



HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
TUESDAY 31 AUGUST 2021 AT HEATHFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE
AT 6.30 PM

Present: Cllrs Coffey (Chair) Leach (Vice Chair) Baker, Deacon, Dunstall, Hart, Leney and Snook.

District Cllrs Mike Baker and Guyton-Day

4 Members of the Public

The Assistant Clerk was present

21/223 **Public questions**

A member of the public objected to planning application WD/2021/1762/MAJ and emphasised that the surface run-off water and drainage for this area is at above maximum capacity, the area regularly floods, especially in the winter but recently three times even in the summer months. Further development would exacerbate this issue. It is also in an AONB and referred to the Monkhill judgement which highlights that you need to show exceptional circumstances to why the development is needed in such areas. Also, it would cause further traffic in an area that is not currently sustainable.

Another member of the public also objected to planning application WD/2021/1762/MAJ. They emphasised concerns over the junction and traffic as the area is struggling to sustain the current amount and further development would have a substantial negative impact. The application is in an AONB and the housing requirement is not required. 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings are required but the development does not address this. Planning developers have outstanding developments approved but unbuilt, which should be developed before looking at further areas.

Another member of the public also objected to planning application WD/2021/1762/MAJ and they highlighted the historic and landscape value of the site as well as being in the AONB. All allocated quotas for dwellings have been made for this area. They were concerned the trees have already been removed without consent. Furthermore, the traffic would not cope with any additional development. It should be objected to under the NPPF para. 172 footnote 6.

A further member of the public objected to the above application on the similar grounds but brought further attention to the flooding concerns, due to surface and drainage water. It is unmanageable at present, even with 4 weeks of works recently

completed. Further development would escalate this issue further and cause greater impact on the neighbouring properties and area. They also share the same concerns regarding traffic and the development being in the AONB.

21/224 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies have been received from Councillors Rivers, Hobson, Puttick, Mian and Whitehouse.

These were noted

21/225 **Disclosure of Interests in matters on the Agenda**

All members disclosed an interest on application WD/2021/2042/F as this is the Parish Council application for CCTV to be installed. The Assistant Clerk gave a dispensation allowing members to comment and make a decision.

Cllr Hart has a personal interest in planning application WD/2021/2051/F as he knows the applicant and the agent

21/226 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9th August 2021 having been previously circulated, were then approved. They were signed by the Cllr Coffey as chair of the meeting as a correct record and visibly shown to members.

21/227 **Action points from previous minutes**

The Assistant Clerk informed members the Strategy Plan has been given to the Clerk to be included in the next stage of the process.

All other items are included on this agenda

21/228 **Planning Applications**

WD/2021/1762/MAJ

SNATCHELLS FARM, CROSS IN HAND ROAD, HEATHFIELD, TN21 0LS -
Construction of 34 no. residential dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping, public amenity space and associated highways works.

OBSERVATIONS: The committee members object to this application on the following grounds:

1 Traffic Impact

(i) The proposal for introduction of traffic lights at the junction of the A265 and the A267 will cause significant traffic congestion, which apart from being inconvenient to all road users, will cause an increase in emissions pollution, light pollution, and noise pollution to the detriment of users of the Hardy Roberts Playing Fields and the adjoining rugby club owned playing field, Darches Wood and local residents.

- (ii) The implantation of the traffic light system would also put pressure on the potential viability of the site, with concomitant impacts on the quality of development, not least in the context of affordable housing provisions.
- (iii) The development would also exacerbate flooding problems to the road from drainage and runoff water, also impacting adversely upon the near capacity sewage system.
- (iv) The congestion will be a disincentive for visitors to Heathfield and therefore also adversely affect the retail shops and local economy.
- (v) Traffic flow movements are predicted using 2018 data, i.e. at least 4 years out of date and ignoring the very substantial increase in traffic volumes using the A265 and A267 as a result of the increase in residential housing in Horam, Hailsham and Uckfield and likely further increases consequent on further planned developments.
- (vi) Trip rate data is selective and uses no data from the South East, relying instead on data from places such as Durham, Norfolk, North Yorkshire and Dorset.
- (vii) The proposed road widening would mean the loss of the pedestrian refuge island, with concerns for pedestrian and road safety.

