

MEETING AW.08:1112
DATE 18:01:12

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held at Horton Village Hall, Hanning Road, Horton on **Wednesday, 18th January 2012.**

(5.30 p.m. – 9.20 p.m.)

Present:

Members: Cllr. Angie Singleton (in the Chair)

Michael Best	Sue Osborne (from 5.40 p.m.)
David Bulmer	Ric Pallister (from 5.40 p.m.)
John Dyke (until 7.15 p.m.)	Ros Roderigo
Carol Goodall	Kim Turner
Brennie Halse	Andrew Turpin
Paul Maxwell	Linda Vijeh (from 5.40 p.m.)
Nigel Mermagen	Martin Wale

Officers:

Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Zoe Harris	Community Regeneration Officer (West)
Paul Philpott	Community Development Officer (West)
Katy Menday	Countryside Manager
David Norris	Development Manager
Diana Watts	Planning Officer
Chloe Beviss	Planning Assistant
Paula Goddard	Senior Legal Executive
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

(Note: Where an executive or key decision is made, a reason will be noted immediately beneath the Committee's resolution.)

92. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 14th December 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

93. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Jenny Kenton.

94. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

Cllr. Ros Roderigo declared her personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 7 regarding requests for community grants, particularly in respect of the application from Combe St. Nicholas Village Hall as she served on its management committee.

95. Public Question Time (Agenda item 4)

Mr. J. Burlington, Chairman of South Somerset Climate Action and a member of South Somerset Together (Local Strategic Partnership), informed the Committee of a talk to be given by Sir Graham Watson MEP regarding action on energy, farming, fishing, environment and climate. Stuart Wallace, Director of the New Economy Foundation would also be speaking. The event was to be held at the Warehouse Theatre, Ilminster on Friday, 10th February 2012 at 7.30 p.m. He invited members to attend the event.

Mr. Burlington further informed members of work that South Somerset Climate Action was undertaking with Keith Wheaton-Green, the Council's Climate Change Officer, in order to apply for a grant from the Local Energy Assessment Fund to enable voltage regulators to be distributed in Ilminster.

NOTED.

96. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 5)

No announcements were made by the Chairman.

97. Promoting Community Safety in Area West – Police Performance and Neighbourhood Policing (Agenda item 8)

Inspector Andy Lloyd from Avon and Somerset Constabulary was welcomed to the meeting and he gave a presentation informing members of local issues in Area West including crime trends and initiatives.

Inspector Lloyd reported on the latest position with specific operations and activities in Area West. He mentioned that a number of back office posts had been lost in the South Somerset District area and although there had been no reduction in front line officers it did mean some increase in work for them. He further informed members of local statistics and activities regarding a number of crime types including those relating to dwelling and non-dwelling burglaries, theft from and of motor vehicles, metal thefts, rural crime, anti-social behaviour and offences relating to drugs. He also referred to the cameras funded by the Market Towns Investment Group having been used to good effect in Chard. Although it had been a hard year he mentioned that the team had kept on top of the performance in detecting crime. In referring to the year ahead, Inspector Lloyd mentioned that activities aimed at crime reduction, target hardening and reducing people's fear of crime would continue. This would include the continuation of themed crime reduction plans including rural crime, metal theft, farm watch and neighbourhood watch. In referring to Police visibility he referred to neighbourhood teams being retained in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster, including the vehicle fleet, and commented that members should not see any reduction of those teams.

Inspector Lloyd further referred to having been promoted to Inspector recently and had moved on from his Neighbourhood Sergeant role in the west area to be responsible for response teams in South Somerset. He commented that he had enjoyed working in the west area and thanked members for their support during his time as Neighbourhood Sergeant. He indicated that his replacement would be introduced to members the next time Police representatives attended the Committee.

Inspector Lloyd then noted members' comments and responded to questions. Points referred to included theft of cables through inspection covers, non-dwelling burglaries and theft of motor vehicles.

Reference was also made to the availability of Police resources to deal with problems that may occur locally when having to police large events such as the Olympics venue at Weymouth and the Glastonbury Festival. Inspector Lloyd mentioned that there was no Glastonbury this year and the force had been given specific requirements with regard to the policing of Olympic venues. There would also be more stringent restrictions on annual leave. He did not think that there should be any real changes to officers locally but commented that it was difficult to legislate for spontaneous disorder. He asked members to let him know of any particular events that may be of concern to them.

The Committee noted the comments of a member who referred to South Somerset Together (Local Strategic Partnership) driving forward the High Contact Families Project in South Somerset, which would help, amongst others, some of those families who may have caused concerns for the Police.

In conclusion, members congratulated Inspector Lloyd on his promotion and the Chairman thanked him for attending the meeting.

NOTED.

*(Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West) – 01460 260426)
(andrew.gillepsie@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

98. Area West Committee – Forward Plan (Agenda item 6)

Reference was made to the agenda report, which informed members of the proposed Area West Committee Forward Plan.

The Area Development Manager (West) referred to the item for information that had been circulated with the agenda regarding the Highways Maintenance Programme. He reported that the Assistant Highway Service Manager (Somerset County Council) had asked if members wished to have a report on the Committee's agenda once the highways budget for the next financial year was known. Members indicated that they would be content to receive the report.

The Area Development Manager (West) also reminded members about the consideration of the Draft Core Strategy, which would take place at the Committee's meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 21st March 2012 and commence at the earlier time of 4.00 p.m. to allow sufficient time for its discussion.

RESOLVED: that the Area West Committee Forward Plan as attached to the agenda be noted subject to the above comments being taken into account.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

*(Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West) – 01460 260426)
(andrew.gillespie@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

99. Area West – Requests for Community Grants (Executive Decision) (Agenda item 7)

Reference was made to the agenda report and the Committee considered the allocation of funding to the Area West Community Grants budget. The Committee noted that through prudent management of grants programmes and in line with the agreed strategy, the Area West Capital and Revenue budgets were now high enough to encourage new applications from local organisations. Members further noted that to ensure that the Community Grants Scheme continued to support projects in Area West, a publicity programme was undertaken, which had resulted in 31 grant enquiries.

The Committee was asked to consider four grant applications submitted so far by Combe St. Nicholas Village Hall; Crowshute House, Chard; Hinton St. George and Locality Rural Community Services Ltd. and Hinton St. George Village Hall and Playing Field Trust.

The Committee noted that it was anticipated that a further 4 applications would be submitted at each Committee.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made by members to youth organisations that may come forward for a grant. It was commented that the youth service was a County Council responsibility and the view was expressed that there was a need to consider carefully any grant applications where future funding from the County Council was unknown and may not be forthcoming.

It was confirmed that the four applications being considered at this meeting were for capital projects. It was also noted that there was adequate provision in the Area West Revenue budget to enable the Committee to fully support anticipated revenue costs of community projects should it choose to do so. The Area Development Manager (West) further indicated that applications were encouraged for one-off costs rather than ongoing costs. In response to a question, the Area Development Manager (West) reported that although the grants regime was not closed to new applications, further promotion would not be taking place. A member expressed concern that grant applications could exceed the budget available and the Area Development Manager (West) commented that if there was any likelihood of that taking place he would bring it to members' attention.

A member commented that by considering the applications four at a time, it did not give the ability to compare them with others that may come forward. The Chairman mentioned, however, that the Council had a robust scoring system and did not want to see the budget not being used.

The Committee then considered each of the four grant applications as listed in the agenda in turn.

During consideration of the applications, the Committee noted the comments of Hilary Tinson from Combe St. Nicholas Village Hall, Emma Way from Hinton St. George and Locality Rural Community Services Ltd. and Roger Clemas from Hinton St. George Village Hall and Playing Field Trust who spoke in support of their respective applications.

