

Minutes of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** meeting held virtually on **Monday 25th January 2021** at 7.00pm in accordance with *The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020*.

PRESENT: Cllrs Di Kelly, Jill Pardey, Chris Pope, Marcus Tarling (Chair).

In attendance: Natalie Brett – Assistant Clerk (Minutes and Virtual Host)
District Cllr Obbard

Members of the public are encouraged to view meetings via the Withyham Parish Council YouTube channel where they are posted until minutes are available.

Members of the public wishing to address any items on the agenda were requested to email their question/comment by the morning of the meeting to be circulated to the committee. There were four members of the public in attendance for item 6.3. The spokesman read the following statement:

May I start by thanking you for the opportunity to speak to you this evening. For those of you on the committee who don't know me, please let me provide you with a brief background.

I am a son of immigrant parents who came over after the war and established a dairy farm at Lealands. I have lived here for over 60 years and played an active role in the community. Upon my father's retirement in 1984, I took over the family farm, before economic and environmental circumstances basically forced me to sell the cows in 1991. I have since retrained and now practise as a chartered surveyor.

As I am sure most of you are aware, agriculture in this part of SE England on these heavy clay soils makes farming a continual struggle and as such much of the land is now not farmed on a commercial basis.

It is basically with this in mind and the very small acreage that I have, that I came up with the idea of creating a new family home for ourselves, not only enabling us to stay in the village, but also the concept of creating a carbon neutral house that makes use of a now redundant farm building, whilst enhancing a tired structure that is no longer used for agriculture.

This building is not only redundant, but remains an unattractive feature on the landscape. This proposal to turn a derelict and unloved building into a new eco-friendly family house which will not only be carbon neutral but with the additional sensitive tree planting and the creation of a new pond, create a setting that in my view will enhance the environment both aesthetically and for flora and fauna.

Thank you.

Cllr Kelly enquired if the neighbours had made comment, particularly in regard to the access driveway. The resident confirmed the driveway was owned by the applicant and no neighbour objections had been received by the applicant.

Cllr Pope enquired how close the application sat in relation to the land that had recently been sold. The resident advised that this was approximately 150-200 meters from the application. It was further advised that the land was sold by the applicant 4 years ago and resold in October.

Cllr Tarling enquired how much land remained with the applicant. It was advised that 26 acres remained, which had been farmed to produce hay for silage for the last 10 years by a local farmer.

The Chair thanked the resident for their comments.

1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING: As this was a virtual meeting it was recorded for the purposes of posting on YouTube until minutes available.

2. APOLOGIES – Whilst Cllr Andrew Fane was in attendance due to technical issues he was unable to participate.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – It was noted that Cllr Kelly was friends with the spokesman for item 6.3 however this would not be prohibitive of her doing her duties on the committee

4. MINUTES

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021

002007 RESOLVED that the notes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman when in person meetings resume.

4.2 Matters outstanding from these minutes.

5 ENFORCEMENT

The Assistant Clerk advised that enforcement at Wealden District Council had been advised about the stables at Gillridge Lane and would be making a site visit. The Assistant Clerk had also notified Rotherfield Parish Council of this as it sits in their Parish by roughly 100 meters. They thanked the Committee for their vigilance.

**6 PLANNING APPLICATIONS
COMMENTS TO BE RETURNED TO WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

6.1 WD/2020/2513/F THE OLD HOUSE, STATION ROAD, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9QX Description: ERECTION OF 1NO. DWELLING WITH GARAGE AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS (Expiry date for comments 29th January 2021)

It was agreed that serious concerns remain with the safety of access to this site. As noted in previous responses to applications at this site the response from East Sussex Highways stating low traffic movements was firmly disputed. The road is a busy access point to the local school, church, and waterworks. The road was noted as a persistent bottleneck within the Parish. A historic instance of a fire engine not being able to access a house fire due to obstructive parking on this road was also noted.

The site remains in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Ashdown Forest Zone of Influence which would prohibit development.

It was commented that the application is a large house and not affordable housing which was needed although the inclusion of a woodland and wildflower area was pleasing.

Withyham Parish Council Objects to this application

- 6.2 **WD/2020/2492/F** 31 TEASLEY MEAD, BLACKHAM, TN3 9TT Description: REMOVE EXISTING GARAGE AND SHED STRUCTURES TO SIDE OF HOUSE AND REPLACE WITH 2 STORY SIDE EXTENSION. FORM NEW SINGLE STORY EXTENSION TO REAR AND SMALL SINGLE STORY EXTENSION TO FRONT. (Expiry date for comments 1st February 20201)

It was noted that the materials would be in keeping and match the existing building. No letters of objection were present at the time of the meeting. A query was raised as to the boundary neighbour's opinion on the application and if they were aware of it as it would be very close to their property. It was confirmed that Wealden District Council were now posting notices and that letters were not being sent to neighbours so the Committee was unsure if they would be aware.

Withyham Parish Council Supports this application.

- 6.3 **WD/2020/2519/F** LEALANDS FARM, STATION ROAD, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9NB Description: CONVERSION OF BARN TO FORM A SINGLE ECO-FRIENDLY DWELLING, WITH THE ADDITION OF GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMP AND WILDLIFE POND. (Expiry date for comments 3rd February 20201)

Whilst it was felt by some that is was a good use of a redundant building, with good design, low key single story and eco friendly, concerns were raised that the application sits within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Zone of Influence. It is also sited outside of the development boundary which the committee has previously taken a view on with other applications, being that they would not support them.

Withyham Parish Council Objects to this application by a majority vote.

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

8. **PARISH LED**

WD/2020/2287/LDE DUCKINGS, WITHYHAM ROAD, WITHYHAM, TN7 4BE CONFIRMATION THAT THE WORKS APPROVED UNDER APPLICATION WD/2017/2455/F HAVE COMMENCED AND THAT THE PERMISSION IS THEREFORE EXTANT – Noted.

002008 **RESOLVED** that the observations on the planning issues detailed in these minutes be submitted to the Planning Authority.

9. **PLANNING DECISIONS** - None

10. **TO NOTE THE RESPONSE TO THE WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN DIRECTION OF TRAVEL CONSULTATION.** – Noted. Cllr Tarling was thanked for his work on this.

11. **TO NOTE THE RESPONSE SUBMITTED - WD/2020/2342/F** - Noted

12. **TO NOTE THE DATES OF THE WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL PARISH PANEL MEETINGS** - Noted

13. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Cllr Fane had notified the Assistant Clerk of an application for Burrswood that would come under the criteria for applications outside of the parish. Tunbridge Wells Brough Council advised that the application was for a Lawful Development Certificate, which does not require consultation. The application is listed under 20/03643/LAWPRO St Michaels Burrswood Groombridge Tunbridge Wells Kent TN3 9PY Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) - Conversion from a former care home (C2 use) to 72 assisted living (extra care) apartments (C2 use)

14. DATE OF MEETING - to note that the date of the next meeting is on **Monday 8th February 2021 at 7.00pm** to be held virtually unless otherwise notified by the agenda.

Meeting closed at 7.32pm