Notes taken by the Parish Council Clerk at the consultation meeting of 17th April 2018 at 7.30pm Farnham Common Village Hall

In attendance approximately 180 residents including Parish Cllrs. Clapp, Hodges, Rowley, Thomas, Robinson, Rolfe and Tipping, and District Cllr. Dhillon.

Cllr. Clapp gave a presentation explaining that

* Developers had acquired options on areas of Green Belt (GB) land in the Parish and been making approaches to the Parish Council (PC) to try and discuss these options.
* The only planning role the PC has is as a consultee after a planning application has been submitted to SBDC. At that stage we had little influence on the scheme design
* The PC opposed inappropriate development in the GB as a matter of agreed policy
* In his opinion central government were putting increasing pressure for housing and in future those pressures would increase
* Going forward if a major development is proposed the PC’s options were to carry on as before or,
* Many applications get passed at planning appeals despite the Parish and District councils opposition and whilst opposing the application in general in the case of GB land nevertheless to try and influence/shape any development by engaging with developers at the pre-application stage to try and negotiate the best worst case scenario should their scheme be granted by SBDC or the Secretary of State/Inspectorate.
* Any such discussions could consider the mix of housing, balancing housing needs, location, infrastructure and any s106 contributions

In response to questions Cllr Clapp stated that

* Major development could be defined as 10 or more units but was likely to be in the 100s of units.
* The aim of any involvement with developers would be for the Parish to understand their approach and the proposed scheme and to exert pressure to develop a scheme in the best way should it be granted despite our opposition. Whatever input the PC could make would be beneficial
* On the issue of whether developers were trying to outflank us and that it was best to wait until the Local Plan was finalised in the next year or so given no sites in the parish were earmarked for GB release and any discussions would only encourage developers where no opportunities existed, Cllr. Clapp said he wasn’t pushing the agenda for this. The PC had been asked by the developers whether we wanted to engage in pre application discussions and he had called the meeting to find out what residents thought. He repeated the PC’s position to resist all inappropriate development in the GB and that this position had been set as a response to the parish plan questionnaire.
* In response to the assertion that the impression being given was to encourage such development or to help developers, he said he believed it was possible to resist development and still try to shape it in case the resistance failed and given he anticipated greater pressure in future.
* In response to how much difference the PC could make Cllr Clapp felt that it would at least be a minimal influence and it could be greater

Mr. Cathcart said the PC has asked for residents input and this was residents chance to tell the PC what they could tell developers. The main issues were schools, doctors and dentists, and sewage problems for Farnham Royal that could be exacerbated. It was a good initiative to communicate these issues to potential developers.

Another resident argued that getting involved at the pre application stage would be better than waiting until the planning application was circulated as that limited the time available to respond

A resident felt it was good to get involved because eg Allerds Farm was right for development and it would be good to influence what went on there.

Bill Youel said rather than develop relationships with developers we would be better off developing links with SBDC planners.

Following debate it was agreed that in respect of Green Belt land (including Green Belt land with some brownfield development eg Miles and Miles land) the PC should not be involved at the pre application stage and should therefore comment on receipt of any application as is the current situation. For all other land the PC could get involved at the pre-application stage.

Mr Clapp stated that the Parish Council would write to the developers that had made approaches with this decision.

Cllr. Clapp went on to talk of the benefits of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the additional powers this would give the community and the need to be ready to face future pressures. He said a meeting would be called on 22nd May at 7.30pm in the council office for anyone willing to attend. He said it could take a number of years to develop.

David Banks referred to the 5km zone around Burnham Beeches. Some discussion was had about effect of likely changes to unitary authority/ies. Some debate was had on the highways infrastructure

Cllr. Clapp said notes of the meeting would be publicised. Some expressions of gratitude were made and request for more meetings like this one. Cllr Clapp said he would be happy to run them if suitable topics came forward.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm