

Minutes of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 7.00pm at The Old Station, Groombridge

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Robin Ashby, Marcus Tarling (Chair), Mrs Anne Jenkins, Mrs Jill Pardey, Stephen Whittaker

**In attendance:** Debbie Siddle – Clerk (minutes)  
3 members of the public

Members of the public are encouraged to come to the meetings and there is a 10 minute opportunity at the start of the meeting for them to address the Planning Committee.

Members of the public stated that they were interested in ensuring that the applications made by Groombridge Place had sufficient detail. It was felt that although it is retrospective, a broad approval for undefined activities and timings should not be allowed. People had not realised that the application was being discussed at the meeting, otherwise it was felt that more people might have attended. Withyham Parish Council was asked to put on its Facebook page the deadline by which people could comment on the Groombridge Place application.

**1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING:** None.

**2. APOLOGIES:** Cllr Mrs Diana Kelly – family commitment

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None.

**4. MINUTES**

4.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017

**001284 RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> August be taken as read with the addition of Cllr Ashby's apologies, and signed by the Chairman

4.2. Matters Arising

None

**5. ENFORCEMENT** - None

**6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**6.1 Application No. 17/02818/FULL (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council) GROOMBRIDGE PLACE GROOMBRIDGE HILL GROOMBRIDGE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS KENT TN3 9QG PROPOSAL (RETROSPECTIVE) VARIATION OF CONDITION 15 OF 92/01311/FUL (CHANGE OF USE FOR OPENING GROUNDS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND CAR PARKING ERECTION OF PAY KIOSK AND BRIDGE) TO ALLOW SPECIAL EVENTS TO TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC WALLED GARDEN AND BUILDING COMPLEX.**

Whilst the postcode for Groombridge Place is in Kent, land on the opposite side of the River Grom is in East Sussex. Activities at Groombridge Place affect residents of New Groombridge (East Sussex) as well as Old

Groombridge and this is why Withyham Parish Council has considered this application.

The Committee was concerned that the Planning Statement shows no regard to the 15km Zone of Influence, and it was felt that Groombridge Place must incorporate it due to the effects of traffic movements and the Habitats Regulations.

A 2007 letter shows that Wealden District Council objected to the car park on the East Sussex side of the River Grom, and Councillors believe that no application was ever made to Wealden District Council for that parking.

Statements are made within the application about no significant objections being made about noise but this is untrue. Furthermore, the Planning Committee notes that the appendix gives events timings as per the current license, but no mention is made of the intention to apply for a license to 3am, which the Parish Council strongly opposes. Mention is given to special events but there is no definition or detail for them. Statements are made about Groombridge benefiting the locality, which are not based on fact.

The Planning Committee requested that the public's comments recently made to Council regarding the recent Licencing Application should be incorporated in its response, namely:

- Noise – residents have had issues with noise pollution and events exceeding recommended noise levels
- Security – residents in close proximity to Groombridge Place experienced trespass and security issues due to the unmaintained perimeter at the recent Joy Festival
- Potential traffic and access issues – there is limited public transport during the day and none at night therefore visitors will use cars and coaches
- Traffic accidents – the road narrows and is unlit and there is a bus stop nearby, has a traffic assessment been undertaken?
- Safety of our children – fields have been used by a large number of campers which have open access to the children's play ground
- Environment – potential for litter blown onto public land and into river. Wet wipes were found in woodland after recent Joy Festival
- Effects on wildlife and birds at RSPB Broadwater Warren
- Effects on livestock and cattle, especially horses in relation to increased firework displays
- Emergency response – premises straddle the county border and there is no local policing in the village, it is unclear which force would respond to emergencies
- Proposed figure of 3000 visitors is approximately double the number of residents in the village and seems too large. Extensive advertising of the Joy Festival drew visitors from a wide area

- There is little benefit to the local community with staff being drawn from outside the area and local businesses not seeing any significant increase in patrons
- In comparison to other similar local venues Hever is licensed from 11am to 1.30am every day, Penshurst Place has no full licence only a temporary alcohol licence 9am to 6pm, Scotney Castle 10am to midnight every day and Chiddingstone Castle has only temporary events licences
- Residents are disappointed by the lack of community engagement by Groombridge Place and have found it difficult to complain when events have been problematic in the past
- Many properties lack soundproofing and some are listed so unable to soundproof further and therefore health and wellbeing of residents is compromised by loud music late at night
- When residents tried to complain about daytime noise from the Extreme Festival Groombridge Place said that it had no control as they had just rented their land to an events organiser
- The Joy Festival kept residents awake even though it wasn't very loud in terms of breaking noise regulations, because at night there is no other background noise in Groombridge
- The Joy Festival took place whilst children were studying for GCSEs and A Levels and some had sleep disrupted by noise at night
- Although the licence is being organised by Groombridge Place, it does not organise the events itself. Groombridge Place therefore has very little control and the events' organisers have no longer term responsibility to the residents
- Events security and organisers cannot control people attending events if they go into the village and cause problems there
- Last spring half term, rain caused the car parks to be waterlogged and all day visitors had to park in the village which caused issues
- Although Groombridge Place state that events will arrange security, firms vary in quality and residents are concerned that some events will not be secure
- TWBC has previously been unable to confirm whether Groombridge Place has been operating under its existing licence for under or over 500 people, the concern is that confusion may continue
- The driveway and narrow road is an issue for increased traffic