Cllr. Ros Roderigo, having declared her personal and prejudicial interest in the application submitted by Combe St. Nicholas Village Hall, left the meeting during the determination of that application. She exercised her right under the code of conduct to make representations in support of the application before withdrawing from the meeting.

The Committee also noted the comments of Cllrs. Brennie Halse and Paul Maxwell who, as ward members, spoke in support of the application submitted by Crowshute House, Chard and the two applications from organisations in Hinton St. George respectively.

During discussion of the application from Crowshute House, Chard a member referred to the Council's policy that the District Council would only fund local projects where a contribution was being made by the Town or Parish Council, which was not the case in respect of this application. Cllr. Martin Wale, who also served as a member on Chard Town Council, commented that the Town Council had given a grant in the past year. He also indicated that if Crowshute House applied for a grant this year it would be considered by the Town Council in the 2012/13 financial year beginning in April. In conclusion, the majority of members were of the view that consideration of the application from Crowshute House should be deferred pending the outcome of Chard Town Council's consideration of grant awards in the new financial year. In response to comments made, the Area Development Manager (West) referred to the need to ensure that in future reports the policy regarding the scope and scale of parish/town council contributions was made absolutely clear.

The applications for grants submitted by Combe St. Nicholas Village Hall, Hinton St. George and Locality Rural Community Services Ltd. and Hinton St. George Village Hall and Playing Field Trust were approved by the Committee as listed in the agenda.

RESOLVED: (1) that it be noted that the estimated maximum level of take up of community grants as a result of the recent promotion will be around £107,000;

(Resolution passed without dissent)

(2) that £70,000 be allocated as a budget to support this community grants programme from the unallocated capital programme;

(Resolution passed without dissent)

(3) that a grant of £8,500 be awarded to Combe St. Nicholas Village Hall towards a replacement kitchen for the hall;

(Resolution passed without dissent, 1 abstention)

(4) that consideration of the application for a grant submitted by Crowshute House, Chard towards the installation of replacement windows and doors be deferred pending the outcome of Chard Town Council's consideration of grant awards in the new financial year;

(9 in favour, 5 against)

(5) that a grant of £6,000 be awarded to Hinton St. George Rural Community Services Ltd. towards changes to the infrastructure of the community shop;

(Resolution passed without dissent)

(6) that a grant of £4,800 be awarded to Hinton St. George Village Hall and Playing Field Trust towards the installation of a roundabout and refurbishment of a rocking horse.

(Resolution passed without dissent)

Reason: To allocate funding to the Area West Community Grants Budget and to determine four specific applications received by the Council for financial assistance.

(Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer – 01460 260423)

(zoe.harris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

(Paul Philpott, Community Development Officer - 01460 260359)

(paul.philpott@southsomerset.gov.uk)

100. Update Report from the Countryside Service (Agenda item 9)

The Countryside Manager summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the work of the Countryside Service across the district over the past year and on key projects for the next six months.

During the ensuing discussion, the Countryside Manager responded to members' questions and comments. Points raised included the following:-

- the Countryside Manager and her team were congratulated for their achievements. Particular reference was made by a member to the success of the Chard Reservoir Countryside Event;
- information was given on wildlife surveys undertaken and on walks that were to be arranged as part of English Tourism Week;
- reference was made by a member to Chard Reservoir and to the revenue received from fishing rights and, although appreciating that it was a local nature reserve, asked whether it could also be used for other activities such as dinghy sailing, which would give the reservoir further recreational use. He asked whether such use had ever been explored. The Countryside Manager indicated that the reservoir was not a massive stretch of water when taking into account the wildlife and that a part of its bank was not owned by the Council. She reported that such use had not been explored but indicated that she would look at the suggestion;
- the Committee noted the comments of a member who referred to Snowdrop Valley on Exmoor, which pulled in revenue for the locality and wondered whether there was anything similar in this district. The Countryside Manager referred to the presence of bluebells at various sites but they were not advertised in the same way;
- a member asked whether a tour of the Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve could be arranged for members. The Committee concurred with the suggestion and the Countryside Manager agreed to make appropriate arrangements.

