

Minutes of a Public Meeting called by the Parish Council and held on Thursday 25th September at Iver Heath Village Hall regarding Project Pinewood commencing at 8 pm.

Approximately 200 residents attended along with reporters from the Slough Express, Bucks Advertiser and the Slough Observer and members of the Parish Council as follows:

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| Julian Wilson (Chairman) | Pat Leech |
| Jeanette Watkins (vice chairman) | Pat Roberts |
| Damon Clark | Carol Gibson |
| Ravi Gidar | Ruth Vigor-Hedderly |
| Bill Lidgate | Claire Mowat |
| Alan Oxley | Derek Adlam |
| Sylvia Lidgate | |

Apologies for absence were received from Malcolm Bradford

The chairman began the meeting by introducing himself, the Clerk and the Parish Councillors present and pointing out those that are District and County Councillors as well.

He then stated that the proposal to build 1500 houses off Pinewood Road and behind Pinewood Green is wholly on Green Belt and partly on contaminated land. He said that the Parish Council objects generally to any development in the Green Belt. He stated that the boards describing the project that were around the room had been lent by Pinewood to aid the discussion but this was in a spirit of co-operation and did not mean that the Parish Council was in Pinewood's pockets.

He stated that the District Council would almost inevitably refuse any planning application for this housing project on the Green Belt. Pinewood at present is planning to apply for planning permission in the usual way in December 2008. When the District Council receives the application there will be a period of public consultation with residents and the Parish Council and other organizations such as the Environment Agency and BCC Highways. The Parish Council would meet and consider the application and inevitably recommend refusal. The proposal would almost double the size of the population of Iver Heath. He said that there is a lack of infrastructure, inadequate roads and it would contribute to existing traffic problems in Thornbridge Road, Pinewood Road, Seven Hills Road and Church Road.

He pointed out that Pinewood already have planning approval for a master plan related to their current site only and this plan includes traffic lights on the Crooked Billet roundabout and widening of some roads leading up to it. Technicolour and Deluxe are moving into the Pinewood site existing plans show buildings for these companies. The

site is very well used at present and maybe over-used already. He pointed out that Iver Heath Fields (41 acres owned by the District Council and managed by the Parish Council) is not part of Project Pinewood.

Once a decision has been made by the District Council on any planning application and anticipating that this will be a refusal then Pinewood will probably appeal. This will then probably go to an Inspector for the Secretary of State for a decision. This can be by written representations or a Public Inquiry. Any resident or organisation will be able to make representations either in writing or in person and the Inspector will then make a decision.

The Secretary of State could call this plan in as being in the National Interest. Pinewood has stated that they are going through the normal planning process. However, they are going ahead with the project knowing there are significant objections and therefore they must think that there is some chance of getting this approved somehow.

There is a pressure group called Stop Project Pinewood being run by Sharon Parsons and there is a web site run by that group where residents can sign up to it if they wish.

Councillor Damon Clark pointed out that at present apart from some very expensive surveys and marketing materials Pinewood Studios have not actually done anything as there is no planning application to consider at the present time.

Councillor Bill Lidgate explained that the District Council Planning Policies are legal documents and very relevant. The District cannot give permission that is not in accord with its policies.

Councillor Alan Oxley said that any application for this number of houses on Green Belt land would no doubt be refused by the District Council. The County Council is talking to Pinewood about the infrastructure and roads as part of the process because if by some chance Pinewood did get permission then it is important that the County gets as much money as it can out of the development in order to make sure that the infrastructure is paid for by the developers – if by some chance it did happen.

The chairman pointed out that Pinewood Studios is being co-operative at present in terms of allowing a pathway into Black Park and supporting the carnival. He re-iterated that the public could be present at the meetings of the Parish and District where any planning application is considered and also at any Inquiry. If a planning application is received in December then it would take 16 weeks to go through the planning process and this time may be extended and so it would be at the earliest April when any decision was made but more likely to be later than that.

Nora Sanders – ex Parish Councillor – made a comment that in order to prove the National Interest that Pinewood would have to prove that they are THE film industry for Britain and there is nowhere else they could carry out these plans. This is a damaged part of the Green Belt and every inch needs to be preserved. It is bounded by the M4, M40,

M25 and Slough sealing the other side. Pollution in Iver High Street exceeds EU regulations.

Questions and answers and comments were then made generally by members of the public as follows:

Q If outline planning permission is applied for – how much detail has to be given?

A The chairman stated that it would be similar to the information on the boards around the room.

Q Who can sit in on planning meetings?

A At Parish, District and Public Inquiries anyone can

Q Where would the expertise needed for a Public Inquiry come from?

A the chairman said that expertise could come from local people or the District Council or if more assistance was required then it might be possible for consultants or barristers etc to be bought in.

Q Government Plan for more housing in this area. Will this project be the golden egg that provides it?

A The chairman stated that South Bucks is under threat from a 3rd runway, freight exchange, new rail link but the South East housing figures are manageable as they are stated at present (without such a large project) but the plan is not completed. So this question cannot be fully answered until it is.

Q What is Pinewood's contingency plan for the land if this development is shelved?

A Occasional film set work possibly.

Project Pinewood is not about film sets it is about making money.

3,000 cars – too many for the roads to cope

Q How can the community support the Council and make a difference?

A Write and object to planning application. Come to public consultations. Numbers are important and particularly at an Inquiry and for the Inspector. The time to write is at the outline planning application stage – to write to the District Council and then at the appeal stage. Individual letters carry more weight than the same letter signed by many people.

Regional Assemblies are ruled by unelected quangos.

Q I chose to live in Iver Heath because I like the lack of amenities and this project will change the face of the area. Despite everything – what happens if it is built and property values fall? Will there be any compensation?

A Nobody will compensate residents. The downside is that property values may be affected during the consultation period, which is likely to be a long time.

A resident of Seven Hills Road was in favour of the project as it may bring buses, pavements, lights etc in the road.

A resident thanked those who were supporting the meeting and objecting to the project as some of the proposed properties will be towering over his garden.

Social housing will need to be provided the same as any other development of this size.

Parking – designated area and underneath the buildings and on street.

Ecology – Arap and DT2 have been employed by Pinewood who has spent a lot of money to get to this stage – possibly £3 million so far.

One person said that it was important to avoid the Nimby label and to quantify all the objections specifically such as the effect on traffic on the A412 and the infrastructure of Iver Heath. In fact all the roads through Iver.

Q How many other areas in South Bucks have 5 storey buildings?

A Not many – Wilton Park is one area.

Q Who supports Pinewood Studios being in Iver Heath? This was a straw poll of those in the room.

A Majority said 'yes'. It is just development in the Green Belt that is objected to (for housing).

Q Does the local MP support the Green Belt policy?

A Yes

Pinewood has a Policy of its own in the South Bucks Local Plan.

One resident felt that gravel pits are already being dug in the Green Belt and it is not Green but full of rubbish.

There is a lot of mineral extraction around Iver because of the wealth of gravel – the Summerleaze site near Denham roundabout will go on for 21 years and is due to be restored as lakes.

Q When did Pinewood buy the land and can it be compulsorily purchased back?

A It was bought about 4 years ago for £125,000 to £150,000. Land cannot be compulsorily purchased except for development.

The District Council bought Iver Heath Fields 15 years ago for about £40,000.

Film sets are a fallacy – just a front for a lot of houses.

Breach of planning policy is the problem

Bill Lidgate quoted from GB4 of the Local Plan. The whole of GB4 is appended to these minutes.

5 storeys – can we all do it?

Colne Valley Park – the land is within it and it could be a reason for objecting.
Bill Lidgate stated that Policy L6 of the Local Plan relates to the Colne Valley Park and is appended to these minutes.

3,000 people on any one day can be working on the Pinewood site. Less than 150 are directly employed by Pinewood Studios. All brought in by production companies and other organizations on the site from all over the country and the world. Not locals.

There is a need for TV and media coverage in the future.

Building in the Green Belt will completely alter the area to its detriment.

The chairman thanked all those attending for taking the time to make their views known. Information will be put onto the parish council web site (www.iverparishcouncil.gov.uk) and notice boards as appropriate.

Meeting ended at 9.40 pm.

Press contacts as requested by some residents.

Slough Observer rmoulden@sloughobserver.co.uk

Slough Express editor@sloughexpress.co.uk

Bucks Advertiser bucksnews@trinitysouth.co.uk

POLICY GB4 - EMPLOYMENT GENERATING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT (EXCLUDING GREEN BELT SETTLEMENTS)

Proposals to establish new employment generating or other commercial sites or extend the curtilages of existing sites will not be permitted in the Green Belt. Where the proposal involves the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt new employment generating development may be acceptable subject to the provisions of Policy GB2 (Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt).

Extensions or additional buildings for existing employment generating or other commercial development will not be permitted in the Green Belt, unless, in the case of extensions, they are in connection with the re-use of buildings subject to Policy GB2 (Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt). The change of use of employment generating or other commercial premises will only be permitted in the Green Belt in accordance with Policy GB2 and where:-

- (a) the proposal would be for another employment generating use; and
- (b) the proposal would be compatible with, and would not adversely

- (c) affect the character or amenities of the Green Belt, of nearby properties or the locality in general, and would be in accordance with policy EP3 (Use, Design and Layout of Development) and; the proposal would comply with all the other policies in this plan. Particular attention is drawn to policies TR5 (Accesses, Highway Works and Traffic Generation), TR7 (Parking Provision), E6 (Employment Generating Uses in the Green Belt) and EP4 (Landscaping).

Explanation

- 3.26 The policy relates to employment generating and commercial sites located outside of the Green Belt settlements listed in policy GB3. Sites located within those Green Belt settlements are covered by policy GB5. For the purposes of this policy employment generating uses are defined as those set out in Part B of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order (see paragraph 10.11). They do not include agriculture or forestry.
- 3.27 Proposals to establish new employment generating or other commercial sites within the Green Belt will not be permitted, as such development would be contrary to long-established Green Belt policies. Similarly, the Council considers that proposals for extensions or additional buildings at employment generating and other commercial sites in the Green Belt would harm the overriding aim and purposes of the Green Belt, given that such sites are not within a Green Belt settlement. The fact that a proposed building may be well screened is not a justification for allowing it - that argument could be repeated too often. Furthermore, additional floorspace in Green Belt locations is likely to result in an increased demand for use of the car, since most Green Belt locations will be poorly served, or not served at all by public transport.

POLICY L6 - COLNE VALLEY PARK

Proposals in the Colne Valley Park will only be permitted where:-

- (a) they maintain and enhance the landscape, waterscape and townscape of the Park in terms of its character, its scenic and conservation value and its overall amenity; and
- (b) they safeguard existing areas of countryside from inappropriate development and do not involve urbanisation of the Park; and
- (c) they conserve the nature conservation resources of the Park; and
- (d) where outdoor sport or outdoor recreation is involved it does not compromise (a) or (b) or (c) above.

Explanation

- 4.16 A substantial part of the District lies in the Colne Valley Park. The District Council is a member of the Colne Valley Park Standing Conference which has recently published a new strategy for action in the Park. That strategy seeks to bring about improvements to the Colne Valley through joint working by means of implementing a co-ordinated

- and planned programme of improvements.
- 4.17 The Council will, in its role as local planning authority for that part of the Park in South Bucks, seek to complement the work of the Standing Conference by ensuring that development proposals meet the criteria set out in the policy.
- 4.18 The Colne Valley Park has in some parts been seriously damaged by previous developments and by landscape deterioration arising from neglect and the inappropriate use of land. A previous study by the Standing Conference on London and South East Regional Planning (now SERPLAN) entitled "The Improvement of London's Green Belt" recognised the extent of the problem. The Green Belt in this area to the west of London is the most fragmented part of the Metropolitan Green Belt. At the same time it is an area under pressure for further development which would, if it were allowed, not only further fragment the Green Belt, but also result in a deterioration of the landscape, character and amenity of the Park.
- 4.19 The safeguarding of the countryside in the Park from urbanisation and inappropriate development is of fundamental importance and is consistent with and complementary to Green Belt policy. The maintenance and improvement of the urban and rural landscape is a key aim and it is important to ensure that all proposals comply with this because it would be inappropriate for the local authorities to expend resources on improvement if this were to be offset by other development which would detract from the urban and rural landscape in the Park. The Council does not consider that because the Park has been damaged by previous development that it would be acceptable to allow further damaging proposals to take place. Rather, the positive action being undertaken by the Standing Conference Authorities to bring about improvement should be matched by other proposals. It is important that proposals should not harm the amenities of the Colne Valley or its residents.
- 4.20 Proposals for leisure and recreation development will need to comply with this and other relevant policies in the Plan. It is important to acknowledge that whilst some forms of recreation may be acceptable in the Park others will not if they would result in damage to the landscape, character and amenities of the area. The Council acknowledges the role that the Park has to play in providing appropriate outdoor sport and outdoor recreation for its immediate population, but considers that the Park would be irreparably damaged by provision of recreation facilities on a large scale to serve a much wider regional demand.