***Withyham Parish Council strongly objects to this application on the basis of the comments made above, and requests that it is withdrawn or refused.***

The Clerk was asked to make Wealden District Councillor Howell aware of this application and request that she contacts her colleagues at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council about necessary consideration to the 15km Zone of Influence.

6.2 Application No. 17/02909/ENVSCR (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council) GROOMBRIDGE PLACE GROOMBRIDGE HILL GROOMBRIDGE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS KENT TN3 9QG PROPOSAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING OPINION - (RESTROSPECTIVE) VARIATION OF CONDITION 15 OF 92/01311/FUL (CHANGE OF USE FOR OPENING GROUNDS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND CAR PARKING ERECTION OF PAY KIOSK AND BRIDGE) TO ALLOW SPECIAL EVENTS TO TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC WALLED GARDEN AND BUILDING COMPLEX.

*The Committee believes that this has already been agreed but, as the Environmental Impact Assessment make no reference to the Habitats Regulations, Withyham Parish Council believes that this should not be approved.*

6.3 Application No. WD/2017/1930/F 3 BROAD OAK, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9SD Description: GROUND FLOOR ALTERATIONS, SIDE INFILL AND CONVERSION OF GARAGE TO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION, FIRST FLOOR ROOF EXTENSION TO INCLUDE NEW FRONT DORMER, REAR DORMER EXTENSION AND REAR ROOF LIGHTS.

*Withyham Parish Council supports this application.*

6.4 Application No. WD/2017/1366/LB GLEN ANDRED, CORSELEY ROAD, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9PN Description: RENOVATION AND PARTIAL REBUILDING OF REAR RAISED TERRACE AND WALLING INCLUDING REPLACING CONCRETE PAVING WITH STONE PAVING.

*Withyham Parish Council supports this application.*

6.5 Application No. WD/2017/1690/F HOME PLACE, IRONCHURCH LANE, BLACKHAM, TN3 9TS Description: 2 NO. WINDOWS TO FLANK ELEVATION, DORMERS TO FRONT AND REAR ELEVATIONS, EXTENSIONS TO REAR INCLUDING ALTERING THE ROOF, CHANGE FROM EXISTING STEEL WINDOWS TO DOUBLE GLAZED ALUMINIUM WINDOWS, ENLARGEMENT OF SOME WINDOWS AND REMOVAL OF BAY WINDOW.

*Withyham Parish Council supports this application.*

001285 **RESOLVED** that the observations on planning issues detailed in these minutes be submitted to the Planning Authority.

7. **APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER AGENDA** - None

8. **DECISION NOTICES:**

**APPROVED**

Application No. WD/2017/1522/F ALTERATION TO LANDSCAPING TO FRONT OF PROPERTY AND NEW GATES / DRIVE FINISH ALDINE HOUSE, FLORANCE LANE, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9SH. Noted.

Application No. WD/2017/1720/F REMOVAL OF VELUX WINDOWS AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW REAR DORMER WINDOW AND FRONT FACING VELUX 1 BURRSWOOD VILLAS, WITHYHAM ROAD GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9QW. Noted.

Application No. WD/2017/1321/F GROUND FLOOR ORANGERY, TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, TWO VELUX WINDOWS TO REAR BEDROOM ELEVATION, ENLARGEMENT OF FRONT PORCH TO INCORPORATE A LOG STORE AND LOUNGE CHIMNEY. FOREST PLACE, WITHYHAM ROAD, WITHYHAM, TN7 4BB. Noted.

**WITHDRAWN**

Application No. WD/2017/1089/F OAK FRAMED DOUBLE GARAGE AND OPEN SIDE LOG STORE. CORSELEY FARM, CORSELEY ROAD, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9SF. Noted.

- 9. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA:** Cllr Howell had asked the Planning Committee to comment on proposed amendments to WD/2017/1643/FR Woodlands. Following feedback from Cllr Tarling the Clerk had responded that the concerns previously raised remained.
- 10. DATE OF MEETING** - to note that the date of the next meeting is on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 7pm in the Parish Office, The Old Station, Groombridge.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm