

Minutes of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** meeting held on Monday 14th
May 2018 at 7.00pm at The Old Station, Groombridge

PRESENT: Cllrs Marcus Tarling (Chair), Cllr Jill Pardey, Cllr Stephen Whittaker, Cllr Di Kelly

In attendance: Natalie Brett – Assistant Clerk (minutes)
Member of the public – For item 6.1

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. There was one member of the public in attendance for item 6.1. The member of the public introduced himself as the planning consultant for 6.1 and gave a brief history of the sites previous application being refused, taken to appeal and the appeal being rejected. The applicant has attempted to make the site profitable and sustainable as a Garden Centre but this has not been achieved. The Garden centre industry is dominated by chains and being a small independent in this location is not sustainable. The consultant commented that in this situation it is usual for the applicant to hand over the land to a developer to pursue the planning and building of any development. A developer would look to house 20-25 house on this site. The applicant has however chosen to self-fund this development as he wishes to leave a legacy and a development that he can be proud of. The new plans have been drawn up with a view to overcome the concerns raised by the planners and at the appeal. The applicant would like to see a sustainable reuse of the site as the commercial side of the site will cease in the future. The appeal saw the location issues fall away however the impact on the ANOB was upheld at the appeal and this is the area that the applicant has tried to work with, including areas of large green space and ecology. The Consultant advised that this was a genuine attempt by the applicant to make something that can work.

It was commented by a member of the committee that little investment into the business had been noted. The consultant advised that features such as a coffee shop would not be allowed in this location due to the Zone of influence and other factors. Although it was noted that there had been no attempt to do this.

A member of the committee questioned how long the site had been owned by the applicant, it was estimated that this was approx. 5-6 year but the consultant advised he would be happy to confirm this.

It was noted that there are no planning notices on the site and the Assistant Clerk was asked to contact Wealden regarding this as the Planner was not in receipt of any notices.

It was questioned as to where the infrastructure for this development would come from as there was not sufficient at present. The Consultant advised that the application would be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy which would be paid to Wealden District Council. (*Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area.*). It was further questioned if a footfall survey had been done on the business to confirm that the business is not sustainable. The consultant advised that this had not been done and that the evidence to support the unsustainability of the site as a business would be the books. Cllr Tarling thanked the member of the public for attending and opened the meeting.

Action: Assistant Clerk to contact Wealden Planning to enquire regarding planning notices.

1. **ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING:** None.
2. **APOLOGIES:**, Cllr Robin Ashby, Cllr Jonathan Kelly, Cllr Anne Jenkins
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None

4. **MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2018

001438 **RESOLVED** that the notes of the meeting held on 14th May 2018 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman

4.2. Matters Arising – Information to be sent to the Fire Arms Office is still outstanding.

5. **ENFORCEMENT** – It was requested that a matrix on enforcement is produced and kept updated for the planning committee to review at each meeting
Assistant Clerk to produce and maintain matrix on Enforcement.

6. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 **WD/2018/0903/F** - ROYAL MIRES NURSERY, LYE GREEN, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1UU Description: DEMOLITION AND CLEARANCE OF EXISTING RETAIL GARDEN CENTRE AND ERECTION OF 8 NO. FAMILY DWELLINGS (2 X 3 BEDROOM, 3 X FOUR BEDROOM AND 3 X FIVE BEDROOM) WITH ASSOCIATED GARAGES, LANDSCAPING AND HARDSTANDING. (Expiry date for comments: 6 June 2018)

The following comments were noted in relation to this application by members of the committee:

The development has only been reduced by 1 house from the previous application that was refused.

The development is outside any designated settlement boundary and not a suitable location for such housing. Policy SP03 of the core strategy directs the majority of new housing to be accommodated within, or as sustainable extensions to existing towns or villages.

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF seeks to avoid isolated homes in the countryside.

This development would be contrary to Policy EN6 of the local plan and Policy SP01 of the core strategy, which seek to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area and the ANOB

This should be classed as major development in the countryside because of the detrimental effect it will have on the countryside amongst fields and farmed land.

There are no two storey developments amongst the scattered sheds and greenhouses of the existing business and as such the effect of 8 new two story dwellings would be immense on the countryside. Introducing an urban development over the entire site. Landscaping to shield the development would not be a suitable replacement for hedges and trees alongside fields, which cannot be replicated.

The site would directly conflict with Policies EN1, EN6 and EN27 of the local plan and policy SP01 of the core strategy, these policies seek to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

European Habitat Regulations override 5 year land supply, so this should not apply.

No public transport is available to service this location, walking and cycling along this road is dangerous.

This would not be a sustainable development due to the site location.

The current business provides low skilled employment in the area which is crucial to sustain the local economy.

The applicant appears to have not made any investment into the business at this site since the last application. It should also be noted that another Garden Centre in the surrounding area is set to close which would see a potential increase in footfall.

All of the reasons that the inspector gave at the refusal to the previous application are still relevant to this application and should form a sound basis for refusal.

It was recognised that the Planning documents submitted were of a very professional standard.

At a vote 3 do not support and 1 abstained. It was agreed to request this application be called into Committee North.

Withyham Parish Council Does Not Support this application and requests it is called into Committee North by Councillor Howell.

- 6.2 **WD/2018/0935/F** RIFFHAMS, WITHYHAM ROAD, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9QT
Description: DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING CONSERVATORY, CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ENTRANCE CANOPY, REAR EXTENSION WITH CONVERSION OF EXISTING LOFT AND ASSOCIATED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS. (Expiry date for comments: 4 June 2018)

It was noted that the house were of an individual nature many of which have added a second story setting a precedent on the road. It was further noted that the application on line showed no objections from neighbours.

Withyham Parish Council Supports this Application

- 6.3 **WD/2018/0965/F** ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ST JOHN'S ROAD, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1RZ
Description: NEW BOILER FLUE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS THROUGH ROOF OF EXISTING CHOIR VESTRY ROOF. (Expiry date for comments: 1 June 2018)

The committee noted that it was nice to see a planning application for this and applauded the applicant for going through the correct procedure.

Withyham Parish Council Supports this Application

- 6.4 **WD/2018/1005/F** WOODVIEW, SCHOOL LANE, ST JOHNS, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1SB
Description: PROPOSED FRONT FACING DORMER WINDOWS & ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING DORMER (Expiry date for comments: 11 June 2018)

It was noted that this application would soften the lines of the building and cannot be seen from the road.

Withyham Parish Council Supports this Application

7. PLANNING DECISIONS

APPROVED

WD/2018/0699/F GROUND FLOOR REAR EXTENSION / PART GARAGE CONVERSION WITH INTERNAL ALTERATIONS 29 NEWTON WILLOWS, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9RF - Noted

WD/2018/0631/F TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION IN CONJUNCTION WITH DEMOLITION OF EXISTING CONSERVATORY 2 HAM FARM COTTAGE, WITHYHAM ROAD, WITHYHAM TN7 4BJ - Noted

WD/2018/0525/F TO CONVERT AND EXTEND PART OF AN EXISTING OUTBUILDING TO A FAMILY ANNEXE OLD BUCKHURST EAST, WITHYHAM ROAD, WITHYHAM, EAST SUSSEX TN7 4BA - Noted

8. **APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER AGENDA** – None

001439 **RESOLVED** that the observations on planning issues detailed in these minutes be submitted to the Planning Authority.

9. **MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA** - None

10. **DATE OF MEETING** - the date of the next meeting being Monday 11th June 2018 at 7pm in the Parish Office, The Old Station, Groombridge was noted.

The meeting closed at 7.29pm