

# Meeting Report

**DATE OF MEETING:** Wednesday 2 March 2011

**WICHELSTOWE  
COMMUNITY  
FORUM**

Chair: Mike Farrington, Golley Slater PR

## Attending:

Emma Leake	Swindon Borough Council
Rob Powe	Swindon Borough Council
Andrew Rowe	Axiom Architects
Steve Roberts	Marston's Plc
Peter Lawson	Turley Associates
Charmian Spickernell	CPRE (Wiltshire branch)
Judith Randell-Sly	Front Garden Action Group
Geoffrey Hamilton	CPRE
Robert Bretton	Westlecot Residents Association
Ann Richards	Wroughton Parish Council
Michael Hinder	Wroughton Parish Council
Cllr Eric Shaw	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Brian Mattock	Swindon Borough Council
Margaret Cooney	Croft & LARRA Community Group
Rosemary Hayward	Croft & LARRA Community Group
Mike Lang	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
Terry Black	Sovereign South & West
Terry King	Front Garden Action Group
Jenny Forbes-Smith	Westlecot Residents Association & FRAG
Paul Corengia	Okus Residents Association
Alan Lynch	BAM Nuttall
Jeff Davis	WYG Trench Farrow
Claire Cornelius	Swindon Borough Council
Vivien O'Connell	Swindon Borough Council
Kareen Boyd	Old Town resident
James Boyd	Old Town resident
Alison Boulton	Wichelstowe resident and local minister/The StoweAway

## Apologies:

Cllr Rod Bluh	Swindon Borough Council
Peter Gallagher	Ramblers' Association
Cllr Kevin Parry	Swindon Borough Council
Ray Morse	Croft Community Council
Cllr Michael Bawden	Swindon Borough Council
Revd Angela Overton-Benge	Swindon Churches Together
Sara Stace	The Children's Society Croft Children's Centre
Lin Pryde	

MINUTE NO:	POINTS COVERED:	ACTION BY:
1.	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
	Mike Farrington (Golley Slater PR) opened the meeting at 7pm, welcomed attendees and announced apologies.	
2.	<b>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2010</b>	
2.0	Regarding minute 2.0, Terry King commented that the Mannington Road sign had been re-instated. Claire Cornelius explained that the sign had been illegally covered by advertising and when this was removed the Wichelstowe wording was uncovered. Claire undertook to mask this and also to check other signage in the vicinity.	CC
2.1	<p>Regarding minute 2.3, Charmian Spickernell said she had asked the Court for a copy of the order dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 2010 and had received this. She added that Section 278 agreement is needed when the detail design work is completed for Junction 16 on the M4. She stated CPRE's concerns regarding safety and enquired why no details are yet available.</p> <p>Vivien O'Connell explained that details are not required until 700 homes are completed and occupied. Charmian Spickernell asked if the approximately 350 homes currently occupied contributed to the 700 figure and Vivien O'Connell confirmed this to be the case.</p> <p>Claire Cornelius added that the design will be undertaken by an independent engineer, with designs then checked by Swindon and Wiltshire Councils and Highways Agency prior to sign off.</p> <p>Charmian Spickernell said she felt it would be helpful if the designs were shown to all councillors.</p> <p>Claire Cornelius explained that it is not generally the case that all designs for development elements are tabled at full Council meetings in Swindon. Issues of particular importance would be discussed with Members as appropriate. It was not however possible to comment on the approach taken in Wiltshire.</p> <p>Terry King asked who would ultimately approve the designs and Claire Cornelius advised this would require a tripartite agreement between Swindon, Wiltshire and the Highways Agency.</p> <p>Cllr Eric Shaw confirmed that when he raises questions in relation to Highways a response is forthcoming.</p>	
2.2	Regarding minute 2.5, Terry King asked when work on landscaping would commence. Emma Leake advised that Section 106 funds would be released once 350 occupations are achieved and work on designs can then commence.	
2.3	<p>Regarding minute 3.1, Ann Richards said she felt there was still confusion regarding signage at Croft Road/Pipers Way traffic lights. This comment was also reinforced by Margaret Cooney and Rosemary Hayward.</p> <p>It was noted that arrangements have passed safety audits and will now be reviewed annually.</p> <p>Terry King commented that it may be appropriate to take account of likely traffic to the proposed Marston's pub/restaurant at the next review.</p>	

- 2.4 Regarding minute 3.3, Michael Hinder explained that his concern regarding culverts had related to the fact that they had not been positioned low enough. Rob Powe explained that the issue is being explored and further updates would be provided in the future.
- Cllr Eric Shaw expressed thanks that the matter is being considered.
- 2.5 Regarding minute 3.4, Cllr Brian Mattock noted that the Mill Lane situation is much improved.
- 2.6 Regarding minute 3.5, Cllr Brian Mattock enquired whether any update on weed control could be provided. Rob Powe explained that the situation is complicated by the fact that the Council does not own the land and that it is part of the Goddard estate. There are also issues relating to the presence of Japanese Knotweed. The Council cannot readily progress this but will approach the Goddard Estate again.
- Margaret Cooney asked if the Council had the power to force action and Rob Powe advised that it did not, in this case.
- Cllr Brian Mattock commented the weeds had died back somewhat during the winter months and also asked what action could be taken to improve the track.
- 2.7 Regarding minute 4.0, Terry King commented that it was disappointing that the lessons of previous plots did not appear to have been learned in relation to the latest 3 plots (83 dwellings) now at consultation stage. He expressed concerns in relation to road widths and measures to mitigate climate change.
- Vivien O'Connell explained that all plans are in accord with the design codes. She commented that arrangements for parking are provided in lay-bys and that all homes must reach the Ecohomes Very Good standard. Some homes will have solar panels but there is no requirement for all to do so.
- Terry King said he hoped the next set of design codes would be an improvement.
- 2.8 Regarding minute 4.4, Terry King enquired about arrangements for parking at the new school at Croft.
- Claire Cornelius advised that traffic assessments are being reviewed with findings to be made available to ward councillors in due course but the timing is not currently known.
- Cllr Brian Mattock asked that an information note on the situation be included with the meeting minutes. *(Please see Appendix 1)*
- Alison Boulton pointed out that the new Croft school is not part of the Wichelstowe development and is quite different from the East Wichel school, albeit this is temporarily located at Croft Leisure Centre, pending completion of the new East Wichel Primary School.

- 2.9 Regarding minute 5.0, Cllr Eric Shaw commented that the access/egress to/from Drove Road vets needed to be considered. This consideration will form part of the re-masterplanning process.
- Ann Richards also expressed concern.
- Cllr Eric Shaw noted that the road can only just accommodate the width of two 4 x 4 vehicles.
- Claire Cornelius recognised the concern and undertook to look at traffic volumes. However, she advised that it is not possible to change the road width or the radius of the bend in the road.
- 2.10 Regarding minute 5.3, Cllr Eric Shaw noted that the plastic coverings by the lights on the bridge have been removed. Pavers have now been laid but are somewhat spoiled by the presence of cones.
3. **BUS SERVICE**
- 3.0 Emma Leake advised that agreement has now been reached with Stagecoach for a pilot service, initially for six months and beginning on 4 April. The new number 73 route will go from Swindon, to East Wichel to Wroughton and probably run hourly during the day.
- Margaret Cooney asked for clarification of the route.
- Ann Richards asked about the route through Wroughton.
- Emma Leake advised that the route is yet to be confirmed. Details will be posted on the Wichelstowe website as soon as they are available.
4. **BRIEFING ON DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL BY MARSTON'S INNS**
- 4.0 Peter Lawson of Turley Associates introduced the briefing, explaining the location of the proposed pub/restaurant at the west of parcel WV35 and close to the main site access from Croft Road.
- Cllr Eric Shaw noted the location is relatively close to Drove Road vets and that consideration should be given to traffic flows.
- Peter Lawson advised that the design codes lay down firm rules for site access and that the pub would be accessed from within the development not from opposite the vet's access.
- The proposed building will have a tower feature to provide a visual landmark on what is a key corner of the development.

Steve Roberts of Marston's outlined the characteristics of their developments:

- 90 per cent are new build
- All are self-funded and company managed
- Each creates 40-50 full and part-time jobs
- 60% of sales are food
- They are very much family venues
- There is parking on site
- Outdoor gardens are provided
- Permanent 2 for 1 dining offers are available
- Venues are female and family friendly and aim to cater for 'fifty somethings'

The recent College Farm development at Watchfield was highlighted as a local example of a typical Martson's development.

Andy Rowe of Axiom Architects provided additional design detail.

- The building will have a strong street frontage
- Some discussion will be required to reconcile design code rules with the requirement for a tower feature
- The site entrance is designed to allow two way traffic flows
- The site includes a sub station which it is hoped to screen
- Boundary treatments will reflect those of the neighbouring housing, hopefully with some breaks/fencing for visibility/security reasons
- The parking layout allows ease of delivery
- There is parking for 55 cars, including 3 disabled bays
- There is a covered cycle park area
- A garden is positioned in the South West corner
- The pub divides into family and adult sections
- The first floor provides living accommodation for the manager, as well as staff changing facilities
- Extract and other plant is hidden from view on a flat roof section between the main roof pitches.

4.1 Terry King asked if sufficient car spaces were provided. Peter Lawson advised that allocations are based on long experience of requirements and the 55 spaces were actually slightly more than strictly required. Claire Cornelius confirmed this.

4.2 Cllr Brian Mattock commented that opening hours are always a sensitive issue and asked that these must be considered carefully.

4.3	<p>Alison Boulton asked whether there would be an outdoor children's play area. Andy Rowe said this is an area for discussion with the local authority. However, if included, it would be quite a small area.</p> <p>Alison Boulton noted that there are quite a lot of very young children at East Wichel.</p>	
4.4	<p>Alison Boulton enquired whether Martston's would be able to present the plans to the East Wichel Neighbourhood Partnership. Peter Lawson advised they would be happy to do so.</p> <p>It was noted that the next Partnership meeting is imminent. Mike Farrington undertook to confirm the date and put PL in touch with the group.</p>	MF/PL
4.5	<p>Charmian Spickernell said she was impressed by the designs but asked what could be done to make the appearance less functional and more attractive.</p> <p>It was noted that appearance will be clearer once designs show more detail of the materials to be used.</p> <p>Vivien O'Connell explained that the design codes have to be followed in this regard.</p>	
4.6	<p>Charmian Spickernell enquired if any energy efficiency/climate change mitigation measures were envisaged. Andy Rowe advised that the development will utilise air source heat pumps which are very environmentally friendly.</p>	
4.7	<p>Cllr Eric Shaw enquired about lighting in the car park. Vivien O'Connell confirmed that this is under consideration.</p>	
4.8	<p>Terry Black commented that it would be helpful to see computer generated images in due course to help people visualise the final appearance.</p>	PL
4.9	<p>Terry Black asked about construction timescales. Steve Roberts explained that he hoped it would be possible to submit a planning application at the end of March or early in April. Construction will take 22/23 weeks and it is hoped the new pub/restaurant will be opened early in 2012.</p>	
4.10	<p>Terry King asked that a copy of the site layout plan be circulated with the minutes. <i>(Please see Appendix 2).</i></p>	
4.11	<p>Terry King asked how many people the pub could seat. Steve Roberts advised that the number is 180.</p>	
4.12	<p>Ann Richards asked about pavements, as some will visit on foot. Peter Lawson explained that customers will be encouraged to use the existing footpath network.</p> <p>Ann Richards asked about the position of the pub/restaurant relative to Blackhorse Bridge and it was noted that this would, in due course, provide helpful access.</p>	

5. **DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

5.0 **Occupation Numbers**

Rob Powe advised that 344 homes are now occupied. It is projected that this number will rise to around 450 by June 2011.

