

**CAXTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Village Hall  
on Thursday 16 February 2012 at 7.45 pm**

Present: Councillors: W Agg (Chairman), M Harrison, E Blair, R Millard, R Steel, K Howard and K Human.

In attendance: Cllrs A Elcox and M Loynes (District Councillors), Mr David Mead (Partners in Planning) and 4 members of the public.

**Comments & observations from members of the public and reports from District & County Councillors**

Mr Mead was invited to provide some background to the scheme for the land at Caxton Gibbet. He explained that:

- Three applications for signage for MacDonald's were still to be submitted.
- The site is being developed by the Abbey Group, and the plans include detailed applications for two restaurants with named clients (MacDonald's and Costa Coffee), and an outline for a third unit of the same classification on the same site.
- The car parking is for all the restaurants.
- The third restaurant has yet to find a client.
- The named clients would be long-term clients signing up to leases of typically 25 years.
- Pre-consultation had taken place with Highways but they had not commented on the final submitted plans although they had asked that the travel information survey work be carried out.
- The wind turbine had been included by Abbey and was not a request or requirement for the restaurant sites.
- It was anticipated that the site would be a 24/7 operation.

Questions were asked about using the existing building. It was stated that this was thought to be too expensive and did not fit the detailed requirements of the potential clients. Restoration had not been considered.

Significant concerns were then raised by residents and members regarding the development:

**Traffic, HGVs and Access**

Serious reservations were raised about the proximity of the entrance to the roundabout. Whilst an additional right turn has been proposed, this was felt to be dangerous. Concerns were also raised about the potential problem of traffic queuing for the Drive Thru backing up onto the A1198, which was also considered dangerous due to the proximity of the roundabout. The view was expressed that at times when the A14 suffers problems with a knock on effect on the A1198 and A428, congestion could be a problem. Mr Mead stated that direct access off the roundabout would not be permitted.

Considerable concerns were expressed regarding how HGVs would access and use the site. The location of the site and the proposed advertising would make it an obvious point for a break for lorries on the A14/A428 travelling East and West. There was not considered to be enough space and provision for HGVs within the site. Concern was also raised as to how usage would be enforced and at the dangers of HGVs stopping and manoeuvring so close to the roundabout. Would HGVs be prohibited?

Concerns were raised about the use of Swansley Lane, and whether this would be used by HGVs, exacerbating the already significant problems of overnight parking and misuse of this road. The view was expressed that serious consideration needed to be given to the issue of HGVs and the use of this site.

### Wind Turbine

Comments were expressed that on the information available, whilst it was recognised as an effort to “green” the development, the wind turbine was of significant visual impact as the site lay on a ridge and would be very visible. The contribution of renewable power was negligible compared with the consumption by the restaurants and was regarded as an inappropriate blight on the landscape. Mr Mead explained that MacDonal’s did use Photovoltaics on other sites and that the turbine was not part of the leaseholder’s requirements. It was felt that, due to its proximity to the A428 on the approach to the roundabout, it could be a considerable and unwanted distraction.

### Access and traffic through the village of Caxton

Concerns were raised about the increase in traffic trying to access the site and using the route through Caxton as a short cut. Concerns were raised about the increased volume and speeding that might ensue. It was asked whether it would be possible to provide signage that directed traffic away from Caxton and on to the bypass.

### Litter

Concerns were raised about the increase in litter through rubbish being discarded after vehicles left the Drive thru.

## **1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

No apologies were received.

## **2. Planning applications received**

### **2.1 S/0053/12 – Erection of wind turbine, land at Caxton Gibbet**

The Parish Council recommended refusal of the application for the following reasons:

- The benefit is minimal
- The feature is inappropriate given the low level of all other buildings
- It is an unsightly blemish on the existing ridge line of the A428.
- The proximity to the A428, so close to the roundabout, would be a distraction and hence dangerous to traffic.

Photovoltaics are also used by MacDonal’s and would be a better solution with lower visual impact, more suited to the low level of this development. It was noted that the nearby school development had ruled out wind turbines and had opted for solar alternatives.

On a proposition by the Chairman, it was agreed vary the order of business to take Items 2.5 and 2.6 at this point.

### **2.5 S/0059/12/FL – Erection of two Drive thru restaurants, land at Caxton Gibbet**

It was agreed to recommend approval for the following reasons:

- The redevelopment will remove the existing building and clear up the currently derelict site.
- It will provide a landmark for the “end of the village”.
- It will bring a significant amount of potential employment to the area.

However the recommendation was subject to caveats due to a number of concerns that must be addressed before approval was granted:

- Access
  - Highways need to ensure that the proposed access is safe and adequate considering that it is so close to the main A428 roundabout.
  - Provision and consideration must be made for the potential use by HGVs. How will this be managed in a safe and considerate way?
  - The presence of two right hand turns off the A1198 in close proximity, the first to Swansley Lane and the second to the proposed development.
  - Adequate provision and transport arrangements should be made for staff. There is no public transport and this must be considered given the number of people employed.
  - Screening of the site.
  - A potential conflict with Swansley Lane which is being proposed as the main haul route during construction of the Cambourne Secondary School.
- Name – The roundabout is known nationally as the Caxton Gibbet and any identification of the site should reflect this.
- The Gibbet MUST remain in place and must be maintained.
- Signage should be in place to minimise traffic using Caxton as a short cut.
- Litter in the surrounding areas must be addressed and provision put in place to ensure that the wider area is not blighted by rubbish discarded from cars. Attention must also be paid to litter in the vicinity of the site and along Swansley Wood Lane.

The Parish Council asks that the Planning Committee carry out a site visit in order to appreciate the traffic and other issues, and that the matter should be decided by the Full Committee and not by delegated powers.

#### 2.6 S/0060/12 – Outline permission for third unit, land at Caxton Gibbet

It was agreed to recommend approval for the following reasons:

- The redevelopment will remove the existing building and clear up the currently derelict site.
- It will provide a landmark at the “end of the village”.
- It will bring a significant amount of potential employment to the area.

The same concerns and caveats apply as for S/0059/12, Erection of two Drive thru restaurants.

#### 2.2 S/0050/12 – Erection of illuminated freestanding pole sign, land at Caxton Gibbet

It was agreed to recommend approval on the ground that this is integral to the main application and was therefore subject to the same comments and tied to the approval of the main application.

#### 2.3 S/0049/12 – Four illuminated fascia signs, land at Caxton Gibbet

It was agreed to recommend approval on the ground that this is integral to the main application and was therefore subject to the same comments and tied to the approval of the main application.

#### 2.4 S/0048/12 – Erection of 8 freestanding signs, land at Caxton Gibbet

It was agreed to recommend approval on the ground that this is integral to the main application and was therefore subject to the same comments and tied to the approval of the main application.

**3. Closure of Meeting**

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed .....Chairman .....date.

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APPROVED