



**PRINCES RISBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH AUGUST 2024 AT THE BRUSHWOOD SUITE, WADES CENTRE, STRATTON
ROAD, PRINCES RISBOROUGH
AT 7.00 PM**

PRESENT

Cllr N Rawsthorne – Chair
Cllrs S Coombs, A Frost, C Morgan, I Parkinson, A Shipley
Susanne Barter- Clerk
Kirsty Pope- Deputy Clerk
Jayne Mylchreest- Administration Officer
13 members of the public

THE TOWN COUNCIL PRAYER

1. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported that apologies had been received from Cllrs Biss, Ball and Marshall who were on holiday, Cllr Turner who had a previous commitment and Cllr Cross who had a work commitment.

Resolved: To accept apologies from Cllrs Biss, Ball, Marshall, Turner and Cross.

No apologies were received from Cllrs Hall and Rampin.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 30TH JULY 2024

Resolved: To agree and sign as a correct record the minutes of the 30TH JULY 2024.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary declarations of interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

Cllr Morgan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item No 7 as a resident of Clifford Road

4. PUBLIC FORUM

2 members of the public addressed the members regarding Agenda Item No 7.

See appendix 1

Cllr Shipley proposed to bring Agenda item No 7 forward.

Seconded by Cllr Frost.

Resolved: to bring Agenda item No 7 forward.

Cllr Morgan declared a non-pecuniary interest and took no part in the discussion or vote.

7. PLANNING APPLICATION 24/06542/FUL

Address: Risborough School Merton Road Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire HP27 0DR

Proposal: Construction of a new full size synthetic pitch and MUGA with floodlighting and fencing system to replace the existing natural grass area and existing MUGA and creation of two bunds.

Cllr Rawsthorne proposed to object to the Planning application and send the following comments to the Planning Officer at Buckinghamshire Council -:

Further to the comments already submitted, The Princes Risborough Town Council objects to this application. Whilst acknowledging the benefits of this sporting facility for both the school and the wider area, as supported by the FA and LTC, the Council would wish to highlight particular concerns on the increased traffic, noise (both during construction and once in use) and light pollution for the residents in the local area of Merton and Clifford Road.

Traffic generation and parking is already an issue in term time and this is likely to be exacerbated. Noise levels within the Impact Assessment are also highlighted as having a 'moderate' impact above existing levels, as is the issue of light pollution - that had been a previous reason for earlier applications to be refused. It would therefore be useful to understand further how these issues would be addressed. We specifically noted that within the recent application for a Dining Hall Canopy, MUGA and 4 Classrooms (approved with exceptions by BCC in Jan 23) limitations on hours of use for the MUGA and the specific mention 'no mobile or fixed floodlighting was detailed - acknowledging interests of residents and the visual amenities of the AONB and neighbouring properties - which we assume remain extant and would therefore require adjustments to the planning application to be made? We would therefore recommend some further local consultation to understand how these issues would be addressed or mitigated.

Seconded by Cllr Shipley.

Resolved: to object to the application and send the response above.

JM

5. BUSINESS PLAN CONSULATION

Cllr Rawsthorne proposed to task each individual committees of the Town Council to review the consultation responses to identify relevant priorities and projects in preparation for the Estimates meeting in November 2024. Seconded by Cllr Frost.

Resolved: to task each individual committees of the Town Council to review the consultation responses to identify relevant priorities and projects in preparation for the Estimates meeting in November 2024.
ALL CLLRS

6. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON EVENT

Cllr Frost proposed to return to Saturday the 30th November 2024 as the date for the Christmas Lights Switch on Event.

Seconded by Cllr Morgan.

Resolved: Saturday the 30th November 2024 as the date for the Christmas Lights Switch on Event.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

To be advised.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the Town Council will take place on Tuesday 24th September 2024 at 7.00pm. to be held at the Wades Centre, Princes Risborough. The Meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

Appendix 1

Objections from many residents of Merton and Clifford Road re. PRS Planning (24/06542/FUL) for full size synthetic pitch and MUGA with fencing system to replace the existing natural grass area and existing -MUGA and creation of two -bunds

As residents of the two neighbouring roads adjacent to the proposed development, we object principally to the noise and the increased traffic implicit in the creation of this sports facility. We also object to the use of floodlights and are concerned about damage to the environment and ecology arising from materials used and construction on the site.

The timing of the planning process was insufficient and we request that the Town Council ask for an extension. Planning permission was submitted on 3rd July, validated by Bucks Council on 25th July and a letter sent to a few residents was dated 26th July and received a few days later. The deadline for comments was 16th August. The school holiday started on 24th July, so many people were away for some or all of this fortnight. People were disenfranchised from having their say on planning matters which would have a detrimental impact on them. Several wanted to attend this meeting, but are on holiday.

You may not be aware that on the 15th August there were 19 Objections and only 5 comments in support on the website for the current proposal. A message was sent to users of sports facilities and sports clubs within and outside the area, asking for support messages and incorrectly telling them access was from New Road, so wouldn't impact traffic on Merton Road. There was then a flurry of supportive comments. However, most were just in support of such a type of facility (wherever it was built), and many were from outside of Princes Risborough, some not even in Bucks! Many would have no idea of the ramifications of the development to local people as they may not be familiar with the area.

Indeed, the geographical range of supporters is indicative of the school's wish to broaden the facility. Rather than focusing on sports for its students, it is aiming to be a hub for sports clubs from a wide area and use the revenue from this to refurbish the AGP.

We are not objecting to a sports facility in general. Our stance is that an outdoor, full-sized, floodlit AGP and 3 hard courts is not necessary or appropriate in this location.

The Wycombe Local Plan (2019) makes strategic and local provision for sports and recreational facilities (including a MUGA) within the new expansion area for the town. It allocates land for this provision adjacent to Mill Lane, (the Molin's Sports ground site), not at the existing Secondary School. Bucks Council and Princes Risborough Town Council must uphold the policy principles of the WLP and refuse this application.

We are not aware of other secondary schools in the area asking for such a large facility, with these greatly extended times of use: 8am-10pm Mon Fri and 8am-8pm at the weekend.

There were no objections to the Sports Hall application in 2013 because the proposal and planning was very different. The access was stipulated to be from New Road "To avoid vehicular intensification of Clifford Road and Merton Road, thus minimising danger and inconvenience to highway users in those locations." The facility was indoor, thus any noise impact on us was minimal. The building was sensitively designed to fit within the landscape. Further reasoning given for not using Clifford Road to access the facility was that it was a Junction onto the A4010 and congestion at the Junction would impact a busy through road. Traffic on Clifford Road and Merton Road has increased since 2013, so this is more pertinent today.

The Highways Report conclusion that road traffic to the site after the development would be "comparable" with current use is nonsensical. It is clearly stated in documentation that the purpose of the floodlit AGP and the creation of three further courts is to increase the number of visitors, particularly in the evenings and weekends, throughout the year.

Both roads are unsuitable for increased traffic. There_ have been concerns over parking, with a RPPI scheme considered. Air pollution levels are being monitored in Merton Road. School traffic at present causes congestion at peak times, with the blocking of Merton Road as cars queue to enter the school. On Clifford Road the steep hill, chicane and hazard of parked cars narrowing the road space is already very dangerous.

More traffic also increases disturbance from engine noise and light pollution from headlights shining into windows as they arrive and depart, until after 10pm. This would deprive residents of sleep and from relaxing in their gardens and homes.

The proposal for construction traffic to use these roads is reckless and may be impractical. No extra car parking has been proposed, so when some of the car park is used for storage of construction materials, where will school staff and visitors park? During large events, such as football tournaments, will cars park on our neighbouring roads?

This development would expose residents to unacceptable levels of noise, both from participants, coaching staff and from potentially very large numbers in the 75m x 3m spectator area in increased and unsociable hours for a residential setting.

The noise report data is inadequate as it analysed training sessions rather than matches. Sources of noise disturbance are from spikes in levels (whistles, shouts, spectator reaction), rather than the constant noise measured. We are also concerned about the accuracy and tolerance of levels of noise indicated on the report.

More traffic also increases disturbance from engine noise and light pollution from headlights shining into windows as they arrive and depart, until after 10pm. This would deprive residents of sleep and from relaxing in their gardens and homes.

We also have concerns about the environmental impact of the proposal, particularly as there is no report from the Council Environmental Health Protection Officer included in the documentation.

The site is in the Chilterns AONB and close to several SSSIs. It is also bordered by the Ridgeway National Footpath and surrounded by fields and residents gardens. Whereas the Sports Haff was sensitively designed, to blend in inconspicuously this proposal would mar views and the enjoyment of this area. Indeed, in the 1997 planning application for a MUGA, one reason for rejecting it was (the) "visual intrusion of floodlighting columns and means of enclosure", It is notable that there are no design images of the final development, perhaps a tacit admission of the unsightliness of it.

Will the school be able to achieve the mandatory 10% net gain in biodiversity units? As Sports England have vetoed the bunds created by the excavation from being sited on the top Sports Field, due to loss of playing field space. Given this decision it is doubtful they would allow the proposed planting to off-set the loss of 9 trees on that site. Where will this vital replacement planting be done? How long would it take to recover the loss?

The biodiversity survey was a "snapshot" and only a "ground survey" of trees was done. This is insufficient. Local residents are aware of a far greater incidence of bats, foxes, badgers, hedgehogs and birds than the recorded statistics show, and even have some photographs of them!

To protect bats the mitigation requires that "any new lighting must be kept to a minimum and directed away from ... peripheries of site... [to] preclude disturbance to bats [using] adjacent hedgerows". How is this compatible with floodlighting?

The replacement of grass by a synthetic pitch is not a sustainable choice. Micro plastic pollution is a recognised hazard. How will the material collected by the barrier be disposed of? What is to prevent users from carrying it away from the pitch on their boots into the surrounding area?

Is the drainage and filtration system adequate for an elevated site? How will the leaching of dangerous minerals such as mercury, used in AGPs, into the soil and ground water system be prevented?

There are many unanswered questions, contradictions, errors and omissions in the documents submitted in this application.

re. PRS Planning (24/()6542/FUL) for full size synthetic pitch and MUGA with fencing system to replace the existing natural grass area and existing MUGA and creation of two bunds

As a local resident of Merton Road, I would like to object to the planning application from Prince Risborough School. Those that have supported that application have failed to see the impact to local residents in MR/CR and the wider community. And have misinformed via a message requesting people of local sports clubs to support the proposal that the access would be via New Road entrance, which is not the case.

I am, to say the least, very surprised at the Highways submission. I would actually question the content.

He states 'the vehicular trips for the application site would be comparable to the existing situation'. Currently there is a restriction on access for the sports hall being strictly from the New Road entrance. This application proposes using Clifford Road and Merton Road for access.

I would also like to use just a couple of quotes from the design and access statement of 18 July that shows the level of use hoped for

3.1.1 The proposed 3G pitch will encourage more football activity facilitating club football activities, sports and community access.

8.3.3 The size of the pitch was design in collaboration with Football Foundation and their requirements which will allow the school and local community clubs to host both local and national level competitions

Indeed one of the supporters states that just their club alone has 300 members that would make use of the facility

This is not comparable at all and implies that the facility will attract many more club users and also local and national competitions. This WILL impact the traffic, noise and pollution levels in these roads with a significant impact to the quality of relaxation time for residents. Safety of local children and residents will also be impacted by this increase in traffic.

Again I emphasise that I am not against a MUGA - just the location and access

Referring to Agenda Item 6 app.no 13/05270/FUL for the Sports Hall in the school, it was stated (4.33) -

'The Highways Officer considers that the new sports centre building would be best served in highway terms from the new Road access rather than CR & MR. This is because the use of CR leads to the use of the CR/Wycombe Road junction including vehicle stationing in Wycombe Road to turn right into CR and queuing on the CR arm. The CR/MR route is also characterised by many parked vehicles. The alternate New Road route is accessed via the Horns Lane roundabout and offers a better standard of access.

4.35 There shall be no other means of access to the development by non-school users other than from New Road. Reason; To avoid vehicular intensification of Cr and MR, thus minimising danger and inconvenience to highway users in those locations.

