

MUCKHART COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Muckhart Community Council, held in the Coronation Hall, on Wednesday 6th February 2019, at 7:30pm regarding the development of site H49

Present: John Anderson (JA) Chair
Mike Wilson (MRW) Secretary
Danny Conroy (DC) Treasurer
Philip Lord (PL) Minute Secretary
Jonathan Bacon (JB)
Stuart Dean (SD)
Jon Jordan (JJ)
Matthew Pease (MP)
Patrick Thompson (PT)
Marlene White (MW)
Peter Wyatt (PW)
Val Whyte (VW)

Councillors Bill Mason and Graham Lindsay

Status: **Approved**

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

3. Welcome

JA welcomed the Muckhart Community Council (MCC) members, and the circa 50 - 60 members of the community present, to the meeting.

JA also welcomed and introduced Mr Neil Martin (NM), Land and Planning Manager and Mr Mark Hamilton (MH), Architectural Director, from Springfield Properties Plc.

JA noted that there was a single item on the agenda for this Special Meeting, namely, a presentation from Springfield on its plans for the development of site H49 (as identified in the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP)) which is located on the land to the south of the bowling green, in Pool of Muckhart, part of which is owned by Mr John Izat and part by Mr Tim Allan. Following the presentation, JA stated there would be an opportunity for both members and the community present to ask questions of the Springfield representatives.

4. Short Historical Overview

JA gave a short, historical overview of previous attempts to develop the site, noting that, at the time the Council's LDP was being formulated, the village, with the support of its local Councillors, had fought very hard, and successfully, to limit the number of new dwellings to no more than 35, across the whole site. JA also noted that this limit of 35 houses was also included in the Muckhart Community Plan (MCP) which was produced following an extensive community survey and which represented clearly the community's wishes as to how any development should be executed.

JA went on to note that Springfield had recently lodged a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) for development and that it was planning to hold a statutory Pre-Application Consultation in Muckhart, on the 6th March, between 2:00pm and 8:00pm. JA recommended that the community should attend this event, to find out more about the proposed development and to make its views known to the developers.

Following Springfield's presentation, JA advised that members would be given the opportunity to ask questions and to make any comments, Following this, members of the community would also be given the opportunity to ask questions which would be addressed through the Chair.

5. Springfield Presentation

Introduction – Mr Neil Martin

NM briefly introduced his company, Springfield Properties, and noted that it develops some 900 houses, per year, across Scotland. The houses range in size, from 1 to 5 bedrooms, and from flats to large detached, and semi-detached, houses. The company is based in Elgin and both Neil and Mark work out of the company's Larbert office.

NM noted some of Springfield's developments in the central area, such as a site north of Perth, in Bertha Park (initially 54 houses).

Regarding site H49, NM confirmed that Springfield was acting on behalf of Mr Izat, at this stage of the planning process, but that discussions were being held with Mr Allan. Should its planning application be successful, Springfield would purchase the land, subsequently, from Mr Izat.

Springfield was presently examining the characteristics of the site, collecting information and undertaking various surveys, such as transport and flood risk assessments. Any information gathered will be provided as feedback at the March 6th consultation. Springfield staff and contractors will be present at the event and NM noted that they may have been seen already undertaking investigations on-site.

NM also noted that Springfield will have more detailed answers to questions raised at this evening's meeting.

Design ideas – Mr Mark Hamilton

MH then gave a slide presentation on Springfield’s initial thoughts on the design of the site, noting the historical and diverse mix of housing types present in Muckhart and designs from previous applications relating to the site. MH explained that although the PAN submitted covered land owned both by Mr Izat and Mr Allan, as well as other areas of Muckhart, the presentation given here focussed solely on the land owned by Mr Izat. MH remarked that the central part of the whole site (where the original ‘Pool’ was or is located) would need to be preserved as a water feature to help control drainage and flooding. This area was indicated on a map on a slide, showing two circular roads within the development area on Mr Izat’s land.

MH went on to display various developments Springfield has been involved in, showing the size and type of housing envisaged for Muckhart, currently (modern style homes with white render exteriors). He noted that it seemed appropriate on this site for 1 to 1½ storey buildings to be developed. Finally, he showed a few existing developments which incorporated a pool or water feature of some kind.

Timeline – Mr Neil Martin

NM concluded the presentation with a slide showing a diagram of the targeted timeline:

1. Pre-application stage - December 2018 to April 2019
2. Planning Determination - April 2019 to January 2020
3. Dealing with planning conditions - January 2020 to April 2020
4. Pre-construction work - April 2020 to November 2020
6. Building and Sales begin – November 2020 and February 2021 onwards

NM stated that we are presently in Stage 1 of the process and that a positive planning decision is hoped for around January 2020 with house sales starting in early 2021.

6. Questions from MCC Members

JA opened the floor to members to ask questions of Springfield. The following is a record of the questions posed and answers given in order, rather than a full transcript of the proceedings (note: questions and answers shown below are not necessarily verbatim but summaries of the conversation).

Question/Comment	Springfield’s answer/comment
Qu. What sort of application to the Council is expected? (SD)	A. A full proposal (i.e. not a Planning Permission in Principal - PPP)
Qu. There are different outlines of the proposed site, depending on whether Mr Allan’s land is included. Can you clarify what area is proposed for development? (SD)	A. Springfield has a legal agreement with Mr Izat only. A conversation has been set up with Mr Allan but no agreement with him has yet been reached.
Qu. Given the answer to the last question will the application to the Council just involve	A. This will only be answered by the time the application is submitted – awaiting the

Mr Izat's land? (JJ)	outcome of the discussions.
Qu. Can you give an indication of the proposed number of houses to be built on both portions of the site? (MW)	A. This is a big site and the Izat portion can easily take some 50 houses on "generous" plots. Thus, the number is greater than the 35 specified in the current LDP.
Qu. Can you indicate the sizes of these houses? (MW)	A. A mixture of 1 to 5 bedroom dwellings, but mainly 3 to 5 bedrooms.
Qu. You will have noted that long discussions have taken place previously with local politicians – to what purpose? (JJ)	A. We wish to achieve the "best use" of the greenfield land, a scarce resource, and one that is appropriate to the village.
Qu. One (MCC) policy is that villages should not be swamped suddenly with new residents. (JJ)	A.
Qu. What is the percentage increase of new houses in relation to the existing number in the core of the village? (JA)	A. We believe there are perhaps 128 houses in the core of the village.
Qu. I note that Muckhart has 108 houses, therefore, an additional 50 is virtually a 50% increase. (JA)	A.
Qu. So, including Mr Allan's land, the final total could be circa 80 houses. What then is the use of a Local Development Plan? (JJ)	A.
Qu. Can you give an indication of the minimum number of houses which is viable? (MW)	A. We haven't looked at this yet. There is a good chance of taking our plan forward, given initial discussions with Council Planners.
Qu. The community has worked out what it wants (as described in the MCP). How does the community say what it wants regarding this specific proposal? (MP)	A. Generally, we find that not many communities have said what they want. For our specific proposal, we view the consultation on 6 th March to be the main vehicle and have no fixed views yet on collecting views after that.
Qu. Your proposal envisages rapid growth in the village, over two years. On the other hand, the community has very clearly expressed a wish for slow, organic growth. Can you comment on this? (PL)	A. We see the rate of growth as a secondary matter. This is an attractive area for people to move into and we see no issue with demand.
Qu. The figure of 35 houses over the term of the current LDP was not plucked out of the air. It was based on a calculation of national anticipated population growth statistics for Clackmannanshire and the	A.

number which can be absorbed by a small community, whereas, the proposal is for 50 to 80. The issue is of social absorption. (SD)	
Qu. Given the proposed number and sizes of the houses, my concern is about the impact on the highly regarded local primary school. Are we likely to lose what is special about it? (MW)	A. Any comments we receive on this issue will be taken on board. We will also be talking to the Council to obtain its feedback.
Qu. Some of these answers do not make much of a sense of “consultation”; I am not convinced you will listen. (JJ)	A. We will listen.
Qu. Regarding the issue of the effects of the development on the local infrastructure, you may be aware of a very large proposed housing development is underway in Dollar, just 3 miles away. Together they will put enormous strain on local infrastructures and services. (PL)	A.
Qu. Can you comment, specifically, on issues around the local infrastructure, for example, the impact of the development on local traffic and parking; existing water pressure issues in the village? Can you also comment on issues such as phone, broadband and 4G/5G mobile services, etc.? (MRW)	A. We are exploring this currently. We are considering a village square concept at the access point to the development (at the bowling green). Regarding communications technologies we are taking that into account.
Qu. Will gas be part of the energy mix in the development? And is there to be an environmental survey? (PL)	A. We do not know yet but the development will be at the top end of energy efficiency. Yes, there will be an ecological survey and report.
Qu. At the moment we enjoy dark night skies and low levels of noise pollution; the development will put these amenities in jeopardy – how will these nuisances be ameliorated? (MP)	A. We can not specify yet but we will discuss this.
Qu. Can you comment on the effect the development will have on the Conservation Area, to which it will be adjacent? (SD)	A. We are considering this and wish to establish a dialogue on this subject.
Qu. Can you also comment on adhering to the “Designing-streets” policy of the government? (SD)	A. We have some ideas on how this will be developed.

Qu. How will the development make the community be sustainable? Will solar panels be incorporated? (JJ)	A. A range of measures: electric car charging points; houses 75% more efficient than in the 1980's; possible augmentation of heating systems with air source heat pumps; etc.. There will be provisions in the designs for home working, thus, saving on commuting journeys. Regarding solar panels, yes, possibly.
Qu. Will there be any <i>really</i> innovative sustainability ideas? (JJ)	A. We are looking at several ideas but we do not know yet.
Qu. We have previously seen the area near the Coronation Hall as the place for a village square. (MP)	A. This is useful feedback – we want to know what the community wants. One of the advantages of our alternative proposal is the slowing down of traffic through the village.
Qu. Do you understand that we value the active community within our village? It means a lot to us and makes it a special place to live. A large amount of new homes could damage that community spirit. (MW)	A
Qu. What type of affordable housing and what type of tenure is anticipated? (SD)	A. We see 25% as being “affordable” housing in accordance with Council requirements (e.g. 2 bedroom bungalows). The local market demand for various types of housing is to be looked into.
Qu. MCC should be part of the discussion as the community will have a view as well. (SD)	A. We will be taking feedback from a market perspective and from others too.
Qu. Do you offer Shared Ownership or Shared Equity for your properties? (MRW)	A. We will look into this.

7. Questions from the Community

Members of the community present where invited to ask questions:

Question/Comment	Springfield's answer/comment
Qu. You referred earlier to developments by Springfield at Lathro, in Kinross, and at Glengarry (?) where the very tight packing of houses into these areas has been seen. Is there a conflict between community wishes and your business?	A. Persimmons own the land in Kinross that is being developed and there are issues of constraint within these specific locations.

Qu. There are concerns about the downstream effects of drainage – can you comment on this?	A. We have to understand the water system and how water flows in and out of the site. This will be taken account of in the plan.
Qu. Experience shows that there is a pattern from your company of applying for more houses than is set out in local development plans and once planning permission is gained actually building more houses than permission is granted.	A.
Qu. Was your company responsible for the illegal felling of an ancient oak tree at Lathro and what are you doing about it?	A. This was done by the previous developers. There have been problems with Perth and Kinross Council.
Qu. Can you indicate the selling prices? If 35 houses are not economic, does this give a foot in the door to build more?	A. If the economics are unviable then the site won't work.
Qu. The access point on the A91 is much higher than the site, implying a steep access road. Will this cause difficulties?	A. We will be looking at this.
Qu. Have you established that there is indeed a demand for housing on this scale in Muckhart?	A. We will be looking at this.
Qu. Can you comment on affordability? For example, the entry level cost of a 2-bedroomed bungalow (or its rental value)?	A. We do not have the information at this moment.
Qu. Can you estimate the level of community support for this development on a scale of 1 to 10?	A. Off-hand, say 5.
Qu. Previous developments have allowed me to live in this village.	A.

8. Thanks

JA thanked both NM and MH, from Springfield, MCC members and everyone from the community for attending the meeting and for the discussion which had taken place.

JA reminded everyone of the Pre-Application Consultation taking place in Muckhart, on the 6th March, between 2:00pm and 8:00pm and, again, recommended the community to attend to find out more about the proposed development and take the opportunity to make their views known to the developers.

The meeting closed at 9:05pm.