

B. In the matter of PA18/11050 the comments submitted by the PC to the planning department were totally inappropriate and bore no relation to the substance of the application.

"The Parish Council refer to a previous Planning Application relating to the Conversion of the outbuilding to annex and new link to the main house at Orchard House and raise similar objections and observations resulting as they did to a rejection of the original Application. There appears to be no new information to show the connection of the Main House to the Annex and that any walkway link to the main house is unclear. The Parish Council require updated plans ( if available ) as it is unclear how the current Plans differ to an earlier submission. Based on the foregoing, the Parish Council make objections as listed.  
The Parish Council do not support this Planning Application."

The original application for this site was for a detached, wooden, self-contained dwelling, remote from the main house and situated some distance to the south of the house. This was refused. PA18/11050 is an application for the development of existing outbuildings to the north of, and attached to, the main house with a clear connection between the two. The application has been approved by the planners despite the PC's objection. At the public meeting of the PC in January the Clerk claimed that the views of the PC were based on the information available at the time and that the decision of the planners was based on subsequent documentation. The public record shows this to be inaccurate. All documents were published on the CC website on 22 November 2018 and they clearly show full details of the development and, in particular, the connection between the main house and the annex. The PC discussed the application at its public meeting on 12th December 2018. There were no further documents relating to this case and the planning officer reached his conclusion based on the information available to the PC. In this matter the Clerk has;

- Misled the PC and the public during the January PC meeting.
- Failed to minute his comments despite the Chair stating that responses to the concerns raised would be minuted.
- Acted in a manner that damages public confidence in the PC.

## Comment

I expect my PC to function at a high standard but I don't expect it to be perfect. Things will go wrong from time to time but it should not be necessary to use the complaints procedure when things do go wrong. Again I note the positive and appropriate action taken by the Chair in his opening comments in January. However, if Councillors or their Clerk do not respond to negative comments or criticism of their actions in a constructive and positive way then the only option is to use the complaints procedure.

Finally, I am surprised that no councillor appears to have expressed concerns about these actions, indeed some have supported the Clerks decision to determine responses to planning applications out of committee. Also, given the expectation that councillors will prepare for meetings by making themselves aware of the issues in advance of the meeting, it is surprising that the glaring inaccuracies in the response to PA18/11050 were not picked up and challenged during the discussion.

I hope that dealing with these complaints will focus councillors' attention on the future governance of the PC. At a time when it is having to deal with highly complex and sensitive issues it is vital that it benefits from the very best guidance and advice from the Clerk lest it faces a legal challenge to its decisions.