Margaret Cooney asked how many of these are private homes. Rob Powe advised that approximately 140 are private and 200 are affordable homes.

Margaret Cooney asked what percentage of homes overall will be affordable. Rob Powe explained that this will be 30 per cent. There will be approximately 1,350 affordable homes across Wichelstowe in its entirety.

5.0A Cllr Eric Shaw asked about industrial units. Vivien O'Connell explained that there is a local Centre at East Wichel but that the main employment land is in West Wichel.

5.0B Terry King asked when the total number of homes (838) planned for East Wichel would be complete. Rob Powe explained that this is dependent on market conditions and the speed at which the housebuilders move forward with development. Vivien O'Connell noted that she is currently waiting advice from Taylor Wimpey on four parcels of land and the local centre.

5.0C Rosemary Hayward asked what proportion of private homes would be built in West and Middle Wichel. Rob Powe confirmed that there would be 30% affordable (split between rented and shared ownership) and 70% open market.

It was noted that the affordable homes had been brought forward more quickly than the private properties at East Wichel but the final balance would be 30% affordable.

Terry Black noted that there could be a further 18 affordable homes to be built at East Wichel.

5.1 **Contract 4**

5.1A Rob Powe explained that work had been delayed further by bad weather during the winter and that the programme is now scheduled for completion by June.

5.1B Alan Lynch of BAM Nuttall provided a contract update.

He explained that work had been downscaled in January, February and March because of the problems of working in very inclement weather conditions.

However, the following have been undertaken:

- Road sub structures are in place
- All structures are substantially complete
- Wroughton brook has been diverted back to its permanent alignment
- Flood control lakes are in place
- The Canal is 80 per cent complete
- The lock structure is well progressed with the lock gates expected to be installed within about four weeks
- Main services are in position - potable water, rising mains, ducting for electricity and telecoms

5.1C	The link to Blackhorse Bridge should be completed in the next three to four weeks. However, it will not be opened to the public until Contract 4 works have all been completed.	RP/ES /AB
5.1D	Cllr Eric Shaw requested a visit to look at the two ponds. Alan Lynch confirmed he would be happy to arrange this. It was agreed that this would be co-ordinated via Rob Powe.	RP/ES /AB
5.1E	Terry King enquired when Redposts Drive would be opened. Claire Cornelius explained that the situation has to be assessed from a safety/practical viewpoint. Rob Powe and Claire Cornelius are currently preparing a report on actions needed prior to opening. It is likely that the road will not be opened until at least a few months after completion of Contract 4.	RP/ES /AB
5.2	<b>Noise Attenuation</b>	RP/ES /AB
5.2A	Jeff Davis provided an update on works along Redposts Drive. Preparatory works are underway. Installation of the attenuation fence should be completed by mid April. Planting will then follow.	RP/ES /AB
5.2B	<p>Danny Myers noted that the bund adjacent to the Motorway is south facing and at a 45 degree angle. He wondered whether this might provide the opportunity for a photovoltaic array.</p> <p>It was thought this might have some implication in terms of sound.</p> <p>Emma Leake noted that this possibility had been raised but it is not known whether it is practicable. Rob Powe also commented that it may not be acceptable to the Highways Agency.</p>	RP/ES /AB
5.3	<b>East Wichel Primary School</b>	RP/ES /AB
5.3A	Emma Leake explained that work is progressing well and is on track for an opening in time for the September 2011 intake.	RP/ES /AB
5.3B	<p>Terry King asked what provision had been made for traffic and parking.</p> <p>Emma Leake advised that this had been considered as part of planning approvals. It was also hoped that many of those living at East Wichel would walk to the school.</p> <p>Claire Cornelius explained that it is always difficult to cater for the early morning/afternoon rush periods as children arrive at/depart from school but as much as possible had been done.</p>	RP/ES /AB
5.3C	Terry King asked if there was adequate parking for staff. Claire Cornelius advised that this had been provided in accordance with policy although arrangements for parking within school grounds are at the discretion of the headteacher.	RP/ES /AB
5.4	<b>Plans For West and Middle Wichel</b>	RP/ES /AB
5.4A	<p>Rob Powe provided an update.</p> <p>Peter Brett Associates have been appointed engineering consultants.</p> <p>LDA Design has been appointed as masterplanning consultant.</p> <p>The first stage of work involves a review of planning history at the site. Proposals will then be developed in line with the original planning approval.</p> <p>Plans will be shared with the Forum in due course.</p>	RP/ES /AB

