

**Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Response
Committee meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 31st
January 2024 in the Community Office, Bruton**

Present: Councillors Bateman, Baker, Buckland, Jones and Taylor
In the Chair: Councillor Robinson
In attendance: Deputy Town Clerk
1 member of the public

P23/45a Election of Chair

It was RESOLVED 5-0-0 [For-against-Abstain] that Councillor Robinson take the Chair in the absence of the Committee Chair.

P23/45b Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85(1)).

Councillor Fradley sent apologies for being unable to attend.

P23/46 Declarations of interest

Members to declare any interests, including disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct, and to consider any written requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act 2011 s33 (b-e) (This does not preclude any later declaration).

Councillor Baker declared an interest in Item P23/48ii as he is a resident of Sexey's Hospital.

Councillor Jones declared an interest in Item P23/48v as Chair of the BruBowl Working Group.

P23/47 Minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2024 (LGA 1972 sch 12 para 41 (1)).

That the Minutes of the Planning & Consultation Response Committee meeting held on 10th January 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

It was RESOLVED 5-0-0 [for-against-abstain] that the minutes of the Planning & Consultation Response Committee meeting on 10th January 2024 are a true and accurate record of that meeting.

P23/48 New Planning Applications

To consider the following applications and make recommendations to Somerset Council which is the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and to notify the full Town Council at its next meeting:

- i. 23/03192/FUL & 23/03193/LBC Gants Mill, Gants Mill Lane, Bruton**
Conversion of disused Mill buildings (part of) to a single dwelling house with staff flat and ancillary use of outbuildings, with associated demolition, alteration, extension, replacement of modern buildings, together with landscape, access and flood mitigation works.

Committee members expressed thanks to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for consulting the Town Council even though the site of the proposed development lies (just) outside the Bruton parish boundary. Some members had been able to take advantage of an opportunity to inspect the site earlier in the day.

At the invitation of the Chair, the applicant's architect who was attending the meeting gave a brief description of the project including the following points:

- There had been milling at the site for perhaps a thousand years and the main mill buildings date back to the sixteenth century, but no serious milling has taken place at the site for around a hundred years.
- Some repairs were carried out in the 1990s, and more recently the site has been used as a wedding venue but in the Covid pandemic this became unviable and the buildings fell into disuse.
- It became clear that without a substantial programme of repair, restoration and conservation the Listed buildings would be at severe risk of becoming dilapidated and derelict.
- The applicants acquired the site in 2022 and since then they have undertaken conservation work on two Listed buildings at the site, dwelling houses, with support from the Local Planning Authority.
- The current application aims to conserve Gants Mill, the most prominent Listed building on the site, by converting it, the adjacent Silk Mill and associated buildings to residential use, opening it to the public periodically on Heritage Open Days.
- The site does not appear suitable for commercial development because of poor access and flood risk.
- Following extensive pre-application discussions the LPA is supportive but English Heritage has expressed a number of concerns.

Committee members discussed aspects of the application:

- English Heritage appears to consider that the alterations required to convert the Listed Building to residential use would unduly compromise its status as an item of architectural heritage. Members felt it would be helpful to know the detailed reasons for their resistance and what viable alternative suggestions they have to secure the future of the Listed building
- The proposed development seems unlikely to aggravate existing problems of vehicular access and highway safety, and may even reduce them.
- Members felt that the applicants might find it useful to consult Bruton Conservation Trust.
- The applicants and their advisers have clearly taken great pains and shown great sensitivity in their approach to a very demanding project.

It was RESOLVED 5-0-0 to recommend APPROVAL of these applications, subject to robust traffic and construction management plans, on the grounds that the proposed development will conserve the most important elements of a local heritage site and help protect the fabric of a Listed building from the dangers of dilapidation.

The Committee expressed confidence that the proposals would enhance rather than compromise the layout, appearance and design of buildings on the site, thereby safeguarding a listed building and a site of considerable archaeological interest. It was content to rely on the Local Planning Authority to impose conditions ensuring that proper provision would be made for road access, highway safety, traffic generation and the provision of unloading, turning and parking space during the construction phase and subsequently. The Committee was of the view that the proposals would have no significant or disproportionate deleterious effect in respect of other material Planning conditions.

- ii. 23/03196/FUL & 23/13197/LBC Hugh Sexey's Hospital, High Street, Bruton BA10 0AS** Modification of existing steps to High Street, creation of ramp with new handrails to match existing.

It was RESOLVED 4-0-0 to recommend that these applications be APPROVED. The Committee is conscious that one of Bruton's most precious heritage assets can only remain sustainable, viable and true to its historical purpose and legacy if the Listed building is adapted to meet the needs of its residents in accordance with modern standards of welfare, health and safety.

The Committee accepts that without a ramp and handrail the freedom of movement and safety of some residents with reduced or impaired mobility would be considerably or even severely compromised. Members took into account the applicant's record of sympathy for the heritage of the Listed building and are confident that LPA and Historic England specialists will ensure that any new installations are in keeping with the historic structure.

- iii. 23/03206/LBC At The Chapel, 28-30 High Street, Bruton BA10 0AE** Internal and external alterations to include removal of internal staircase, formation of a new internal opening and alterations to the external metal staircase and the reinstalment of the original external door opening.
it was RESOLVED 5-0-0 to recommend that this application be APPROVED.

The Committee understand that the proposed changes would enable the business to operate more efficiently and thereby promote the sustainability and viability of the Listed building which depends on the business for its upkeep. The Committee also welcomed the proposed reinstallation of the original external door opening whose restoration represents a positive gain in heritage terms.

- iv. **23/03159/S73 The Bord Hall, Mill Lane, Bruton, Somerset BA10 0AT** S73 application to vary Condition 3 (ancillary) of approval 11/01324/FUL (Demolition of former bord hall, change of use of land to residential and erection of a building for use as a design and photographic studio) to allow the transfer of ancillary accommodation to Mill Forge. **It was RESOLVED 5-0-0 to recommend that this application be APPROVED.**

Members understand that planning condition 3 of planning consent 11/01324/FUL required that the use of the (then) proposed Bord Hall be ancillary to the adjacent dwelling house, and they accept that the current Section 73 application seeks in effect to transfer that ancillary role from one adjacent dwelling house (Millwood) to another adjacent dwelling house (Mill Forge). Members were reassured to learn that *"There are no plans to change anything about the layout of the properties, the surroundings, access or the structure. All will remain exactly the same as outlined in the planning application granted in 2011"*. They also see sense and merit in an amendment which would enable the original (2011) applicant, who had designed and built The Bord Hall, to regain ownership so that he could use it for its original purpose.

- v. **23/02308/FUL Bruton Skate Park, Jubilee Park, Godminster Lane. Bruton BA10 0NA** Removal of existing steel skate park and installation of replacement concrete skate park in addition to new stone path and swale/collection pond.

Members of the Town Council's Planning Committee are naturally in favour of this application which was submitted by the Town Council itself, and in the circumstances they feel that any comments would be otiose or redundant. For this reason, and in accordance with its longstanding practice in such cases, the Committee did not wish to submit a formal response to this consultation.

P23/49 Update on a previous planning application

To note decisions relating to applications previously considered by the Committee.

23/03149/TCA Trendle House, Trendle Lane, Bruton, BA10 0EJ
Notification of intent to Fell No. 1 Tree within a Conservation Area. **PERMITTED**

The meeting concluded at 8.15pm

Patrick Pender-Cudlip
Deputy Town Clerk