that they will only support "small scale" solar applications. There are good practice guidelines in case of large developments that say local people should be involved and told in plenty of time – this was not the case, the parish were given several days notice, and the meeting was on a weekday which may not have been convenient. There is no evidence of exploration of alternative sites for the development. The Parish have conducted a referendum, this needs to be included in the response. Is there any merit in meeting again with David Meehan? This could help discuss the possible response and see if there is any room for negotiation.

The Chairman spoke with the planners today and they advised that they have until June to make their final decision. This will depend on the process - if it is taken to committee it will take longer and will require the District Councillors to oppose it and ask for it to be taken to committee. It is not clear at this stage if the District Councillors will support LEPC views.

It was suggested that we should use PC funds to get professional advice with regards to the grounds for objection to help formulate a response – this was not supported as the money could disappear very quickly with legal funds and also the people who are neutral or in support may not agree that this is an effective use of the PC funds.

A vote was held and all Councillors were asked to decide if they wanted to support/object or remain neutral with regard to the application, responses were placed in an envelope for the Clerk to review.

The unanimous decision to object to the application was reached.

An initial response to the application will be drafted with input from all Parish Councillors.

S18 / 0474 / COU – Briery Hall, change of use of paddock to garden, erection of swimming pool with pavilion, staircase to roof terrace

This is a retrospective application for change of use. This has not been submitted as a retrospective application as the applicant states that the work has not been completed. None of the work can be viewed from the road. There was some concern about setting precedent that this is ok to complete work and then submit a retrospective application. It was suggested that an environmental assessment should be completed including a flood risk assessment. In the comments it should be made clear that this should be a retrospective application as most of the work has been completed. There are also 2 footpaths that have not been mentioned in the application which means that PROW have not been consulted.

Unanimous decision to support the application for change of use was reached.

S17 / 1361 / FUL – Land adjacent to Peglass Cottage, Glamping orchard

The Chairman spoke to the resident yesterday, they will be submitting a new planning application and have been given one month. No appeal had been submitted against the previous planning application refusal. The business is currently still operational. The planning application has not yet

been submitted. The environment agency have asked for full flood risk assessments which the residents are currently arranging. The noise and smoke that the business creates should be taken into account as it has an effect on the surrounding properties. It was reported that the applications had obtained a license from The Freedom Camping Club and that this has granted permission for up to 5 tents on the property. This license apparently could override planning. The Chairman suggested that it may be worth having a discussion with the applicant to understand the nature of these developments. No further comment can be made at this stage as the new application has not been received.

A councillor raised the issue of the planning issues in the parish. There has been a huge amount of time and effort spent raising these issues with SDC. Some of these have now resulted in planning applications but others have been left with no action. There has been staff turnover within SDC which has not helped. It was agreed that another meeting would be arranged with John Longmuire. There needs to be a consistent approach to this and it needs to be supported by SDC. This could be raised at the Annual Parish Meeting where we have representation from SDC planning.

Action: Clerk to advertise that there will be representation from planning at the Annual Parish Meeting.