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2339 C/73/1037 - OSP 149 (2299)

A Special meeting of Milton Parish Council with officers of the County Planning Dept. to discuss the application by Cyril Middleton & Co. (C/73/1037/F - 3/9/73) to fill in the gravel pit (OSP 149) adjacent to the Recreation Ground. Held in the Milton Parochial School by kind co-operation of Mr. Whitton, Headmaster, on Tuesday, February 13 1974, at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Planning Officers: Messrs G.Wood & D.French.

Parish Council: Mr.D.Pearson (Chairman) in the Chair; Mrs.M.Jones, and Mrs.B.C.Watson; Messrs H.W.H.Easy, P.Kiddle, M.J.D.Nurse, R.T.Summerfield and the Clerk.

Apologies from Mrs.Chinnick (due to illness) and Mr.L.M.Forbes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Wood and Mr. French.

Mr. Wood outlined the background of the Milton Country Park Scheme of which the pit under discussion here formed a part near its boundary. At present there was only one Country Park in the County - at Wandlebury, and this was increasing in popularity, he said.

The Countryside Commission had inspected the whole area of the Milton proposal (about 90 acres) and, subject to the County Council paying some attention to the clearing-up of the southern portion - OSP 220, owned by Stokes of Cambridge Ltd. - which they would defer at present as Stage II, the Commission would be prepared to make a grant on the remainder (some 60 acres) which they would designate Stage I.

Mr. Woods told the Council that an enforcement order had this week been served on Stokes of Cambridge Ltd. for their contravention of planning regulations on OSP 220.

He regretted that the present crisis had brought about some 'pruning' of County Council estimates which would bear some effect after next April but the Country Park scheme, as a whole, was going ahead.

The application under discussion here, by C.Middleton to fill in the pit (OSP 149) made some months ago, now required a prompt decision and the County Council were most anxious that the Parish Council should have a full opportunity of putting their views before the County Planning Committee, and therefore welcomed this discussion between two planning officers and the Council and hoped for decisive comments from the Parish Council at this meeting.

Mr. Wood referred to the 3 suggested courses of action on the pit which had been previously circulated, in detail with plans, to the Parish Council ( see MIN: 2299), viz:

1. Complete filling-in (for recreational use)
2. Partial filling-in and remainder left shallow for boating/paddling
3. Whole of pit filled in to shallow depth (2ft.?) for " " "

At this stage the planning officers invited the views of the Council.

The Chairman pointed out the increasing need of facilities for organised recreation in this expanding village and the wisdom of allowing ample reserve Recreation Ground for those needs. Particularly, he said, the football and cricket clubs often needed alternative sites when resting or re-seeding their pitches. There had been difficulties on the present Ground in siting alternative pitches comfortably. He considered that for the sake of posterity any opportunity, such as now presented itself, of allowing for extension of the Recreation Ground in the not too distant future, should be firmly grasped before being lost for good.

That being so, he agreed with Mr. Wood that suggestion 3 would not accomodate this view.

Members shared considerable apprehension that suggestion 1 (complete filling-in) might be later abused by industrial development on the site of the old pit.

Mr. Wood assured the Council that this was most unlikely; Mr. Middleton who was co-operating closely with his Dept., understood it was 'green belt' and his application asked, in fact, "to fill in the pit to County Council requirements" - which have been stipulated to him as recreation.

The comparative merits of suggestions 1 & 2 were discussed - arising from the conflict between the pit's unofficial, but very popular amenity value (for swimming & fishing) and the serious danger it presented (2 near-fatalities had occurred). A paddling/boating pool for children was thought would be popular.

Recommendation to the Planning Committee.

The Council finally agreed unanimously to recommend the pit be filled in to ground level with the exception of a small area ( ? most conveniently at the north end) to be left shallow (about 2 feet) for children's paddling and boating. They would like the Planning Committee to note that application in the future by the Parish for the extension of the Recreation Ground would be a distinct possibility if the Committee accepted the Parish Council's recommendation.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Wood and Mr. French for their attendance and the opportunity which the Council had had for a full discussion, and then closed the meeting.

Signed *J. Pearson* ..... Chairman ..... *5 March 1974* ..... Date.