

Minutes of the Withyham Parish Council **PLANNING COMMITTEE** meeting held at The Parish Office, Station Road, Groombridge on **23rd October 2023** at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Cllrs Allan Gaukroger, Robert Gordon-James (Chair), Diana Kelly, Penny Lawn and, Deviani Parekh-Jones.

In attendance: Natalie Brett – Assistant Clerk

Members of the public are encouraged to attend the meetings in person or via Zoom and there is a 10-minute opportunity at the start of the meeting for them to address the Planning Committee. There were no members of the public in attendance.

1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING – Meetings recorded for the use of the Clerks and will be erased once minutes are approved.

2. APOLOGIES – Cllr Pardey – Family Commitment

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None

4. MINUTES

4.1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9th OCTOBER 2023 – Agreed with amendments to the declarations of interest.

002583 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2023 be amended and then taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM THESE MINUTES - None

5. ENFORCEMENT - None.

6. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

COMMENTS TO BE RETURNED TO WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

6.1 WD/2023/1989/O DRUMLIN HOUSE, SUMMERSALES HILL, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1UT Description: OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR 2 DWELLINGS

Wealden District Council Expiry date for comments: 1 November 2023

Link to documents on web:

<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=162960>

The Chairman of the Withyham Parish Council Rights of Way Committee had advised the following information:

- There's no reference to FP WIT/20 that follows the northern edge of the red-outlined area on the site plan, It has been fenced off for the access drive to the proposed development but it should be stated that it won't suffer any interference either during or following construction.
- When walked in August it was noted that the wooden fence separating the path and the track has largely collapsed at the London Road end making it difficult to follow the true line of the path. Were construction vehicles to use the track to access the site as shown on the plan there is very little, if any space to pass safely. I think a condition should be that the post and rail fence separating the path from the track should be reinstated before work commences to ensure pedestrian safety.

- The site map outlined in red is outside of the area marked in blue said to be in the applicant's ownership.
- FP WIT/20/1 is part of the High Weald Landscape Trail long distance path, so particularly popular with walkers.
- Vehicular access from London Road has limited sight lines, and the speed of traffic in both directions is often high. Construction-related traffic during the development will be an extra hazard to walkers approaching the path from the road, and also to passing vehicles. Once such large houses are occupied there will doubtless be multiple vehicles for each dwelling plus the usual delivery and courier vans, all passing in and out every day.

The committee thanked the Withyham Parish Council Rights of Way Committee for their helpful comments which it supported.

The application sits within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it was agreed that weight should be given to this as this application does not conserve nor enhance the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would be detrimental to it. The trees noted in the ecological survey must be protected and are of importance. The ecological survey also advised the possibility of Great Crested Newts in a pond which should be followed up with the NatureSpace Newt Officer. Further the increased traffic movement of such a development would be detrimental to the Ashdown Forest SAC. The site also sits outside of the development boundary which must be maintained. The committee agreed this was not a suitable location and 5 bedroomed houses were not a housing need in the Parish.

Errors noted in the application were the status of the Royal Myers appeal, the development being sustainable with no evidence of such and the statement regarding a "predominantly residential area" which this site is not, it is a field.

Withyham Parish Council Objects to this Application.

7. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE AGENDA BY THE CLERK - None

002584 RESOLVED that the observations on the planning issues detailed in these minutes be submitted to the Planning Authority.

8. PLANNING DECISIONS FOR NOTING – All noted

APPROVED

WD/2023/2045/LB REPOSITIONING OF ROOF LANTERN HIGHFIELDS, BEECH GREEN LANE, WITHYHAM, TN7 4DB

WD/2023/2069/FA VARIATION OF CONDITION 4 OF WD/2022/0682/F (PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION WITH BALCONY, NEW AND REPLACEMENT DECKING AND EXTERNAL CHANGES TO CLADDING AND WINDOWS.) EXTEND WEATHERBOARD TO GROUND FLOOR LEVEL ON EAST AND NORTH ELEVATIONS, REDUCE SIZE OF RAISED TERRACE ON NORTH ELEVATION, REPLACE WINDOW WITH FRENCH DOORS TO BALCONY ON EAST ELEVATION. THE GRANARY, GILLRIDGE LANE, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1UP

REFUSED

WD/2023/1750/F FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION ABOVE EXISTING GROUND FLOOR FOOTPRINT BUCK VIEW, CHERRY GARDEN HILL, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9NY

WD/2023/1891/LB FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION ABOVE EXISTING GROUND FLOOR FOOTPRINT BUCK VIEW, CHERRY GARDEN HILL, GROOMBRIDGE, TN3 9NY

WITHDRAWN

WD/2023/0391/LB RENOVATION OF GROUND FLOOR OF NORTH WING, INVOLVING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS. WARREN HOUSE, WARREN ROAD, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1TX

9. AGREE RESPONSE TO HIGH WEALD AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

<https://highweald.org/aonb-management-plan/management-plan-public-consultation-2023/>

Expiry date for comments: 5th November 2023

Cllrs Gaukroger and Lawne had kindly prepared a draft response to the consultation. The committee thanked them for their hard work. Cllr Gaukroger advised that the document was a very comprehensive, well thought out and strong document and should be supported by the Parish Council. It was agreed the draft response be submitted by the Assistant Clerk.

002585 RESOLVED to submit the proposed draft response to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan Consultation.

10. TO NOTE INFORMATION HELPFUL TO PLANNING PROVIDED IN THE AONB MANAGEMENT DRAFT

Cllr Lawne listed some of the items that had come up whilst reviewing the consultation documents. These were noted as:

1. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Statement would be a useful document for the planning committee to reference once published.
2. The details provided on the Character of Settlements would also be a useful resource when published.
3. One aspect that was noted in the Field and Heath section (5) was to encourage hedges, not fences, this would be helpful when making comments on developments.
4. Dark Skies Section (6) was already well supported by Wealden District Council, one item of note was that barn conversions with big windows would come under this.
5. In the Planning and Development Section (5) it is noted that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not automatically apply in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
6. The History of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is also very interesting and would be recommended reading.

7. The High Weald is one of the best-preserved medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. Despite its large size, and proximity to London, its landscape has remained relatively unchanged since the 14th century, surviving major historical events and social and technological changes. The Assistant Clerk would prepare a briefing paper with more details once the management plan was published.

11. **TO NOTE REQUEST TO CALL IN WD/2022/2499/F TO WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE NORTH** – Noted. Wealden District Council Cllr Hulbert confirmed that this would be called in.
12. **MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA**
The Assistant Clerk advised that the Parish Office had been notified of an advert placed in the Times of Tunbridge Wells in relation to a possible future planning application for the site at Little Wold. Withyham Parish Councillors and Planning Committee will not be discussing this possible application until a formal notice is received from Wealden District Council. It was also noted that the Planning Appeal for the current application at this site is still ongoing.
13. **DATE OF MEETING** - to note that the date of the next meeting is on **Monday 13th November at 6.30pm** to be held at The Parish Office unless otherwise notified by the agenda

The meeting closed at 6.48pm