

**Notes of informal meeting with Bolesworth Estate & Neighbouring Parish Councils.
Burwardsley Village Hall Institute.
Wednesday 18th September 2024.**

Present

Bolesworth Estate – Vicki Ball, Nina Barbour, Gaurav Batra, Harry Bolton, Rachel Scott, Frances Steer, Guy Vernon.

Broxton & District Parish Council – David Williams.

Burwardsley Parish Council – Eric Enston, James Perry.

Cheshire West & Chester Council (CW&C) – Mike Jones.

Tattenhall & District Parish Council – Neil Matthews, Ann Wright (Clerk).

Apologies

Handley Parish Council – Nigel Johnson, Rory Lea and David Mamwell, Jon Mosley.

Tattenhall & District Parish Council – Jonny Kershaw.

Broxton & District Parish Council – Kathryn Borman

Notes of previous meetings

The notes of previous meetings held on the 17th June were agreed.

Bolesworth Estate Update

The following updates were provided, see attached notes.

Flood Mitigation

It was noted that Estate is looking at ways to provide a higher-level solution to flooding issues in the area. In addition, the Estate is being proactive pressing tenants to clear ditches. It was highlighted that the Estate is struggling to have a dialogue with CW&C Highways department regarding drainage works.

Action – Frances Steer to forward emails to Mike Jones who will take the matter up with Highways.

In the long term the Estate is working towards developing a management plan to naturally control the flow of water through landscaping, planting and hedgerows.

It was agreed it was important to get all parties around the table to discuss and develop this project including Environment Agency, Defra, CW&C, Parish Council and tenants.

It was reported that Welsh Dee River Trust have been surveying all the water courses across the Estate over the last 6 months and the findings will help identify how much water can be held back and how.

Concern was voiced that holding back too much water could result in the village being flooded and that there was a need to look at the flow through Handley and beyond to the Dee. The Estate agreed that any actions would need the collaboration and sign off from the correct statutory bodies such as CWAC and the EA.

Action – Mike Jones to raise with head of CW&C Highways and flood team who can involve the Environment Agency.

It was noted that Rocky Lane appears to be draining quickly after heavy rain. There still seems to be issues with flooding on Frog Lane.

Action – Ann Wright to send photographs of flooding to France Steer.

It was noted that the flooding of the former railway at Gatesheath also needs to be addressed and is impacting the flow of water, it was noted this is not part of the Bolesworth Estate.

Planning Matters

Bolesworth Estate's CW&C Local Plan submission is about the Estate's long term vision, it is expected that CW&C will respond to the submission by the end of the year.

The Estate has been involved in discussions as part of the Employment Areas Survey considering what business tenants are looking for.

Currently the Estate is working with a tenant to move over to solar power, they have also had discussions with Nick in Transition Tattenhall.

The Estate confirmed they would like to work collaboratively with the Tattenhall Neighbourhood Plan.

It was reported that Gaurav Batra was meeting with Natural England next week to discuss the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty application.

Leisure

It was noted that the Harthill application has been approved and a further application has been submitted to convert a number of properties on The Green to holiday lets. It was stated parking for these properties will be on the approved car park.

It was noted that no major works are planned for Harthill Church although if a suitable use can be found for the building with small modifications these may go ahead. It is hoped the building could be used as a flexible space for business meetings and low-level events complimenting the school site development.

Beehive

It was noted an application had been submitted to bring the property back into use as a restaurant and B&B. It was confirmed a business is ready to take the property on.

Residential Projects

Land rear 68-84 Castlefields

It was reported that the Bolesworth are considering the viability of developing this site with no more than 30 dwellings of which it is intended 30% would be affordable. This is currently being looked at as a high-quality scheme of relatively low density with landscaping.

It was confirmed the Estate is aware of the flooding risk in that area including the recent flooding of properties when the Redrow retention pond overflowed. Concern was raised that development of that site would increase the flow into the Keysbrook which is constrained by the pipes under Tattenhall Road. The Estate agreed to look at this specifically as part of any early constraints mapping.

Access would be through the existing developments.

It was raised that any affordable development needs to be truly affordable not 80% of market value. Also, priority must be given to allocation of affordable properties to people with a strong connection to Tattenhall possibly based on the S106 allocation scheme for the Burwardsley Court site.

It was raised that discussions should take place with the Community Land Trust to see if they can be supported to deliver the properties they already have permission for. Bolesworth agreed to build these objectives into their evaluation of the potential development.

Cheshire Workshops

It was noted this site has now been vacant for 5 or 6 months and is attracting anti-social behaviour, including necessitating police visits, and as such it is a priority to develop this site. It was suggested a low density, high quality residential development would suit this site, possibly 7 to 9 units. To maintain the quality of the proposed dwellings these would need to spread beyond the footprint of the current buildings but within the footprint of the site.

It was noted that there is some Parish Council support for a small residential development on the site so long as it is sympathetic to existing properties with suitable screening.

It was suggested that the Estate has a conversation with CW&C planners regarding a "portfolio approach" to development of the various sites in tandem and focussing the affordable elements of schemes where this will have the greatest benefit in Tattenhall (which has access to more amenities including the school within walking distance).

It was noted the Estate is mindful of the current car park which provides access to the Sandstone Ridge and the impact its loss could have on parking in the area. The Estate will consider this closely as any scheme design comes forward.

Barbour Square

It was confirmed that currently the offices on Barbour Square are vacant but under lease with RSK, however the lease ends in April 2026. As such the Estate is looking at alternatives uses for the building including a small number of high-quality residential apartments.

It was discussed that Chowley Oak is a better and more sustainable and attractive employment site given highways connectivity and existing occupier clusters.

It was raised that the building would be a suitable location for a larger shop noting the need for a larger shop or a number of shops given the growth of the village.

It was noted that previous attempts to attract an additional shop in the village had not been successful, but it was not clear if that due to the location or the possible footfall that had put businesses off.

It was suggested the Estate would look into the options and discuss further at the next meeting.

Harthill Development

It was requested that Broxton and District Parish Council and Burwardsley Parish Council be involved in the setting/agreeing of conditions, the Estate agreed to ensure that both Parish Councils are included in any discussions going forward.

It was agreed that it would be helpful for a discussion to take place with Broxton Parish Council about parking around The Green.

It was confirmed that the Estate has a number of properties which it is working on as such nothing may move forward on Harthill until the next calendar year.

General – when a scheme is being developed, such as the Cheshire Workshop, Barbour Square etc, it is recommended a discussion take place direct with the appropriate parish council to understand concerns, issues that can be considered during the detailed design. A further discussion when the design is in draft is also recommended.

Events

It was reported the Estate is looking forward to 2025 and working more closely with 3rd party providers to hold high quality events.

The Together Again Festival, July 2025, will be a major attraction and is already being promoted.

Bolesworth International 27th June – 6th July is going ahead and will be coupled with a lifestyle and super cars element. It is also planned to attract higher profile competitors which will not only raise the profile Bolesworth but the area as a whole.

Consideration is being given to running a new high quality Christmas event in 2025.

Community Update

It was noted the car parks will be available for use for the Christmas Market and Tractor Run, Barbour Square all day and Great Bear from 2.30pm. It was agreed that Tattenhall Parish Council would discuss with their contractors if a solution could be found to obtain access through the bollards for the event.

Other Matters

Vacant Properties

It was asked why the Estate has so many vacant properties. The Estate confirmed that only a small handful of the estate's properties are vacant, and that most of these are either slated for refurbishment over the coming months or, in some cases, for disposal where it is felt that the properties would be better as owner-occupied.

It was noted the Estate is seeking to convert a handful of properties to holiday lets.

Tree Surveys

It was noted that the Estate follows a tree management strategy, a number of trees have been surveyed along main arterial road. Further trees will be surveyed in 2025 and 2027.

It was noted that any trees which look in poor condition should be reported to Vicki Ball.

Future Meetings

Dates to be agreed – January, April, July & October 2025.

Ann Wright
20th September 2024.



