

Great Bedwyn Parish Council Planning Committee
Meeting held at 10.30 am on Wednesday 30/1/2019
In Farm Lane adjacent no 39 to discuss the following planning application:
18/11901/FUL 39 Farm Lane Great Bedwyn change of use from A2 to residential

Present: Cllrs Howell (Chair), Bushby, Younger and Stone

8 members of the public - including 3 directors of The Bedwyn Pub Company who hope to rescue the Cross Keys as a pub, and 3 residents of Farm Lane including Cllr Clack (chair of the planning committee) who was present but as a member of the public as she owns a neighbouring property. Cllr Sheerin was also present as a member of the public.

Cllr Howell opened the meeting by explaining that the proposed scheme had prompted considerable public interest and there were about 50 objections on Wiltshire Councils website. The public present were permitted to make comments before Councillors discussed their response to Wiltshire Council.

Public Discussion:

Judy Haynes said that the plans were very unclear. It was not clear exactly what was to be retained and what rebuilt in this sensitive site. She also particularly wanted clarity on the the nature and height of the boundary wall to 15 High St and noted that there were no detailed plans for the summerhouse which was in an elevated site compromising views down Farm Lane.

The loss of The Cross Keys had impacted her B&B bookings as the other pub in the village was not open for some meal times and was too expensive for tourists who were cycling or walking the the Great West Way. She said that Wiltshire Council was keen to promote tourism and yet the closure of the Cross Keys had impacted footfall for all the local businesses. She suggested that we should consider the lost local employment potential also.

Peter Angus mentioned safety in relation to a difficult vehicle access on narrow road. He suggested that cars would in fact end up parking elsewhere in a congested village. He particularly mentioned that the necessary building works could block the lane for a considerable period and might necessitate replacement of existing wall that could compromise the structure of 16 High Street which was an important site in the centre of the village square and conservation area.

Rob Braybrooke mentioned that the development of the rear of the former pub left the important site at 16 High Street without a garden, car parking etc and we needed to know what was happening to the front to be able to decide about the back. He mentioned increased traffic near a dangerous junction. He felt there had been a lack of consultation about the splitting of the property and change of use.

The possibility of B&B and small business use was suggested particularly if the former Cross Keys could be reunited as a stimulus to tourism and employment.

Jenny Clack said that Farm Lane was an important vista to be protected. The skylight and the possible summerhouse were mentioned.

Discussion by Councillors:

Many of the points raised by the public were agreed. Particularly in relation to trade, tourism and heritage. Cllr Younger was concerned about the lantern lights and the summerhouse. The new window would look directly into a neighbouring house. Cllr Stone agreed and obscured glass was suggested. He also mentioned the increased height. Cllr Bushby was also concerned about height and we noted that the footprint of the new building would actually be bigger because the area at the rear was only a covered passage.

Councillors resolved that Cllr Howell prepare and circulate a draft letter of objection to Wiltshire Council pointing out the large amount of public concern. Many items had already pointed out by the public but that the committee's response should particularly on the big picture. We do not feel that the scheme can be properly considered without the plans for the future of 16 High Street. The buildings are in effectively the same ownership and the consideration of planning permission should be refused until such time as a proposal for the entire former Cross Keys site be forthcoming.