- 5.4B Ann Richards asked if Wroughton Parish Council could be kept advised and Rob Powe confirmed the Parish Council would be provided with details.
- 5.4C Cllr Eric Shaw asked what is the total acreage of land at Wichelstowe. Rob Powe advised that there are 235 acres of developable land in Middle and West Wichel.
- Cllr Eric Shaw enquired about maintenance of the area/open spaces. Rob Powe advised that this is under consideration, with possibilities including the establishment of community trusts.
- 5.4D Charmian Spickernell asked whether there would be a circular bus route through the whole site. Claire Cornelius explained that the route would make use of the STAR route reserved for buses and emergency vehicles etc.
- 5.4E Margaret Cooney asked for clarification of the position of the Southern Relief Road and this was provided by Rob Powe.
- 5.4F Charmian Spickernell said the plans assumed the ability to accommodate the Croft Road Hay Lane Link and access from Junction 16 on the motorway and questioned whether this could be confirmed ahead of the Section 278 agreement and, therefore, whether expenditure was justified.
- Vivien O'Connell, Rob Powe and Emma Leake explained that planning consent has been given and that there is every confidence that the plans can proceed. In terms of process, the masterplan review must first be completed, and detail designs then developed for strategic infrastructure. Only then can the final detail of the Junction 16 improvements be developed.
- Kareen Boyd noted that this advice seemed to be counter to comment made in a recent Swindon newsletter. Emma Leake explained that the key point is that planning consent for Wichelstowe has already been given and the transport implications were considered in detail at that time.
- Cllr Eric Shaw summarised that planning approval has been given, and permission granted for the junction improvements/road to pass under the motorway. Further discussion at this stage is therefore inappropriate.
- 5.4G Danny Myers enquired how the junction improvements are funded. Rob Powe explained that further infrastructure will be funded via receipts from house/land sales at West and Middle Wichel.
6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 6.0 Terry Black drew attention to the availability of the Sovereign newsletter and encouraged Forum members to take copies.
- 6.1 Terry King enquired when the new bridge would be completed over the railway line. Rob Powe advised that the main span is now in position and finishing works will be completed during March. The bridge will be opened during April.
7. **NEXT MEETING**
- As explained at the September 2010 meeting, future meeting dates will be set to reflect important developments in the programme. The timing of the next meeting, expected to be later in the year, will be advised in due course.

## **APPENDIX 1 - Traffic & Parking Update For The New Croft School**

A road traffic impact survey is currently taking place. This survey is likely to be completed by the end of March/Early April. The outcome of the survey will need to be reviewed and its implications assessed as part of the feasibility study on the proposed development of a primary school on the site. The feasibility study will not be available until mid/late May when consultation and planning application timelines will be finalised.

### APPENDIX 2 - Proposed Marston's pub/restaurant site layout

The first illustration below shows the position and general layout of the proposed Marston's pub/restaurant. The second illustration shows the location of the site (WV35) in relation to the remainder of the development.

