

## St John Parish Council

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the St John Parish Council will be held at St John village hall on Tuesday 3rd January 2023 at 7.30pm.

**Those present** : Cllr Richards (Chairman), Cllr Tanner, Cllr Hirst, Cllr Hoskins, Cllr Everard, County Cllr Ewert , Mrs Allen Clerk to St John Parish Council ( PC) and 15 members of the public.

### **59.22 Apologies for absence. Cllr Crane due to annual leave.**

### **60.22 Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda. None.**

Cllr Richards advised that Mr & Mrs Berry had declined the invitation to attend the meeting, as they considered that they had nothing to add. Furthermore, they asked that (on a note of professional conduct) Cllrs Richards and Everard are not present as this would constitute a conflict of interest.

Cllr Richards declared there was no conflict of interest.

### **61.22 Welcome address.**

Cllr Richards welcomed the members of the community to the meeting and confirmed his commitment to chairing this meeting in a fair and impartial way.

Cllr Richards explained that under Planning protocol, Cornwall County Council (the statutory Planning Authority) contact the Parish Council to comment on all Planning Applications given their knowledge of their designated parish. These comments are discretionary.

The Parish Council is not the Planning authority and Councillors are not professional planning officers, they are consultees only and your locally elected members to represent the community to the best of their ability.

To this end the Parish Council have called this meeting to hear the opinions of the local community.

### **62.22 Public forum.**

Members of the public were asked if they would like to express their opinions relating to the St John Inn, St.John Torpoint Planning Application PA22/10077 for the demolition of the concrete double garage and construction of a new garage with holiday accommodation above. For information the footprint, height and mass of this building is considerably larger than the existing garage.

- Planning documents. Comments were made that there did not appear to be sufficient information contained in the Planning submission documents on the Cornwall Council Planning portal for local residents to make completely informed decisions.
- Visual impact in Conservation Area. The new building will be increased in height to 7m tall from the existing 3m. The plans do not show what the new building would

look like when viewed beside the historic St John Inn. The new building will be visually imposing and will be in clear view from the road and local residents. Comments were made that although this is a one bedroomed apartment that in the future the building possibly could be converted into a large residential property in the pub car park.

- Concerns were raised given existing and historic problems with the foul draining system shared by the Inn, the Campsite and other properties in the village, which involve a septic tank and field percolation system, the problem could be exacerbated if this dwelling is approved. Clarity on the new sewage system should be made available asap.
- All surface, land and field drainage water from the entire site including the proposed treatment plant would feed into an adjacent property/ properties and eventually the SSSI via a nearby stream.
- Environmental concerns were raised relating to the potential for further pollution of the local environment. It appears that there is evidence of reducing biodiversity and increased water pollution. The Environment agency and Environmental health have both been informed in the past to no avail.
- Protection of the existing trees and Cornish hedge should be provided for in the design of the new structure.
- Demolition of the garage, which will involve proper removal of asbestos, will be safer for neighbours.
- Sewage flows from The Buffers could be connected into the new system.

### **63.22 Parish Council response.**

#### **Neighbour development plan compliance.**

Having listened to the comments from the members of the public, Cllr Richards confirmed that after consultation with the planning officer, although described as garage reconstruction with accommodation over, this is a new build dwelling. The Applicant has stated that it will be used as a holiday let. The Planning Officer will consider whether this would comply with Policy 1 of the Rame Peninsula NDP, and whether the building should be considered as an Annexe to the Inn, with the appropriate Condition to prevent open market sale, (as such the new dwelling would not be a sustainable independent house).

#### **Visual impact.**

Although set back from the road, the visual impact will be high as the mass of the new building will be considerably larger than the small garage.

There have been two applications for new buildings adjacent to the Inn, one in 2015 by the previous owner, and more recently in 2019 by the current owners. The former was refused as it would fail to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the St John Conservation Area. The latter was accepted as it would not be visible from the road.

The Planning officer will be responsible for carefully considering the impact on the St John Conservation Area.

#### **Drainage.**

There is concern regarding pollution from the existing foul drainage system, and this has been lodged on the Planning Register.

In 2019 the PC supported a planning application for a two-bedroom lodge (PA19/03005). This was on the basis of assurance that the existing septic tank was being properly managed with sufficient emptying, and that an EA Permit should be a Condition of approval, as the loading on the septic tank and field drainage system already exceeded 2000 litres/day. The planning officer referred to the EA Permit but only as "advice". No permit has been obtained and further development including a new toilet/shower has been added with current estimated flows to be over 4000 litres/day.

As the new dwelling will have a new separate foul sewage disposal system then it is possible that ongoing problems with the existing system may not be considered in this application, this may depend upon Building Control.

If the Planning Officer is minded to give approval, then the PC recommends a Condition that full design details of the new system should be submitted for approval prior to commencement of any construction, and also that any possible adverse effects on the existing system should be assessed during this design approval.

When the new separate system goes ahead then maybe flows from the The Buffers should be connected to this new system in order to reduce the loading on the existing septic tank, so that the management of the existing system can be improved.

St John residents would welcome if this could be resolved to the benefit of everyone.

A vote was held to gauge the opinion of those that were present at the meeting. 2 supported the application. 8 objected to the application. 5 neutral voters.

**64.22 Application PA22/10539** Demolition of the existing chalet and replacement with a sustainable and energy efficient new chalet Trelowen

Location Tregonhawke Cliff Military Road Torpoint Cornwall PL10 1JU

### **Parish Council response.**

The Parish Council consider that this planning application visually does not fit it aesthetically with the unique character of the chalet community along Whitsand Bay. The Parish Council feel it is very important to retain this.

The Plans appear to show an increase in size of this property. It is understood that this property has already been increased in size since 2005, although the plans for this do not appear on the Planning portal. Therefore, the PC believes the property has already had its discretionary increase in size up to 10%, it would ask that the Planning officer looks into this further.

The chalet is being moved from its existing position and presumably will involve excavating the cliff. The PC have concerns about the structural integrity of the cliff because of this.

The PC opposes the application to include a hot tub because of the regular disposal of the water which may undermine the cliff and because of the pollution by chemicals used in emptying said hot tubs on the local flora and fauna.

The landscaping of the plot appears to be inappropriate, by removing the existing planting and soft landscaping and replacing it with concrete and decking which will

increase run off and potentially undermine the cliff stability and reduce the natural biodiversity of the site.

**65.22** Meeting closed 9pm.