



ARDINGLY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Bernadette Cox
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Minutes of the Extraordinary Ardingly Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 26th February at 7.30pm in the Reading Room at Hapstead Hall, Ardingly

Present

Councillor D. Stutchbury (Chairman)
Councillor C. Hotblack (Vice Chairman)
Councillor J. Aloof
Councillor P. Burr
Councillor R. Chalk
Councillor B. Gass
Councillor J. Horsman
Councillor K. James

In Attendance Mrs. B Cox (Parish Clerk)

1529 Public Questions

There were eleven members of the public present and the following questions/matters were raised; Fiona Rocks explained that having read the last minutes (Draft APC February Minutes) where the two options to be researched in response to potential practical action on the PC stance on SA25 were outlined, she would like clarification on what basis, Councillors will be making a decision tonight on which of the two options to adopt. She explained she is asking this question as there has been no parishioner consultation to obtain a view of what action the village feels wants. Councillor Hotblack explained in response, that MSDC held a Public Consultation and the results of that showed that 2/3 of those that objected were qualified objections the content of which referred to the number of dwellings being an issue, which supports the already adopted stance of "The size of SA25 is too Large". Fiona Rocks questioned how the Parish Council even got to this stance when over the last few meetings there has not been clear discussion on SA25 and because of this the Parishioners were unaware that removing it from the DPD was even an option until very recently.

Councillor Stutchbury explained that removing it from the DPD is not an option. Councillor K. James stated that the Parish Council's stance was also informed by the Public Information Morning held in November in response to the 1st MSDC Public Consultation of the DPD. Fiona Rocks challenged that more Public Consultation was required, she went on to question that only three days' notice was given for this Extraordinary Meeting and that it was poorly advertised, she explained that the Stangrove Development was communicated and the village were involved by way of Consultation.

Councillor Hotblack explained the idea that the Parishioners be consulted formally was debated however the Parish Council felt there was no clear question to put to the village as this is not a black and white issue. Ben Moon explained that 93% of responders to the MSDC Public Consultation objected to SA25. Councillor Hotblack explained that he had interpreted MSDC's Consultation report as follows; that only 1/3 of the responses that objected were outright objections. The other 2/3's objected to the number of dwellings. Ben Moon went on to say that the APC DRAFT February minutes were contradictory and inconsistent. The Clerk asked Ben Moon which section he was referring to specifically and he read a section of minutes the content of which was the Clerks description of some of the SA25's WP's behaviors specifically the suggestion that some members of the WP had shown obstructive behaviors during their time on the SA25 WP. He then went on to say between that extract and the meetings with the Showground it looked to the village that the Parish Council were the SG's stooges in terms of the development at SA25. The Chairman explained he would not be responding to comments of that nature and moved on to another parishioner. Fiona Rocks suggested that there had been a lot of meetings between the WP and the SG on SA25 and not enough Public meetings between the PC and its Parishioners. Councillor Chalk explained not all members of the WP had been meeting with the SG.

Fiona then summarised that this is an enormous decision for the village and SA25 is "Major" development. Councillor K. James responded reassuring the parishioners present that the SA25 WP had undertaken a significant amount of work to get to the two options including several meetings with outside agencies. Councillor K. James also went on to say that APC meetings are open and the Public can attend. Councillor Chalk explained that detailed in previous minutes are the updates and recommendations from the SA25 WP to Full Council through the entire process.

Councillor K. James explained that she had read in the information from the WP that MSDC had previously recognised that SA25 is a significant scale of development within the AONB and she queried if they have admitted this how will they argue that it isn't a "Major" development. Katherine Surgeoner stated that she had spoken with Andrew Marsh at MSDC who was helpful, and had had a useful discussion with him across a few topics connected with SA 25, most pertinently the meaning of 'major development'. Mr. Marsh accepted that the meaning of 'major' was a grey area but raised the fact that a Hand cross Development (SA27) also in the AONB which had been allocated 65 houses had not been considered to be a 'Major' development by MSDC even though it was a smaller village than Ardingly. However, Mr. Marsh confirmed he was aware that Tonbridge Wells district council appeared to be interpreting 'major development' as anything which leads to an increase in size of over 5%. KS also shared that Andrew Marsh had said that there are 6 other AONB sites in the DPD and 2 employment sites, but of those 6 SA25 was the largest and most contentious.

Councillor K. James stated that she was surprised that the work as to whether SA25 is a "Major" development or not had not already been undertaken by MSDC. The Clerk explained that normally such work is undertaken at planning stage but in response to the comments received during the Public Consultation on the DPD the Scrutiny Committee asked the MSDC planners to undertake this work prior.