The Chairman thanked the Countryside Manager for her presentation, the details of which were noted.

NOTED.

(Katy Menday, Countryside Manager – 01935 462522)

(katy.menday@southsomerset.gov.uk)

101. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations (Agenda item 10)

Cllr. Linda Vjeh referred to Chard Museum and informed members of the details of a concert that was to take place at the museum in February. She indicated that she would report further regarding Chard Museum at the next meeting.

NOTED.

102. Feedback on Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda item 11)

There was no feedback to report as there were no planning applications that had been referred recently by the Committee to the Regulation Committee.

NOTED.

(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

103. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 12)

The Committee noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of a planning appeal received.

NOTED.

(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

104. Date and Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 14)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 15th February 2012 at 5.30 p.m. at the Town Hall, Guildhall, Chard.

NOTED.

(Andrew Blackburn, Committee Administrator – 01460 260441)
(andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk)

105. Planning Applications (Agenda item 13)

The Committee considered the applications set out in the schedule attached to the agenda and the planning officers gave further information at the meeting and, where appropriate, advised members of letters received as a result of consultations since the agenda had been prepared.

(Copies of all letters reported may be inspected in the planning applications files, which constitute the background papers for this item).

11/03866/COU (Pages 1-13) – Change of use of existing log cabin from residential to use as a teaching studio for traditional upholstery courses (GR 339117/113281), 1 Tonypandy Cottages, Castles Hill, Allowenshay – Miss Peta Inglesent.

Prior to summarising the details of the application, the Planning Officer, in updating members, referred to condition 2 set out in the agenda report and reported that an amended site plan had now been received showing an amendment to the red line outlining the boundary of the application site to include access and parking. It was noted that if the application were to be approved, the date of receipt of the amended plan (18th January 2012) would need to be included in condition 2. The Planning Officer also wished to make an amendment to condition 5 to ensure that the use of the log cabin remained ancillary to the dwellinghouse.

The Planning Officer also reported that the Highway Authority representative had sent his apologies for not being able to attend the meeting. The Highway Authority had, however, reiterated their concerns about this proposal, the details of which were set out in the agenda report. Reference was made to the local highway network being single width carriageways with high banks on either side with little or no passing places along the length of either of the approach roads. Consequently, the Highway Authority was concerned that the additional vehicle movements associated with this proposal could lead to an increase in vehicle conflict on the surrounding highway network. In addition, reference was made to issues that had been raised by local residents about parking on the site and the Highway Authority had indicated that as those parking issues were located off the adopted public highway they were a civil matter between the parties involved.

The Planning Officer, with the aid of slides and photographs, then summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. She further referred to the key considerations to be taken into account including highway safety, residential amenity and the impact on the local rural economy. The Planning Officer further reported that given the issues that had been raised regarding this application the recommendation was for the grant of a temporary permission for one year, personal to the applicant.

The Planning Officer then responded to members' questions on points of detail. Points addressed included the benefit to the local rural economy of this business; confirmation that there was no travel plan submitted with the application, although the applicant encouraged people to take a certain route to the site and to share cars; confirmation that although the Committee could consider the impact on amenity, this did not extend to shared assets such as the use of the driveway; the amount of additional traffic that was likely to be generated; confirmation that permission could be made personal to the applicant and information regarding the number of parking spaces available to each of the three properties in the terrace.