2. Vehicle and pedestrian accessibility- The loss of the pedestrian paths due to the widening of the road will impact safety for users. There is also no turning circle for refuge and emergency vehicles so the area becomes inaccessible.

3 In AONB

- (i) Noting that the site is within the High Weald AONB, the frontage and associated works will suburbanise the area, contrary to Objective S3 of the HWAONB Management Guide (“Guide”) as stated in the first refusal letter from the Wealden District Council. ‘The proposal fails to conserve or enhance the High Weald AONB or protect the wider character of the area contrary to saved Policies EN6 and EN7’.
- (ii) The development would impact and cause significant harm to the natural beauty, character and appearance. It would also have significant impact on the ancient woodland and landscape. The area is also outside the development boundary under section 17 should not be permitted.
- (iii) In addition, NPPF Paras 172 and 11 and 11d (i) as cited in the ‘Monkhill’ case in the `Court of Appeal are particularly relevant to this application located in the AONB. Para 172 emphasises that ‘great weight should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic beauty in the AONB’ and Para 11 ‘the presumption in favour of sustainable development requires permission to be granted unless Para 11d (i) there is a clear reason for refusing’. It is considered that in this case there is a clear such reason.

(iv) It is also noted that AONB land is protected by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act. (CROW act).

4 Visibility

The site is now visible from the road junction as a result of the removal of a number of mature trees which had screened the site from the road. It will demonstrate damage to the relationship between the Cross in Hand settlement and the green space which comprises the site, and negatively impact on the separation of the Cross in Hand settlement from Heathfield, both of which are contrary to Objective S2 of the Guide.

5 Access

(i) The present impression of the access is that it is an agricultural one. In upholding a planning refusal relating to an application in respect of another part of Cross in Hand, the Appeal Inspector said “The alterations and the creation of the parking / turning area and new access would result in a domestic appearance to the site, at odds with its existing naturalistic nature and setting. Although the development would be largely hidden from public view, this change would be appreciable with the new engineered access and the view of the site through it. Overall, therefore, the proposals would result in substantial and harmful changes to the character and appearance of the site as a whole. Consequently, the proposals would not conserve or enhance the overall character of the site or the landscape of the AONB. “

(i) As stated earlier this site is in fact visible from the road, increasing the negative impact on the setting.

6 Noise and light Pollution – The introduction of a domestic housing estate on the site will bring with it noise and light pollution. Recent research has identified that LED light pollution will cause a 50% reduction in insect life in the vicinity. The pollution will negatively impact on the fragile ecology of the ancient woodland and its wildlife.

7 Loss of open grassland

(i) The development will damage the pattern of “small and irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands” by destroying it in this area, contradicting Objective FH2 of the Guide.

(ii) The design of the housing should enhance the architectural quality of the AONB (Objective S3). The HWAONB design guide states that any development should not dominate that of the parent settlement in the vicinity but this proposal is for 34 units which would be overwhelming. The Guide states that a “catalogue selection box approach should be avoided” but the proposals demonstrate exactly that.

8. Damage to Habitat

- (i) Loss of a wild meadow adjacent an ancient woodland, with habitat and foraging for wildlife and the area has the potential for roosting bats, dormice, nesting birds and stag beetles.
- (ii) Light pollution to the ancient woodland.
- (ii) Impact on the ancient woodland and other trees from water runoff and drainage from the site and any wet pond overflow.
- (iv) WDC Core strategy local plan Para's 12 and 13 state ' Proposals must ensure habitats and biodiversity features and ecological networks are maintained, restored, enhanced and created to give a net gain. This does not seem to be fully evident from the proposals.

9 Unsustainable location

- (i) The Transport report accompanying the application records that the Manual for Streets suggests 800m as the maximum target walking distance for amenities for new developments. It then demonstrates that only one such facility is within that target and all the rest are well beyond that figure. It should also be noted that the footpath route to Heathfield town centre is undulating so presents more of a challenge to walkers. The propensity to walk will be significantly less than average for that reason and because the route runs alongside a traffic heavy road.