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| 1530 | <p>Procedural Matters 1530.1 Councillors J. James and Strutton sent their apologies. 1530.2 There were no declarations of interest in respect of any matters on the agenda.</p> | |
| 1531 | <p>SA25 Working Party Update</p> <p>The Clerk addressed the Full Council and explained that due to the contentious nature of SA25, she had taken advice from MSDC reference tonight's meeting and that MSDC had advised she make it clear to all Councillors that a clear and full discussion must take place on the research gained on the two options prior to any vote on the Parish Council's practical action taking place. This is to ensure that all Councillors not on the SA25 Working Party feel fully informed to participate in any suggested votes. She suggested to Councillors that the discussion should take place first and that the Working Party recommendations be discussed after the discussion to ensure they do not influence the Non-Working Party members vote.</p> <p>1531.1 To receive and discuss the information gained by the SA25 Working Party when researching the following options;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1; whether SA25 could be removed from the DPD • Option 2; if the Green Space boundary identified at SA25 could be negotiated to reduce the build area of SA25. <p>Councillor Hotblack asked the Full Council if they had all read the supporting documentation circulated prior to the meeting. All Councillors indicated that they had. Councillor Hotblack then asked if any Councillors had any questions or observations on the supporting documentation.</p> <p>Councillor K. James explained she had some comments. She stated that if MSDC had previously identified SA25 as a significant scale of development in the AONB that they must have expected that it would be continuous. She asked for clarification on why in the supporting documentation the issue of protecting the identities of the two settlements was so key. The Clerk explained that Clare Tester from the AONB stressed this as a key issue and that Butcher's Field had been rejected on appeal under these grounds. Councillor K. James went on to talk about the DRAFT Scrutiny Committee document she suggested the following edits;</p> <p>After the background paragraph that reference, be made to the original comments submitted as part of the 1st MSDC consultation.</p> <p>Discussion then took place on the research gathered by the SA25 Working Party around the two options, as part of that discussion Councillor Stutchbury explained that when he stated during Public Questions that the SA25 could not be removed from the DPD the Clerk had indicated to him that Andrew Marsh had told her that SA25 can be removed from the DPD as it can be revised to propose less dwellings as part of the Consultation process should it be deemed appropriate.</p> <p>Councillor Taylor asked for clarification that if a reduction in the number of dwellings was agreed would that be secure or could Developers challenge that. The Clerk explained that the Developers can challenge any revision at Planning Inspector Level as can all other parties. Further Discussion took place around outline planning the content of which focused on explaining that if the Developers had agreed outline planning that they could revisit and revise it later but MSDC should at that stage remind the developers that the outline planning should be respected.</p> | |

Councillor Hotblack asked after the discussion if all Councillors felt informed enough to progress. All Councillors indicated they did.

The following statement was suggested for approval;

APC supports the action to request that MSDC significantly reduce the number of dwellings proposed on SA25. A vote was taken and the statement was unanimously APPROVED.

There was then discussion on whether the option of removing the DPD from SA25 also required voting on. Councillor Hotblack suggested that the previously approved statement was understood to be the preferred option so it was not logical to vote on the removal of SA25 from the DPD as that would contradict the above approved statement. There was discussion between Councillors that they had not agreed the above statement to be the preferred option. Councillor Hotblack then proposed and it was seconded that the above statement be the APC's preferred option on practical action to support the APC stance. The Clerk suggested to the Parish Council that she had found setting the agenda difficult as she was unsure of what specifically the Parish Council wanted to vote on, which is why she had not detailed the specifics of any vote on the agenda. She stated that she had assumed that the outcome of the discussion would structure any vote. Councillor Gass suggested he would like to vote on the removal of SA25 from the DPD as this was an option he believed had been tabled before as a valid option for the Parish Councils practical action. There was discussion amongst Councillors as to whether they could use this option as a fall back should the preferred option fail. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council could vote to that effect as an outcome of their discussion but would need to agree the wording. Councillor K. James asked what would be the consequence of having remove SA25 from the DPD as a fallback option and Councillor Hotblack explained this was what the Working Party were unsure of, the Working Party were unable to confirm the likelihood or unintended consequences of either the removal or reduction options.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would vote on the following statements;

APC supports the action to seek to remove SA25 from the DPD as a preferred option. The result of the vote was 8/1 against this statement.

The APC resolves that should the preferred option not result in a substantial reduction in the number of dwellings and the footprint of SA25 then APC will seek to remove SA25 from the DPD. A vote was taken and the statement was APPROVED (5/3) with one abstain.

1531.2 To receive and vote on the SA25 Working Party's recommendation on the Option to take in support of the Parish Council's stance "SA25 is too large"

Councillor Hotblack then suggested that now that the preferred option had been agreed could the Working PARTY have the following recommendations approved as the actions on the preferred option;

That the DRAFT document be amended to include in the recommendation and summary words to demonstrate the approved practical actions.

That the DRAFT document with amendments be circulated and approved by email.

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| | <p>That the Parish Clerk is to submit the document to the Scrutiny Committee via email and that Andrew Marsh is to also be sent a copy.</p> <p>That the Parish Council delegates to the Working Party the task of contacting members of the Scrutiny Committee once they have received the document to discuss the document and Parish Council's stance preferred and fall back options.</p> | |
| 1532 | <p>Future Meeting Dates</p> <p>1532.1 Parish Council meeting for 3rd March2020</p> | |