The Committee then noted the comments of Mr. D. Wilkinson, Mrs. C. Wilkinson and Mrs. S. Gibson, in objection to the application. Views expressed included the following:-

- reference was made to the site being located in a peaceful area, which had been enjoyed for many years and to the business causing disturbance and intrusion on privacy and loss of amenity;
- the working pattern of one of the residents of the adjoining cottages meant that he was at home between Wednesday and Friday when trainees were on site and he needed that time to relax from his work but the loss of amenity was having a significant effect on his life;
- it was not considered that working from home was essential in this case as there were several small business units available at reasonable rates in the surrounding area, which meant that there were other options available;

- nothing against a person trying to make a go of it but it was felt that this was not the right location;
- the access was narrow and steep and reference was made to the parking difficulties that had been experienced;
- reference was made to noise from the applicant's working activities and to there being no insulation in the cabin;
- if members were minded to grant the application, it was asked that the decision be deferred to enable members to see the site;
- reference was made to the loss of amenity caused by rubbish being left and by smoke from burning upholstery waste. Clients' dogs also left mess;
- mention was made of noise having occasionally continued at night;
- until the planning application had been submitted, the concerns had not been acknowledged;
- when coming home from work, should not have to tolerate this kind of nuisance and the business was interfering with the personal enjoyment of home;
- concerns were expressed about the proposed hurdle fences obstructing a driver's view of a child;
- it was questioned whether the turning bay had actually been widened.

The Committee also noted the comments of Mrs. J. Crabb and Mrs. K. Joyce in support of the application. Views expressed included the following:-

- the business supported local self catering accommodation through a number of bookings having been made by people attending the courses, which was good for business;
- reference was made to upholstery being a traditional skill and to how the course had helped one of the students to enable her to work from home and to care for her family at the same time. It was also commented that there was flexibility in the way study could take place and that the applicant had secured commissions for a course member.

The applicant's agent, Mr. S. Travers, commented that the officer's report set out the facts relating to the application, the conclusion of which he welcomed. He referred to the objections that had been submitted and although having sympathy with the situation he commented that the planning authority should not take sides. He explained the reasons why he felt that this application was one that the Council should be supporting and referred to one of the Council's aims being to promote economic growth, which was also paramount in Government advice. He referred to the applicant carrying out a rural industry that supported the local economy, which he felt the Council should not discourage at this time. He further mentioned that the cabin was some 30 metres away from the neighbours and not in direct line of sight. Reference was made to the Environmental Protection Officer not having any issues with the application. If the application were granted he asked the Committee to consider the deletion of the last sentence of condition 6, which put restrictions on when the courses could take place as he did not think that the applicant's business should be stifled at this stage.

The applicant, Peta Inglesent, explained that she had diversified into teaching from upholstery making and to having to advertise nationally, which was expensive. She also referred to renting storage premises. Comment was further expressed that through mutual co-operation and sharing she was able to provide a business to support herself and other local people. She further indicated that she could not afford to go anywhere else. Information was given on the ownership and access rights to the driveway. She also referred to not having heard about any of the issues raised by the objectors until the planning application was made. She indicated that she was trying her best to earn her own living, which helped the local community and local businesses as well as people on the courses. She asked that the Committee grant the application.

Cllr. Sue Osborne, ward member, referred to there being a lot of emotion and strong public interest and was pleased that the application had come to the Committee. She felt that there was a difficult balance to achieve in respect of this application. She referred to the need to balance the rights of the applicant to set up a business at home, which was generating income and supporting the local economy, with issues of amenity and the right of the neighbours to have the peaceful enjoyment of their property. In respect of the application, she referred to stringent conditions being recommended if it were approved and to no problems having been identified by the Environmental Protection Officer. She also referred to issues that had been raised about the application having only come to light now. Although the roads were not good she commented that a family could occupy the property who could use the workshop for noisy activities. She was of the view that the Planning Officer had identified sensible working compromises to make the application workable.

Cllr. Kim Turner, who was also a County Councillor in whose division the site was situated, commented that this was a difficult application. In referring to some of the issues that had been raised by the objectors, she commented that she could not understand why they had not been reported previously. If the Committee agreed the application she felt that the neighbours would have to monitor the position and if any issues arose report them to the Environmental Protection Officer. She also commented that she was disappointed that the Highways Officer had not been present at the meeting. If the application were granted she commented that it would be for one year, which would give time for the impact to be assessed. She also referred to the business supporting the local economy. She indicated that she could support the application and hoped that the neighbours could get together and solve the issues raised.

During the ensuing discussion, having considered the issues raised in this case, the majority of members indicated that they could support the application. Reference was made to the recommended conditions being stringent and to the grant of a temporary 12 month permission giving the opportunity for any impact to be assessed. It was also hoped that the neighbours could resolve the issues between them. Reference was made to the business generating income and supporting other local businesses. It was also felt that the conditions would address some of the issues raised.

Further comment was expressed, however, that although not having a problem with the highway aspects, as it was felt that there would not be many vehicle movements, and being supportive of the principle of home working, the view was expressed that although this was the right type of business it was, in this particular case, in the wrong place as the inter-relationship between the properties was poor and given the size of the driveway.

In response to a comment the Development Manager reported that the granting of the application for a temporary period would allow the impact of the development to be gauged. He also clarified that the granting of this application would not prejudice any decision that may be made in the future.

After further discussion, the majority of members were of the view that the application should be granted as recommended by the Planning Officer including, as mentioned at the meeting, the addition to condition 2 of the date of receipt of the amended site plan and the amendment of condition 5 to ensure that the use of the log cabin remained ancillary to the dwellinghouse.

- RESOLVED:** (1) that planning permission be granted subject to conditions 1-4 and 6-16 and informative notes 1-2 as set out in the agenda report;
- (2) the inclusion of the date of receipt (18th January 2012) of the amended site plan being included in condition 2;

- (3) the amendment of condition 5 to read as follows:-

The log cabin shall only be used for private purposes ancillary to the dwellinghouse, known as 1 Tonypandy Cottages, or as a teaching studio for upholstery courses and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class D1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: In the interests of amenity, in accordance with policies ST6 and EP9 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

(9 in favour, 4 against)

11/04168/FUL (Pages 14-17) – Alteration and the erection of two storey side and front extension to dwellinghouse (GR 330994/116643), Chapel Cottage, Windmill Hill, Ashill – Mr. and Mrs. Chris Downing.

The Planning Officer, with the aid of slides and photographs, summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. She referred to the key consideration to be taken into account being the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the property and its surroundings. It was noted that the recommendation was one of refusal for the reason set out in the agenda report.

In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified a number of points of detail raised about the design and layout of the proposed extensions.

The Committee then noted the comments of the applicant, Mr. C. Downing. He referred to having purchased the property in 2005 and to it having been neglected for many years. He indicated that there was insufficient space to bring up a family with there being too few bedrooms, unsatisfactory living areas and no central heating. He wished to bring the property up to modern standards suitable for a family and future generations. He explained why he felt that his proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locality and further mentioned that he did not feel that the property in its current form was acceptable in that respect. He also indicated that there were no objections to the proposals, whilst there were several letters of support and he hoped that the Committee would also support the application.

Cllr. Linda Vijeh, ward member, commented that she had requested that this application be brought to the Committee and referred to the support for the proposals that had been received from local residents. She also mentioned that the Parish Council had no objections and that the Principal Landscape Officer had indicated that the proposals were not so disproportionate as to generate a landscape objection. She further referred to the SSDC Guidance 'Extensions and Alterations to Houses – A Design Guide' and commented that it was guidance and not a rule. She referred to the applicant having had pre-application discussions and to revisions having been made to the scheme but the Planning Officer had still not considered the proposals to be acceptable. She also commented that she understood that the applicant was amenable to have the front elevation in natural stone or fully rendered. She indicated that she could not agree with the recommendation of refusal and that she fully supported the application.

During the ensuing discussion, other members indicated their support for the application to be granted. Comment was expressed that the application had the support of local people and that, bearing in mind the sustainability of the use of the land, the Committee should look at it favourably. Reference was also made to there being no neighbour or Parish

Council objections and the view was expressed that the submitted proposals would be an improvement on the existing property. Reference was made, however, to there needing to be a sensible treatment of the elevations in terms of the materials used.

Members supported the granting of the application as they felt that the proposal, due to its scale, form and design would respect the character and appearance of the area and would not have a significant impact on local amenities in accordance with policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

RESOLVED: (1) that planning permission be granted subject to conditions, which shall include:-

- standard time limit;
- development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans;
- details of materials to be used to be submitted for approval.

(2) that approval of the materials to be used be delegated to the Assistant Director (Economy) in consultation with the ward member.

(Resolution passed without dissent).

11/04287/FUL – The installation of photovoltaic panels and solar hot water panel to southwest roof slope (Retrospective) (GR 334967/110531), The Barn, Chaffcombe Gate Farm, Chaffcombe – Mr. N. Hill.

The Planning Assistant, with the aid of slides and photographs, summarised the details of the application as set out in the agenda report. She referred to the key considerations to be taken into account being the provision of renewable energy, impact on character and setting of original building, impact on distinctive character and quality of local landscape, possible alternative siting, danger of setting a precedent and conflict with English Heritage guidance. She reported that the recommendation was one of refusal for the reason set out in the agenda report.

In response to questions from members the Planning Assistant clarified the position with regard to what had been applied for and that the application was retrospective. She also clarified where the site could be viewed from and commented that from a wider context the views were discreet and that it was the more immediate view that was of concern. The Planning Assistant also confirmed that the photovoltaic panels were situated on an elevation that fronted a public right of way.

The representative of Chaffcombe Parish Council, Mr. S. Robinson, commented that members of the Parish Council had looked at the site and could see no reasons to object to the application. He referred to the buildings not being listed, not situated in a conservation area and not being a heritage site. He further indicated that the panels were not really visible from the public road and a high hedge and low roof obscured the view of the panels from the south west side. He also commented that there were no objections from villagers about the panels.

The applicant, Mr. N. Hill, referred to the two sets of panels on this roof. He mentioned that the solar hot water panel previously installed had attracted little attention from villagers and that the photovoltaic panels had been installed about six months' ago, the technical details of which he explained. He further commented that the photovoltaic panels overlooked a track and a high hedge and were not really visible from the road. Reference was also made to the layout of the panels not being unique. He indicated that he realised that there was a condition on the original permission for the conversion of the barn but

referred to the reasons why he contested that the south west elevation on which the panels were situated was not the principal elevation. He also referred to the Council's Conservation Manager not having visited the site.

Cllr. Sue Osborne, ward member, indicated that she could not agree with the officer's recommendation in this case. She commented that the building was not in a conservation area or a listed building and that the application had neighbour and parish council support. She referred to the view from the road outside Chaffcombe Gate Farm, from which the panels could not be seen, not having been shown. She also expressed her view that the application complied with PPS22 regarding renewable energy and referred to the Council being under target with regard to the provision of renewable energy in the district. She further questioned why the buildings had not been listed if they were so valuable. The view was also expressed that the English Heritage guidance was only guidance and not rules. She asked members to support the application.

During the ensuing discussion, other members also indicated their support for the application as they felt that the proposed solar panels would not have an adverse impact upon the character of the building or the surrounding area and provided a sustainable form of energy in accordance with the aims and objectives of Policies EC3, ST3, ST4, ST5 and ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006), Policies STR1, STR6 and 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (2000) and PPS22.

The Committee noted the comments of a member, that perhaps there was a need to update the Council's policies in respect of renewable energy issues.

RESOLVED: that planning permission be granted subject to a retrospective time limit condition.

(Resolution passed without dissent, 1 abstention).

(David Norris, Development Manager – 01935 462382)
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)

.....
 Chairman