Bolesworth & Parish Councils meeting

18th September 2024

Flood Mitigation

- All estate works requested by CWAC Highways have been completed.
- The Estate is eager to engage in proactive dialogue with Highways but no response from them to date (despite multiple requests).
- Long term flood management
 - Welsh Dee Rivers Trust is undertaking a survey of all water courses on the Estate, and they will advise next steps.
 - Actions will require a broader coordinated approach with CWAC, Parish Councils, Environment Agency, DEFRA and the Dee Valley River Trust.
 - This will be a major project. We need to agree who will lead/organise/fund a project group.

Planning Update: Policy

- Land Availability Assessment and Call for sites submitted March 2024.
- Employment Areas Survey submitted 1 August
 - Call with Icen's Economics Team (commissioned by CWaC) 30 August to share insight into local commercial property market conditions, existing and future business land needs and local economic conditions.
- Tattenhall & District Neighbourhood Plan Review – request update and consultation timeframes?
 - How might the Bolesworth Estate be able to help meet the plans objectives?
- Potential National Landscape (AONB)

Planning Update: Leisure

- Harthill – draft planning permission received.
- The Green / holiday lets.

Planning Update: Residential projects under consideration

- Land to the rear of 68-84 Castlefields
- Cheshire Workshops
- Barbour Square
- Other small residential projects

Land to the rear of 68-84 Castlefields

- Safeguarded for residential development (if required) after 2025.
- Tattenhall & District December 2023 Housing Needs Report identifies there is a 12-unit affordable housing shortfall.
- Seeking a Development Partner to prepare a planning application in early 2025 to include:
 - 30% affordable housing on site;
 - high quality design and layout sensitive to the local character and surroundings, having regard to neighbouring uses;
 - high quality landscaping throughout;
 - appropriate ecological mitigation;
 - appropriate flood mitigation;
 - safe and accessible walking and cycling routes linking with existing networks.



Cheshire Workshops

- Vacant since early 2023.
- Site subject to repeat Anti-social behavior (Police called following 15th August break-in).
- Following the below factors considered in support of developing houses on the site, we intend on requesting a formal pre-application with CWaC.
 - Fantastic location and views.
 - Shortage of housing to buy.
 - Result in a small number of new residents moving into the village.
 - Least disruptive long-term solution for development of the site.
 - Would be a low-density development.



Barbour Square – early stage thinking

- Uncertain future for the buildings given trends in commercial property and village centre location (view confirmed Fisher German)
- RSK already unoccupied, since pandemic, and not successful in sub-letting internally or externally.
- Several of our other office buildings around Barbour Square have also suffered long term vacancy, despite being of a more appropriate nature for their location.
- Real concern that key buildings in the village centre become long-term vacant / public nuisance.
- Bolesworth is seriously considering how to secure the long-term future of these buildings, consistent with enhancing amenities in the village centre.
- A potential solution could be a sympathetic conversion to a small number of high-end apartments, which could offer multiple benefits to the village at large (village centre vibrancy, housing availability and freeing up parking).

Other projects: under consideration

- Portico – preparing the site for market
- Meshach – tidied following the last meeting. Preparing the property for sale.
- Laundry Cottage – considering a planning application for conversion of redundant outbuilding to a single dwelling.

Events Update

Plans for rest of 2024

- Hampson Car Auction 21-22 September.
- Fireworks in November no longer going ahead.
- No Christmas event in 2024 as the estate is building a new formula for this.

Plans for 2025

- We have a confirmed booking for the Together Again Festival in July 2025.
- Confirmed Camping & Caravaning Club event over May Bank Holiday 2025 (23rd – 27th).
- Bolesworth International confirmed for 27th June – 6th July.

Community Update

- Estate is supporting the Tattenhall Christmas Fair & Tractor Run which takes place at the end of November.
- Funding & support for Growing Children Project at Tattenhall allotments continues.
- TWiG & Woodland Trust – planting of Oak Avenue (FP2) delayed due to wet weather. Now hope to complete in November.
- Continue to work with CWAC & Cheshire Easts PRow officers to address any issues on public footpaths across the estate.
- Millfield footpath has been resurfaced by the estate following the damage in the January storms.
- Providing further funding to the Tattenhall Tornadoes (U9's girls netball) in 2024/25 as team expands.
- Bolesworth is pleased to have sponsored the Village show which took place on 1st September 2024.