

# Wellington Town Council

Town Mayor  
Cllr Paul Davis



Town Clerk  
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## PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes for the meeting held at the Wellington Civic Offices on **Monday, 16th August 2021** commencing at 6.00pm.

### **Present:**

Cllr G Luter  
Cllr G Cook  
Cllr S Hall

Cllr L Jinks  
Cllr J Latter

**In attendance:** Andrew Roberts, Deputy Town Clerk and Cllrs P Davis – Town Mayor, D Roberts – Deputy Town Mayor (ex-officio) and Cllrs A McClements, J Gorse and P Fairclough.

### **63/21 Welcome and Introductory Comments**

The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting and thanked members for their attendance and for those members of the public who were viewing the meeting on the Facebook livestream.

### **64/21 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr J Alvey – family bereavement  
Apology accepted.

### **65/21 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **66/21 To approve the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 4th August 2021**

This item was deferred.

### **67/21 Matters arising from the Minutes**

This item was deferred.

### **68/21 To receive details of Planning Applications received since the last meeting:**

#### **TWC/2021/0737 Land West of New Works Lane, Telford, Shropshire**

Installation of Solar Farm and associated infrastructure. The Chairman advised the meeting that a number of members wished to address the Committee and invited those members in attendance to speak.

Cllr McClements initially wished to thank the Committee for allowing her to speak in relation to this particular application. She commenced by acknowledging that no elements of this particular application was within Wellington the proposed development if allowed to proceed would have a tremendous negative impact within Wellington and in particular the Arleston Ward which she represented, and accordingly

she strongly objected to the application. Whilst commenting that the New Works application was timetabled to proceed to the Telford & Wrekin Council Planning Committee, the Steeraway proposal was still at the pre-application stage. Members were advised that many residents had contacted her raising their concerns about having two solar farms on open land, which they currently enjoyed. An increasing number of families, walkers, runners, dog walkers, children, cyclists and horse riders, used the area daily and as a result of the Covid restrictions these numbers have increased. She commented that we were so lucky to have access to this open space with positive effects being experienced by more and more people, for their health and well being. The T50 walks recently introduced promoted further walking opportunities within the New Works area and that she also had the opportunity of participating in the recent Steeraway walk leading to the path around New Works. The land at New Works was in the process of long term recovery following the completion of the open cast mining operations. One of the reasons for the granting of the permission for the open cast mining operations was that any disruption would be confined to a short operation phase of three to four years, she had noted that the planned operation of any solar farm would be 40 years. She also highlighted that a bat survey had not been undertaken, and the application was using historic data. It was also important to note that due to Covid restrictions a number of further surveys had not taken place and that she considered that no application should be considered in the absence of this further updated information. Members were referred to National Planning and Policy Framework guidelines were in place to ensure that the visual impact of such a large scale solar farm were considered given the topography of the locality was considered and meant that the panels could not be sensitively screened and would not blend into the landscape. The planning application stated that any planning mitigations would not be beneficial for a period of at least 10 years. Members were referred to the specific local wildlife sites, sites of specific scientific interest and local nature reserves within 2km of the application site and also the ancient woodland on the western boundary of the application site, together with a scheduled ancient monument within the site, all these were required to be protected. The industrial history of the area was of importance, which also needed recognition and protection. She reminded members of the current increase in traffic impact within the ward of Arleston, and in particular the Dawley Road which was very busy which was a reflection of the current development work within the area which would be further increased if this proposed development was allowed to proceed. She outlined that the initial construction traffic plan would result in an initial 1236 two way traffic delivery movements over 6 months, and that these would comprise in the main heavy vehicle traffic, entrance to the site was on a bend, with visibility issues and she considered that this would constitute a safety hazard for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Cllr Fairclough agreed with the points raised by Cllr McClements and that commented that her view was that this development would prejudice the footpaths in the vicinity and the tourist opportunities provided within the area, although this was balanced by the need to recognise the benefits of green energy production. She concluded by stating that in her view the proposed development was in the wrong location, and that an alternative location should be considered.

Cllr Gorse was also invited to address the Committee, although fully supporting the earlier comments that had been made, she commented that the footpath that had been created along one side of the Dawley

Road from Lawley to Bayley Road and had been improved and designated as a safer route to schools. Cllr Gorse reminded members of the adverse impact that had been generated because of the open cast mining operations and recently completed residential accommodation, which would be repeated if this application were approved. The location of the site was within an area of outstanding natural beauty, which again would be adversely affected if the application was approved.

Cllr Roberts referred to two letters that she had written to both Robert Jenrick and to Mark Pritchard she confirmed that she had received a number of replies, all the letters reminded her that it was for Telford & Wrekin Council, to determine. She reminded the Committee that the Town Council had nominated a representative to the Wrekin Forest Partnership, the partnership had drawn up a Wrekin Forest Management Plan, which had been adopted by the Borough Council on 11 July 2019. Members were advised that this policy protected the area at the highest level, which was incorporated within the Local Plan. She reminded the Committee that the policy and the plan made some very important statements, which she commented that these must form the basis of protecting the area. She further outlined four elements contained within the management plan which should be strongly considered against this planning application – these were: The identification of dangers of pressures around the fringes of the Wrekin Forest area; the ongoing restoration of the former opencast coal mining offers opportunities to enhance the natural landscaping characteristics of the area; protect the iconic landscape and tranquillity of the area and to enhance where possible and to resist large scale residential and industrial development within or within the vicinity of the strategic area and that it was for the Borough Council to enforce these main areas.

