

STRADISHALL PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the planning meeting held on Tuesday 26th March 2024

Councillors present: Ian Hutchinson (Chair), Adrian Lee (Vice-chair), Louise Latarche, Robert Deeks and Debbie Gates.

Also present: Five members of the public.

1. Acceptance of apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from parish councillors Ed Hollingsworth and Jonathan Masefield and the reason for absence accepted.

2. Declaration of Interest in items on the agenda and dispensation requests.

Cllr Debbie Gates declared a non-pecuniary interest in planning application DC/24/0186/FUL. She was allowed to take part in the discussions and vote.

3. Public session

The following issues were raised during the public session:

a) Planning application DC/24/0186/FUL

- There are not enough parking spaces on the site as there will be 4/5 members of staff potentially with cars, leaving only 6 available parking spaces for people using the retail facility. There is no space allocated within the site for the existing car sales building or MOTs and car servicing. Additional land was purchased 6-7 years ago to be used as parking for the garage sales business. The retail building will be built where cars for the garage sales are currently parked. On a normal day there are already 25-30 cars parked on the site.
- 11 spaces have been allocated for used cars in the current car sales owner's contract, but it is difficult to see how these will be accommodated should this application be approved.
- The application was submitted using the name Harding Garage Services but this is incorrect as the garage was sold by Mr Harding in January 2022. The correct name should be Stradishall Service Station.
- It is already difficult backing out of the MOT service bays without the addition of more pumps. On average 8-10 cars are serviced a day with one being serviced at a time. The remainder are parked on site until they are ready to be serviced. If they fail the MOT they are supposed to be left on site.
- Access to the EE Network booster station which is behind the site has to be kept clear for EE to be able to maintain the phone lines.
- School buses stop outside Best One.
- Delivery and refuse lorries will block the entrance to the site.
- The turning circles on the plans are very tight and do not allow for any vehicles parked on the site.
- There is no schematic showing how large vehicles will exit the site towards Haverhill. Under the previous owner traffic had to be stopped on the A143 to allow fuel lorries to get out.
- There are no EV chargers shown on the plans. Once EV chargers are installed, they will take up some of the proposed parking spaces.
- The proposed retail building is very big and too big for the site. It will reduce the visibility splay towards Haverhill for traffic exiting the site. It is also going to impact the junction of Lancaster Way. From the plans it looks as though the building will be very close to the road. The scales on the drawing do not clearly demonstrate the size of the building. The retail building will sit much further forward than Café 33 and Best One Stores.
- The prison is currently being expanded which will generate more traffic.
- Where will construction vehicles park?
- The proposed retail facility will have a detrimental impact on two existing businesses and it is difficult to see any justification for allowing such a large retail facility.

4. To discuss any planning issues.

It was resolved that Stradishall Parish Council would **object** to this application for the following reasons:

DM 2 Highways safety.

There are not enough parking spaces on the site to accommodate the proposed fuel station and retail facility in addition to the existing car sales and MOT/car servicing businesses. 11 spaces have been allocated for the retail facility, but this will not be enough as there will be 4/5 members of staff potentially with cars, leaving only 6 available parking spaces for people using the retail facility. 11 spaces have been allocated for used cars in the current car sales owner's contract, but it is difficult to see how these will be accommodated should this application be approved. Parking spaces are also required for the MOT/Service business. On average 8-10 cars are serviced a day with one being serviced at a time. The remainder are parked on site until they are ready to be serviced. If they fail the MOT they are supposed to be left on site.

Additional land was purchased 6-7 years ago to be used as parking for the garage sales business. The retail building will be built where cars for the garage sales are currently parked. On a normal day there are usually 25-30 cars parked on the site. If there is not enough space to park, cars will park on the A143 or in Lancaster Way, which happens already at busy times.

There are no EV chargers shown on the plans. Once EV chargers are installed, they will take up some of the proposed parking spaces for extended periods.

School children get on the school bus outside Best One to go to Bury St Edmunds. School buses from Haverhill stop outside Best One. There is no pedestrian crossing and no pavements which means school children have to negotiate crossing the A143 at busy times. School children often walk on the garage site to avoid having to walk on the A143.

There is no provision in the plans for deliveries of fuel and to the retail facility. Already deliveries to the existing shop have to park on the A143 causing hold ups and making it extremely precarious for school children and customers crossing the road to the Highpoint Estate. We have provided photos and a video of the problems experienced already. Queuing past the garage towards Haverhill will mean cars will have to overtake on the opposite carriageway passing the Lancaster Way junction, the exits from the parking area for Best One Stores and Café 33 and the road junction from Cowlinge. This will be extremely unsafe for all road users.

A 30ft delivery truck will not be able to access the site without blocking the forecourt and fuel pumps. The proposed retail building will be sited very close to the A143. This will affect the visibility splay of vehicles exiting the site particularly those turning right towards Haverhill on a road. The speed limit on the A143 is 40mph. This is already a busy road with a history of accidents without the additional traffic generated by the prison expansion and the proposed fuel station and the hazards caused by poor visibility splays and traffic parked on the A143.

The access to the EE Network booster station which is behind the site has to be kept clear for EE to be able to maintain the phone lines. There is no provision for this in the plans.

The turning circles on the plans are very tight and do not allow for any vehicles parked on the site. It is already difficult backing out of the MOT service bays without the addition of more pumps.

DM2 – Scale of the proposed retail building

The proposed retail building is too large for the site and out of keeping with the locality. It will also reduce the visibility splay towards Haverhill for traffic exiting the site and impact the safety of the Lancaster Way junction especially due to the increase in traffic generated by the prison expansion. From the plans it looks as though the building will be very close to the road. The scales on the drawing do not clearly demonstrate the size of the building however the retail building will sit much further forward than Café 33 and Best One Stores and be much more dominant as a result.

DM 2 - Impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

The proposed building will be much closer to properties on the Highpoint Estate which will lead to an increase in noise and light disturbance, particularly as the proposed opening hours are much longer than currently. The extended opening hours will also have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the residents living in the flat above Best One Stores.

DM40 – Impact on neighbouring businesses

The proposed retail facility cannot be classed as small in scale in relation to the primary use and will have a detrimental impact on two existing businesses Best One Stores and Café 33. It is difficult to see any justification for allowing such a large retail facility.

Stradishall Parish Council would also like to submit the following comments:

It is difficult to see how the construction of the retail facility will be managed whilst allowing the existing car sales and MOT/servicing businesses to function and without impacting on the A143. Stradishall Parish Council is concerned that contractors' vehicles will park close to or on the A143 causing a potential hazard to road users.

The application was submitted using the location 'Harding Garage Services' but this is incorrect as the garage was sold by Mr Harding in January 2022. The correct name should be Stradishall Service Station.

5. Any other business for noting or including on the agenda of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on Wednesday 1st May 2024.

No issues were raised.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed: Dated: