

Over Kellet Parish Council ~ Planning Procedures

The Parish Council, in common with all other parish councils, town councils or metropolitan councils are statutory consultees on all planning applications within the parish confines. There are strict guidelines in force which govern the consultation process. The stages in the consultation process are as follows:-

- 1 The planning application details are sent by email to the parish clerk by the planning department of Lancaster City Council, apart from matters that are under the jurisdiction of the planners of Lancashire County Council e.g. in Over Kellet, the quarries and the local school are under their control. The same procedure is adopted by the county council.
- 2 At the same time it is normal for near neighbours to be advised and notices are placed as close to the proposed site of any potential development by the relevant planning authority. (in the case of potentially more controversial issues, notices are placed at other prominent locations in the village. (E.g. the wind turbine at Back Lane Quarry)
- 3 Parish Councils, as with any other individual, are able to comment for up to **21 days** following the original notification from the planning authority. **The parish council is not advised of applications** before this notification.
- 4 Normally, applications are considered at the next meeting of the parish council, and a response is sent by email to the planners following the meeting.
- 5 Quite frequently, the next parish council meeting occurs before the 21 day period has expired. In common with other parish councils, such applications are dealt with by a separate planning committee of three members who are given the opportunity to examine the application and reach a conclusion, whereupon a response is forwarded to the planning office via email from the clerk.
- 6 Occasionally further information is received which requires a speedier response but this would only be in connection with an existing application. Again the same procedure is adopted as in 5 above.
- 7 If the planning committee of the Parish Council feel that more time for deliberation is required or that all the parish councillors should be consulted, the clerk can apply for extra time from the planning office. The extra time is only granted in exceptional circumstances. There is no legal obligation for extensions to be granted.

All applications are included in the agendas, which are placed in the Parish Council Notice-board outside the village shop and, of course, the meetings are open to all to attend. Strictly speaking, it is only parish councillors who can comment at these meetings but at meetings of Over Kellet Parish Council, a fairly relaxed attitude is adopted and those attending the respective meeting are encouraged to express their views. Usually, such views are conveyed by the parish council in their response and the planners notified accordingly. All decisions made by the parish councillors are set out in the appropriate minutes of the meeting. The provisional minutes are usually displayed in the parish council notice-board by the weekend following the parish council meeting.

It must be stressed that if matters are of particular concern to an individual, they should write or email their own response to the planning office in Lancaster.

Some applications are more contentious than others and in such cases the application is frequently the subject of a full submission to the planning committee of Lancaster City Council, which is comprised of elected 'District' councillors, for consideration. People are welcome to attend such meetings but they are not able to take part in the decision making process. They are able to give a short presentation to the meeting but must apply for this course of action before the respective meeting.

Details of all planning applications are available on the Lancaster City Council web-site. <http://planning.lancaster.gov.uk> I do download a copy of the application from the web-site for distribution to the planning committee of Over Kellet Parish Council and this is available at parish council meetings. The City Council web-site contains all representations made to them and people should be made aware that anything that is sent to them is "in the public domain" for anyone to see.

As a final note, it should be understood that whilst everyone, including the parish council, can make their views known, the planning office is obliged to follow governmental and legal guidelines. All too often it is perceived that the planning office ignores the views of protesters, including parish councils but, in my experience, when they do turn down applications, the applicants often go through the appeal procedure to the governmental central planners in Bristol. Frequently, the appeal succeeds and Lancaster City Council are left with a hefty bill for expenses incurred by the applicant, not to mention their own costs. The resultant expense can amount to many tens of thousands of pounds, which must be absorbed by council tax payers.

I hope that the above helps to clarify the way in which planning applications are dealt with by the councils involved and the way in which you can find out about the applications and respond to them.

Michael Watson ~ Parish Clerk