Cllr Davis, the Town Mayor was also invited to address the Committee, he firmly acknowledged all the previous comments he wished to acknowledge the natural environment and the increasing biodiversity and the historic woodland of the area and taken on a tour of the open cast mining prior to this land being restored and seen the wildlife return and all of this would be set back if the proposed application was approved. He further expressed concerns about the safety of the infrastructure associated with the proposed development, potential for fires, chemical leakage etc. which would potentially have a long term greater impact on the locality. In conclusion, he considered that the location was not the most appropriate location and that if he were a voting member of the Committee he would vote in objecting to the proposal.

Cllr Cook agreed to all the previous comments and cited that the application site was located in the green belt, would have an adverse effect on traffic movements within the locality and would be of detriment to local wildlife and that he would object to the application on this basis.

Cllr Jinks confirmed that she had recently visited the site and that she recounted that the area was a nice and safe area that should be retained as such for the future and that as a result of the long term restorative works as a result of the open cast mining operations and she expressed a desire for it to be designated as a Local Nature Reserve. She made further reference to the existing wildlife within the area, which should be fully protected. She also referred to the existing hedgerow, which would also be destroyed forever if the proposed development were allowed to proceed. The current agricultural use should also be preserved as this was an important element of the

economy which again would be lost if the proposed development proceeded. Members were referred to current National Planning Framework for Solar Installations stated that local authorities should as a priority consider what the impact is going to be and give proper weight to planning decisions. She was of the opinion that access to green spaces was vitally important for the health and well-being of all. She highlighted all the planned development within the borough and enquired as to whether it was possible for the solar panels to be on the roofs of this new development instead of one location. The site was located within the designated Wrekin landscape programme and must be protected. Further, the New Works application if approved would have 64,000 solar panels, 6 storage supply containers, 5 transformer stations, CCTV and high wire security fencing adjacent to ancient woodland. The Borough Council owns a large number of commercial properties and she questioned that the solar installations could go there instead. She further stated that if the Steeraway site was also approved there would be 145,000 solar panels covering 227 acres of land, as a result there was a need to protect the open space and on the grounds outlined above she would object to the proposal. Cllr Latter commented that further consideration should be deferred until the Steeraway site came forward, based on the grounds generally stated above.

Cllr Hall indicated that she had nothing further to add to the comments outlined above and wholeheartedly supported.

Cllr Luter confirmed his opposition to the application on the above grounds as stated. It was concluded that the Committee overwhelmingly objected to the application, and this was resolved unanimously.

**TWC/2021/0740 10 Brambles Walk, Wellington, TF1 2ED**

Erection of a canopy to the rear of the property (Retrospective). No objection.

**TWC/2021/0764 Barclays Bank Plc, 23 Church Street, Wellington, TF1 1DQ**

Installation of new render infill and repairs to existing render and concrete following removal of existing ATM, projecting sign and individual letters. Whilst members expressed further disappointment that Barclays had chosen to close the branch and that this application would result in another atm being removed, it was accepted that there were no relevant planning grounds which would result in an objection being raised accordingly it was agreed that in the circumstances there was no objection in principle to the application.

**TWC/2021/0473 Site of the former Haygate Pub, 26 Haygate Road, Wellington**

Erection of 18no one and two bedroom apartments together with associated parking and external works.

Cllr Cook mentioned three points the major impact on traffic within Haygate Road, the design was not in keeping with the immediate locality and adverse access arrangements for the dry cleaners and was in objection to the proposal.

Cllr Roberts was in objection to the proposal based on inadequate car parking provision. Although she had no opposition to the design of the scheme.

Cllr Latter commented on the lack of car parking provision and the design of the proposed building was not in keeping with the locality.

Cllr Fairclough commented on the traffic impact that would be experienced.

Cllr Jinks commented that the design represented an over

development, and further commented on the inadequate car parking provision and that overspill car parking would result in  
Cllr Hall commented that she was concerned on the proposed access to the development as it was opposite Simon Close.  
Cllr Luter commented that he objected to the application based on the comments stated above. The Committee resolved to object on the basis that the proposal was deemed to be an overdevelopment, the design being out of keeping with the locality, adverse traffic issues and inadequate car parking provision.

**TWC/2021/0775 7 Christine Avenue, Wellington, TF1 2DX**

Erection of a first floor side extension and front porch and canopy. No objection.

**69/21 Correspondence**

None.

**70/21 Telford & Wrekin Planning Committee Applications**

It was noted that there were no applications specific to Wellington.

**71/21 Urgent matters (for information only).**

None.

**72/21 To agree date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 25th August 2021 at 6.00pm.

Signed .....  
25th August 2021