

Wisborough Green Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting to be agreed on 17th November 2015

Date: Tuesday 10th November 2015

Present: Mr A Burbridge (AB), Mr K Charman (KC) (Chairman), Mr P Drummond (PD),
Mr A Jackson (AJ), Mr M King (MK), Ms A Stone (AS), Mr H True (HT),

Apologies: Mrs S Overington (SO), Mr C Vit (CV)

In Attendance: Mrs L Davies, Clerk

Members of Public: 14

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.45 pm and welcomed all.

Action By

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs Overington and Mr Vit.

2. Declaration of Members' Interests:

Being a neighbour to the Winterfold site, AJ declared his interest and that he would be withdrawing to the public seating area.

No other interests were declared and no requests for dispensation had been received.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting: The Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 20th October 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AJ withdrew to the public seating area.

4. Public Questions: The Chairman explained that this was the public's opportunity to make comments relating to the one item on the agenda being the planning application for Land East of Winterfold. As this extra-ordinary meeting had been called for this purpose, he asked that on this occasion, no other unrelated matters be raised.

The following is a summary of the points raised by the residents, mainly from nearby properties in Durbans Road and Newpound Lane. The comments have not been noted in order or identified against individuals but combined to aid reference, with the Parish Council response in bold.

- The site was large and would provide a significant portion of the housing requirement for the village. Concern was expressed that the site had not featured in the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) consultation process and had been inserted later in the process. It was felt that a democratic process had not been followed and that others were making the site selection decisions.

The Chairman did not wish to divert discussion to the NP process, however, he explained that the site had previously been identified on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) produced by Chichester District Council (CDC). In 2010 and 2013 the paddock only was identified as 'no potential'. Possible sites were then identified or put forward to the Parish Council. In April 2012, the paddock and fields were included in the first consultation event to which 266 people attended. In the November, site assessments were undertaken on all sites that had been identified by the community, landowners and CDC. In April 2013 it was confirmed by the Winterfold owner that the site was unavailable for development and as such, was not included for further public opinion in the May 2013 consultation event. In the May 2014 SHLAA, CDC identified the paddock and all 3 fields as "part of the site has potential to be developed" and the NP Steering Group was then informed that the site was available. All 31 possible sites put forward for development were

re-assessed using sustainability criteria set by national planning policy. The challenge was to address village preference and the requirements of national planning policy, and as such, an independent planning advisor was engaged. It had been the intention in July 2014 to undertake a further consultation on the emerging sites, but on the back of CDC's decision to permit the Land South of Meadowbank application and notification of the Nursery Appeal, the Parish Council was advised to produce and consult on the draft NP as quickly as possible. In terms of the sites included in the Plan, the decision for Land South of Meadowbank and Greenways Nursery was made by others. In terms of the final shortlist, it was necessary to balance community views with the constraints of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with the help of independent expert opinion.

MK advised that the Draft Plan had been on two consultations and all information had been provided for examination to ensure that the process was robust and the document conformed to both local and national planning policy. The Examiner's report was imminent and the outcome would be considered by CDC and the Parish Council. It would result in one of three options:

1. Plan is not sound – start process again.
2. Amendment required before referendum.
3. No amendment and to referendum.

- It was a significant scheme which had been phased for the later stage of the NP. With the Land South of Meadowbank already permitted, it was questioned why a further 22 dwellings were required in 2017. **The Chairman explained that the village was required to take a minimum of 60 houses and if all the sites within the NP were developed, this would give 68, 10 being residential caravans. Phasing of development had been included in the Plan to allow new housing to be incorporated progressively, but the decision on this element was unknown at present. The village was expected to take some development and the consequences of not having a NP in place could be much worse for the village, particularly as there was the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF.**
- There was a clear preference in the NP process for the use of Brownfield sites; this was a Greenfield and against the community's wish. Although Newpound was not considered sustainable by the planners, people still lived there. **The Chairman concurred but explained that all the sites at Newpound were contrary to the NPPF and as such, could not be included in the NP. The only Brownfield site that could be included was Clark's Yard.**
- The NP put emphasis on the village qualities and rural environment. Large new developments needed careful consideration; it was important to protect what was valued.
- Other sites had been included in the NP (Land South of Meadowbank and Greenways Nursery) as a result of decisions being made by CDC. Again, this undermined the NP process.
- There was a clear preference stated in the NP that the community supported a number of smaller sites instead of large sites. This application was again contrary to the community wish.
- Concern was expressed at the impact upon traffic, particularly with the access onto Durbans Road. The road already experienced speeding traffic and development, with the additional traffic movements, would increase safety concerns, particularly relating to parking outside the Cricketers Arms, and the crossroads at the centre of the village. It was questioned what could be achieved to improve the road safety.
- The village was a rural village and dark skies were promoted by the Parish Council, in terms of policies within the Plan and recent articles in the Parish Council newsletter. It was unknown what lighting was being proposed, but concerns were expressed at the creation of light pollution, visible from the village centre. There was a general increase in ambient lighting around the village, such as lighting at the public houses and café signage which was drawn to the Parish Council's attention. The density of the development would have an impact upon the dark skies even with mitigating factors.
- Concern was expressed at the impact upon neighbours. It appeared within planning that properties had no right to a view. This particular scheme removed a rural view for a number of properties which was more in line with urban living. One property would have a communal parking area behind which would have the additional impact of movement, noise and lighting.
- The tree line indicated between the current paddock and the development was sparse and as such, development would be a significant change, potentially visible from the village centre.

- It stated within the Design and Access Statement that a medical practice was located in the village. This claim was obviously incorrect which some felt questioned the integrity of the planning application.
- Questions were raised over the site assessment and the criteria used. Some issues over the site had been identified within the assessment, but it had still been included in the NP. It was felt that there were other opportunities available in the village.
- The site assessment process was questioned. It was not felt that adequate explanation had been given to the ranking system used and why this site, as a Greenfield and with a number of other issues, was ranked higher than other sites. There was concern that the ranking system was being ignored. It was felt that the NP showed no resemblance to public opinion. The only site remaining from the May 2013 consultation was Clark's Yard. Whilst respectful of the work done, with this application it did raise questions about the process. **The Chairman explained the process of site selection had evolved over time. Land availability and criteria changed which was why expert advice was sought and as sites were assessed, the possible list changed. He agreed that access issues had previously been raised by CDC and that the fields did not initially score highly with the community at the April 2012 consultation, but to comply with planning policy, decisions had to be made. There were traffic and parking issues throughout the village and all sites were not without traffic or other issues. The Chairman highlighted that all site assessment information was available on the village website. The Chairman also highlighted that the Parish Council had looked for more community help in developing the NP but sadly this was not forthcoming. He advised against confusing the NP process with this specific application.**
- The inclusion of the two sites already permitted had resulted in 35 dwellings towards the minimum of 60. With the addition of Clark's Yard, it was questioned as to whether the proposed 22 could be reduced.
- Reference was made to NP Policies OA5 Local Gaps, EN2 Landscape Character and Open Views, and EN4 Conserving and Enhancing the Heritage Environment. It was felt that this application was a contradiction to these and other policies within the NP.
- There was a recent application at Stable Field, Kirdford Road, which was refused, one reason being sustainability and pedestrian access to the village. It was felt that the current pedestrian access to the village centre from this site was inadequate. How could this be mitigated and why was this situation different to the Stable Field application.
- The pedestrian access into Newpound Lane was considered dangerous. The sight lines were poor and there was already a dangerous situation with traffic and parked cars.
- The legacy of the decisions was questioned in terms of long term implications for future development in the vicinity; would a successful application open up surrounding fields for development. **MK concurred that this was an important factor and the Parish Council also wished to protect land for the future. It was therefore important to receive the Examiner's report before making any comments.**
- A Garmans resident believed that there had been previous discussion relating to the use of the land, but could find no record. **KC advised that CDC would need to have regard for any previous agreement.**
- It was noted that the agents had held discussions with the Parish Council and CDC. It was unclear from the meeting minutes how these discussions had affected the application. **The Chairman explained that an initial meeting was held with Parish Council representatives whereby a scheme for 30 houses over a much larger area of the field was presented. Strong comments were fed back to the agents, who then produced a reduced scheme at a Pre-application meeting with CDC. At this meeting it was confirmed that CDC would be looking to see an application in line with the NP.**
- The need for housing was generally agreed and thanks were extended to the NP Steering Group for undertaking the process; the workload was acknowledged. This application was premature to the NP process and if the community's view was respected, the application should be withdrawn until the NP process had been finalised with the referendum. This would be the correct democratic process to ratify details in the NP.
- It was commented that there should be a moratorium on applications when a NP had progressed past a certain stage, as applications such as this potentially undermined the whole process. **It was suggested that members of the community could raise this issue directly with the local MP,**

Nick Herbert. Premature applications by developers were not prohibited, but complicated the NP process, which had also been frustrating for the NP Steering Group.