The use of MR/CR until late at night until after 10 is totally unacceptable to residents. Both Roads are Cul-de-sacs. Vehicles coming out of Merton Road will be shining the lights directly into window of houses in Clifford Road. Similarly on sharp corners. And there will be a marked increase in noise levels for all residents.

Noise and Light Pollution.

I note there is no report from the Environmental Protection Officer. The Downley School applied for permission for a MUGA earlier this year. The EPO summary was

Objection unless subject to conditions to address 1) Potential noise nuisance from an unreasonable intensification of the use of the MUGA

Recommended Conditions The proposed facility hereby approved shall not be used for any purpose other than a sports facility ancillary to the school and shall not be used for hire by a third party. Reason: to limit intensification in order to safeguard the residential amenities of nearby residents and the area generally from noise and disturbance.

A former Environmental Health officer who specialised in Noise control for the last 20 years of working suggested that the method of analysing noise was inappropriate (details can be obtained in his comments on the application).

The noise levels from the survey produce levels only just below the max level in the standard which is not appropriate standard in a quiet residential area

Additionally, within the related surveys (in Bristol) given as comparative analysis there was in all circumstances no 'spectators' mentioned, whereas there is a large area allowed in PR for spectators, which will be the case for the competitions that are being encouraged. This will increase the noise level to local residents, and would push the noise levels above estimated max levels.

The noise levels considered purely relate to the use of the MUGA without considering the fact that the car park is between the MUGA and local residents (actually only a few meters from the gardens/houses), and car start up noise is usually in excess of 70dB(A) - not really acceptable to local residents considering this could be beyond 10pm Mon-Friday and 8pm weekends. And the additional air pollution caused.

Additionally, I would expect to see comments on the impact of light pollution from spot lights that are on 50 foot poles. Apart from the visual impact to the area - I am sure being on the top of the hill they will be seen from miles around (in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). And for local residents purely providing an image showing the light intensity certainly isn't understandable to a layperson. Indeed nearby residents it is showing 1263 candelas - from what I can gather 1 candela is the equivalent to the intensity of 1 candle - 1263 sounds quite bright to me without a full understanding and this could be until 10pm at night!

And what impact would this have on wildlife in the area? The majority of local neighbours (including myself) have seen Badgers, Foxes and Hedgehogs In their gardens. And common to have bats flying around at night.

Referring to Agenda 6 again from a habitat survey undertaken in 2013 - Foraging Bats: Bats are likely to use the trees on the south-eastern boundary for foraging and commuting. Therefore, any lighting in this area should be kept to a minimum and directed away from the boundary.

Principal Issues:

Wycombe Local Plan (WLP)

- The WLP makes strategic and local policy provision for sports and recreational facilities (including a MUGA) within the new expansion area of the Town. The WLP concept plan allocates land for this provision adjacent to Mill Lane/Lower Icknield way- NOT at the existing Secondary School.
- Bucks Council and PR Town Council must uphold the policy principles of the WLP and refuse this application.

Applicants Design and Access Statement:

- The Design and Access Statement is woefully inadequate. The only reference to traffic impact is - construction traffic.
- There is no assessment of operational traffic impact, road safety impact, congestion impact or parking impact.
- Bucks Council must be asked refuse this application due to these inadequacies.

Highway Officer Report:

- The Highways Officer's report and conclusions are fundamentally flawed.
- This Highways Officer has determined that the MUGA proposal is no different in traffic terms compared with the existing sports hall. This is not the case e.g. the sports hall is restricted to use New Road only.
- Bucks Council must be asked reject the Highways Officers report

Environmental impact Assessment:

- The application site is located at prominent and high elevation in the town. The site is within the AONB. The application appears to be of a completely different scale to that of a local facility for the local school.
- For these reasons alone, Bucks Council should be asked to require the applicant to provide a full environmental impact assessment.

Inadequate time for given for responses:

- Residents have been given inadequate to respond to this application.
- Bucks Council should be asked to extend the timescale for this application. This is necessary and essential to enable Bucks Council to require full and proper assessments of:
 - The applications 'non- compliance' with the Adopted WLP.
 - A comprehensive assessment of Highways and Transport (importantly during Operation of the sports facility at low and peak periods).
 - A comprehensive assessment of Environmental Impact.
 - Allow proper time for all local people to express their views.