10 Surface Water and drainage concerns–

- (i) The loss of open grassland and replacement with hard surfaces, and the increase in overall area as a result of pitched roofs will produce an increase in present levels of surface water, which the accompanying flood risk. The statement proposes to be managed by creating a pond with filtration blanket, discharging to a watercourse which appears to belong to a third party. There is no explanation of how that watercourse is to be maintained in perpetuity or whether there is a right to use the watercourse in this way, given that it may result in flooding of the adjoining land. The proposed pond will hold a total of 469 m³, compared to the EA data indicating that 460.2 m³ would be necessary. This means the pond when new might have a 3% overcapacity when new, which is hardly a generous excess. And the report acknowledges that it will silt up over time.
- (ii) There is nothing proposed to pay for and service the pond. There is a real probability that especially in times of extreme weather the watercourse will flood and that will result in damage to the adjoining ancient woodland and landscape.
- (iii) At present the surface and drainage water for this area is unmanageable and has flooding recently 3 times in summer months. The impact on neighbouring properties and the area would be substantial.

11 Housing need

- (i) The Design and Access statement justifies the application by referring to "much needed housing" without providing evidence to support the

statement, which has become thought of as fact by means of repetitive statements by politicians. In actual fact, in this area, there are a total of 640 households on the District Council register at present and those few in the immediate vicinity will be housed by planned development on the part of WDC for Heathfield.

(ii) Additionally Office for National Statistics figures for property sales in the Wealden District show that since 2011 up to and including June 2020 sales have actually declined year on year, despite the many consents for new residential development that have been granted in that period. This indicates a lack of demand driving the managed rate of development of consented sites in the District.

12 Infrastructure – The area at present infrastructure cannot cope with the amount of residents, further housing will cause further impact and on these and in turn effect local residents.

13 Boundary encroachment – Under 2021 planning policy framework section 137 boundaries should be protected and prevent neighbouring towns merging into and insist on protecting the countryside from encroachments.

14 Sustainability of the development – The expense to implement the traffic and widening of the road conditions would be very expensive and it may cause concern for the sustainability of the development.

15 Impact upon neighbours – In all areas of the development from traffic, to flooding to noise and light pollution neighbours and neighbouring properties would be impacted greatly in a negative way, if this development was to be approved.

WD/2021/1549/F

LIONS LODGE, LITTLE LONDON ROAD, HEATHFIELD, TN21 0LU - Single storey side extension to a domestic detached dwelling

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members supported this application and considered the size and appearance to be in character with the locality, subject to neighbours being consulted and for boundary screening to be retained.*

WD/2021/1893/F

DANBURY, MUTTON HALL LANE, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8NX - Proposed rear single storey extension

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members supported this application and considered the size and appearance to be in character with the locality, subject to neighbours being consulted and to no further windows apart from the high level windows shown on the design submitted plans.*

WD/2021/1606/O

LAND EAST OF SANDY CROSS LANE (TO THE SOUTH OF PARKSIDE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL), HEATHFIELD - Outline application with all matters reserved bar access, for the erection of up to 8 no. self-build/custom build dwellings and ancillary works.

OBSERVATIONS: The committee members objected to this application on the following grounds:

