

Marston St Lawrence
Minutes of the Parish Council meeting
Held on Thursday 26th February 2015 in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Michael Scott (Chairman), Daniela Carletti, Richard Gale, Chris Skermer, Matthew Tims, Christine Coles, Parish Clerk and ten villagers

The Chair opened the meeting by thanking Cllr Skermer for providing the refreshments and the Parish Clerk for arranging the meeting.

1. Apologies: Cllr S Goodwin, Mr and Mrs Barber

2. Liz Knight (LK), South Northants Council (SNC) Conservation Officer to discuss the Conservation Area/Appraisal and Management Plan

The Conservation Area Appraisal is an appraisal of the area as a whole, and one of special archaeological interest. Assets contribute to the character of the area. It is about preserving what is special. Marston St Lawrence was last designated in 1991 and parishes are reviewed by SNC from time to time. There are more resources available to SNC now to help with the appraisal compared to the last review carried out in 1991. Within the current public consultation, the boundary has been extended slightly. The changes include the whole of the plot to the rear of The Old School House which has altered since initial designation and the historic barn to the west of The Glebe House.

The Management Plan is to inform, protect and enhance the Conservation Area. SNC advise statutory bodies. Discussions take place about preferable materials, the design and scale of buildings.

LK explained that a review of the Conservation Area looks at the whole character of the village and this may include some listed buildings. Listed buildings are designated by English Heritage and are individual buildings. There are a few within the Conservation Area and a couple outside of the area. They are protected separately under the Listed Building Act of 1990. Any changes to these buildings have to be made through SNC.

This document is in draft format and SNC welcome public written feedback by 18th March. Responses will be looked at by SNC in April with a view to adopt the plan then.

3. Question and comments from the Parish Council

The Chair asked if the southern corner could include the bridge over the waterway? The Local Authority have spent a lot of money restoring it for added protection. It is a local beauty spot. LK made a note of this comment.

Cllr Gale spoke about lighting and asked if SNC have a preference for a different sort of lighting or no lighting? LK replied that SNC are happy with street lights and accept that modern intervention has to happen. The Parish Council had considered placing one nice Victorian lantern opposite the church when the lighting was replaced but the lantern was too expensive. Nobody has objected to the current lamp standards.

Cllr Gale asked if this will provide a stronger background for planning decisions? LK replied that the Conservation Area Appraisal is about the development and management of buildings within the area and working with utility companies.

Cllr Gale asked if there have been areas that have undergone more changes? LK replied that in Castle Ashby the 1920s properties which were not previously included have now been added.

4. Open Forum

Q – What powers do the Local Authority have to enforce regulations with utility companies when BT are allowed to put a cabinet in the middle of the Conservation Area?

A - LK replied that SNC acknowledge this point. They do not have any legal powers to stop this from happening but they do try to consult with statutory bodies and work with them.

Q - Will the appraisal limit development within the Conservation Area?

A - LK replied that it informs and not limits development. Village boundaries are more restrictive. There is a policy within the Local Plan (H6) which restricts development. SNC would be consulted on a new development and look to see it is whether it is appropriate or not.

A short discussion took place about one change to include the whole of the plot to the rear of The Old School House which has altered since initial designation. The plot has been extended and this was overlooked previously.

Mr Skermer spoke about the village being non sustainable and new houses being rejected in the past. The Chair replied that the role of SNC is to protect and enhance the area and look at the design, use of materials and type of development. These points have to fit in with the existing setting.

Mr Skermer asked if the document will protect trees in the Conservation Area? He referred to a tree which borders Marston House to the church. The pathway close by is dangerous with moss and leaves and would require cutting back from time to time. The Chair replied that the Highways Authority oversee roads and pavements. This will be added to the March agenda for discussion then. LK replied that one tree has a TPO on it. Any work would have to be notified to the SNC tree team. There are restrictions on what can be done to a trees height and width.

There is nothing in the appraisal about waterways but this is covered by the Environment Agency.

Q – When will the next review be carried out?

A - There is no set period. SNC have 59 parishes to assess. 38 parishes have been done in the last four years. This village could be assessed again in the next ten years.

LK spoke about an Article 4 direction which is made by the local planning authority. It restricts the scope of permitted development rights in relation to an area or site. Article 4 directions are used to control works that could threaten the character of an area of acknowledged importance such as a conservation area. This is not proposed for Marston St Lawrence yet.

LK agreed to take back the comments raised tonight and the members will vote in April.

The Chair thanked LK and the villagers for attending the meeting.

Meeting finished at 8.15pm