- Dr Jill Sutcliffe explained that she had been a Parish Councillor for 2 years and involved in the NP process. The Parish Council and NP Steering Group had been very disappointed that the Land South of Meadowbank application had been approved by CDC. CDC had been fully aware that the community wanted small scale development, however, at that time, despite having made considerable progress towards the NP, it had not been published. As a result, CDC permitted the development. The strongest position for the village was to have a NP place to avoid any further unwanted development. Having reached examination, CDC now considered that the NP had weight. Dr Sutcliffe went on to explain that the NP constraints came from central Government. Whilst the NP tried to take on board community opinion and wishes, the NP had to also comply with National and CDC planning policy. Practical decisions had to be made to achieve the best outcome for the village and to meet developer pressures. The Steering Group had worked incredibly hard for the village and the timing of this application was extremely unfortunate. However, the application could still be opposed if it was not considered to be in line with the NP.
- One resident was aware that an application for a single dwelling had been refused due to design, scale and massing and impact on the rural area. This was one house at the side of the road filling in a gap which raised a number of questions relating to the planning process.
- It was asked if a copy of these meeting minutes could be submitted to CDC; **agreed.**
- It was asked how the Parish Council could comment on the application when already ratified in the NP. **The Chairman advised that this was why the Parish Council could not make any response to CDC until the NP Examiner's report had been received.**

Comments by Mr Julian Slade, Landowner: Mr Slade explained that Rydon Homes had made an approach for the land for 30 houses, but his proposed scheme followed the NP which included green open space. It was a site close to the village but offered screening from the village centre. A considerable amount of thought had been given to the scheme and public opinion incorporated into the design, which included pedestrian access to the school. He had also sought the opinion of the resident in Newpound Lane whose property backed onto the proposed garage area. He wanted to produce a scheme that would be good for the village and one that the village could be proud of. When asked about the phasing wish of the village, Mr Slade advised that he was being led by planning consultants. He felt that the perception was a lot worse than reality and once built, it would settle well in the village. In terms of pedestrian access to the village, Mr Slade highlighted that the scheme included an additional pavement on the eastern side of Durbans Road which ran along the grass verge along his property boundary. He also apologised for the current condition of his own property which would be replaced next year. Mr Slade disagreed with the public comments made and advised that he had followed the NP as closely as possible.

The Chairman thanked the members of public for their comments.

5. Planning: The Chairman reiterated that a decision would not be made by the Parish Council until the NP Examiner's report was published. A meeting would be called for later in the month when the details were available; an extension to the response deadline had been obtained. However, he invited some initial feedback from members.

WR/15/03366/OUT - Case Officer: - Katherine Rawlins - Lge Scale Maj Dev - Dwellings	Mr C/O Agent Land East Of Winterfold Durbans Road Development of 22 units, associated infrastructure and open space. O.S. Grid Ref. 505116/126219
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AB agreed with the public comments that the prematurity of the application in advance of the NP referendum potentially undermined the democratic process. He therefore felt that it was difficult to discuss an application which had been included in a document not yet ratified by the community, particularly as it was a Greenfield site. AB could also not see any reference to land being gifted to the village which concerned him in terms of future development.

PD was mindful that a decision on Land South of Meadowbank had been taken out of the Parish Council's hands. HT agreed that the implication of not having a Plan in place was very worrying. In terms of the phasing, the Examiner's opinion on this proposal was required in advance of any decision on this application.

The site was currently in the Plan. MK would be interested to take advice from CDC on how closely the application needed to be to the Plan before there was an opportunity to object.

Members expressed their frustration that, yet again, the NP process was being undermined by a planning application and supported the public comments in this regard.

The Chairman confirmed that having the Examiner's report would give guidance in terms of the site specific details as well as other general policies in the NP which could impact upon the application. It was agreed that no further discussion on the application would take place and that a meeting would be called later in the month when the Examiner's report had been published by CDC.

6. Any Other Matters to Report (AJ re-joined the meeting)

- a. PD advised that he wished to give a Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions (CAGNE) presentation on arrivals and departures at the next meeting.
- b. The Clerk informed members that the line painting by the Pavilion had been undertaken that day, although unfortunately in yellow. The company had accepted it was their error and would return to correct if felt unsuitable. Members to review in terms of colour and whether cross hatching was required.

ALL

7. Date of Next Meeting:

Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 17th November 2015 at 7.45 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.00 pm.

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Chairman

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Date