- Surface water and drainage concerns – The proposed development would exacerbate existing flooding adjacent to this site on nearby roads, and existing drains cannot cope with current capacity.
- Access to site – The entrance is dangerous as it is on a sharp bend on a very narrow fast lane, and in proximity to the junction with Park Road and the part-implemented and approved access to Heathfield Park. The proposed development would exacerbate such hazards.
- Impact on Heathfield Park – The proposed development, by reason of introducing a suburban form into this location, will have a potential detrimental impact on the Park and all its settings, as well as the adjacent AONB.
- Appearance - If this site were to be developed it would result in a suburban style development in this rural area. It would also be out of character in this area, and the formation of the access would open up the current sylvan frontage, again detrimental to the visual amenities of the locality.
- Unsustainable location – with reference to the SHELAA findings from the Submission Wealden Local Plan, this area to be unsuitable for development in an unsustainable location for a number of reasons, all of which apply in this case.. The landscape assessment showed it was unsuitable and would cause a negative impact from such development.
- Location – The area is unsafe for pedestrians to walk, especially for young children or pram and wheelchair users, pointing again to the unsustainability of the location. It would also have an adverse impact on the local amenities which are already overrun.
- Housing requirement - There is an influx in development in the area and there is no housing required at this time, especially as the development would not be for affordable housing.
- - Traffic – It would have an impact on the already congested traffic to the area on a well-used lane, especially at busy times such as school drop offs and pickups.
- Development time and scale – There are also concerns over the length and time of the proposed development as there are no clear timescales given, not least in the context of self and custom-build housing.
- Impact. The proposed development would have an adverse impact on the amenities of adjacent residential properties as well as the nearby Parkside School, by reason of noise, activity, light and pollution.

WD/2021/1473/LDE

TWISSELL COTTAGE, BARRETT'S PARK, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8QS - The existing and continuous use of land around the house as a domestic garden and the existing and continuous use of an outbuilding as a summer house/garden room.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members objected to this application on the grounds there is a lack of evidence put forward to substantiate the case.*

Cllr Baker abstained

WD/2021/1941/F

SILVER BIRCHES, STREET END LANE, BROAD OAK, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8TS - Extension to approved agricultural track.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members supported this application subject to the condition the use is for the purpose stated.*

WD/2021/1879/LBR

CROSS FARM, ROCKS LANE, WALDRON, TN21 0RA - Part retrospective application for repair works to the farmhouse's east elevation

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members raised no objections subject to the work to be carried out satisfactorily in accordance with the heritage site.*

WD/2021/1842/F

SCOTSFORD GRANARY, STREET END LANE, BROAD OAK, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8UB - Proposed garage extension & side entrance onto the existing house with minor alterations to the existing house including new roof lights and solar panels

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members supported this application subject to the condition the existing garage is demolished.*

For Info – No Consultees

WD/2021/1849/LDP

40 SWAINES WAY, HEATHFIELD TN21 OAL - Loft refurbishment with the addition of 4 dormers

OBSERVATIONS: *This application was noted by members*

21/229 **To consider Planning Applications after the agenda was published**

WD/2021/2016/F

SEPTEMBER COTTAGE, FOXHUNT GREEN, WALDRON, TN21 0RY. Single storey side & rear extensions.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members supported this application and considered the size and appearance to be in character with the locality.*

WD/2021/2042/F

GRASSED BANK TO THE NORTH EAST OF THE TWITTEN, STATION APPROACH, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8LG - 8M CCTC column with CCTV camera to be installed and 8m duct from this pole to street light next to railing for nail salon in station approach

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members approved this application and agreed it is a much need facility.*

WD/2021/2051/F

LAND AT REAR OF SPAR SHOP, RAINBOW PARADE, BURWASH ROAD, BROAD OAK, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8SX - Construction of a new four bay garage with associated parking and turning

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members supported this application and considered the size and appearance to be in character with the locality subject to the use to be for the purpose stated and retention of the access and turning circle as shown in their plans. Members welcomed the reduction in scale from the previous scheme.*

21/230 **Planning application approved: Parish Council Comments are in *Italics***

WD/2021/1277/F - TANGLEWOOD BARN, BRITTENDEN LANE, WALDRON, HEATHFIELD, TN21 0RL - Side extension to kitchen (Single Storey). Extend existing deck. – **Approve/Support**

WD/2021/1468/F - 57 SWAINES WAY, HEATHFIELD, TN21 0AN - Proposed driveway and external works – **Approve/Support**

WD/2021/1633/F - EYRESTOCK, HANGING BIRCH LANE, WALDRON, TN21 0PA - NEW WINDOW TO THE REAR OF STABLE CONVERSION – **Approve/Support**

WD/2021/1295/F - THE BARN, ALEXANDRA MEWS, ALEXANDRA ROAD, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8EE - Proposed side extension to form new utility and front entrance. Removal of existing boundary wall and formation of bin storage. Proposed new summerhouse - **Approve/unable to comment see response**

WD/2021/1338/F - THE RUNT IN TUN, HAILSHAM ROAD, MAYNARDS GREEN, HEATHFIELD, TN21 0DJ. Proposed installation of double doors in north elevation.
Approve/Support

These planning decisions were noted

21/231 **Planning applications refused**

WD/2020/2637/F - DERNLEA FARM, DERN LANE, LIONS GREEN, TN21 0PL
Part retrospective application for a two-storey side extension with rear infill at ground level (amended scheme to WD/2014/0545/F) – **Refuse/Support**

WD/2021/1188/F - 4 SPRING COTTAGE, HALLEY ROAD, BROAD OAK, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8RG - Erection of a single storey rear extension and internal alterations – **Refuse/Support**

WD/2021/1189/LB 4 SPRING COTTAGE, HALLEY ROAD, BROAD OAK, HEATHFIELD, TN21 8RG - Erection of a single storey rear extension and internal alterations – **Refuse/Support**

These planning decisions were noted

21/232 **Planning applications withdrawn**

WD/2019/0623/O - CADENCE, BATTLE ROAD, PUNNETTS TOWN, HEATHFIELD, TN21 9DR - Residential development comprising 5 no. two-bedroom houses with vehicular access from B2096 Battle Road and associated landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks.

This planning decision was noted

21/233 **Tree Works**

TM/2021/0266/TPO - 9 The Oaks, Green Lane TN21 8YN -Reduce crown of one beech and one oak tree by 2m and thin by 20% within tree preservation order (Heathfield and Waldron) No 19/1 1984 – 9 The Oaks, Green Lane TN21 8YN

TM/2021/0268/TPO- 3 Oakleigh Drive, Heathfield TN21 8HQ – Cut branches of mixed tree species by 2m back to boundary within Tree Preservation Order Heathfield/Waldron No 32 1955

TM/2021/0229/TPO- 65 Springwood Road, Heathfield, TN21 8JX. Work as per scheduled within tree preservation order (HEATHFIELD/WALDRON) NO 13, 1991

TM/2021/0265/TPO- 6 Thorntree Close, Heathfield, TN21 0YE. Reduce one oak tree by 3M within tree preservation order (HEATHFIELD/WALDRON) NO 33, 2001

These tree works were noted

- 21/234 **Parking in Alexandra Road, Heathfield** – raised at SLR meeting on 1 July reply email of 10 August.
This was noted by committee members
- 21/235 **Planned work to Isenhurst Junction to take place on 27 and 28 September 2021.** *This was noted by committee members*
- 21/236 **Sustainability Settlement Strategy** – *The committee members agreed to allocate the various areas to councillors who will include any additional comments and email the final version to the Assistant Clerk. A completion date of the 10th September was also agreed.*
- 21/237 **Bollards** - *The committee members noted the information received and agreed to look further into the high kerb or planters option for the area. Once this relevant information has been received the members would discuss the information again and agree the actions to take.*
- 21/238 **Correspondence from resident regarding Elm Way.** *Cllr Baker informed members he had looked into this issue in great depth and a successful outcome had not been reached. Members agreed to see if any further correspondence from residents is received before pursuing this matter any further.*
- 21/239 **To update members on Parish Panel Planning meeting.**
The Chair gave a brief update of the Parish Planning Panel Meeting
- 21/240 **Crime & Disorder Act 1998 Section 17** – to consider effects (if any) arising from items on the Agenda.

These were considered
- 21/241 **Risk Management: -**

To consider effects (if any) arising from items on the Agenda
These were considered
- 21/242 **The next Planning and Highways Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st September 2021 at Heathfield Community Centre at 6.30 pm**
The Assistant Clerk informed members the venue of the meeting may alter to Broad Oak Village Hall. This was noted by members.