

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Traffic Committee held on 2 March 2010 at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 8.00pm.

Present: Mr C Snowling (Chairman)
Mr A Gomme (Vice Chairman)
Mr W Blunden
Mr M Leach
Mrs M Nicolle
Mrs V Upton
Mr S Willcox

Also Present: 9 members of the public

In Attendance: Mr P Hemsley

397. WELCOME AND EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

397.1 The Chairman welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

398. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

398.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Hersey and the reason accepted.

399. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

399.1 Cllr Nicolle declared a personal interest in Item 5(i), 10/00235/FUL, Newton Road Field Land Parcel - re-profiling of land at Beggars Grove Field, as she was a neighbour.

400. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2010

400.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 8 February 2010. It was AGREED to APPROVE the Minutes and the Chairman SIGNED the Minutes as a true record of that meeting.

401. PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS REFERRED TO THE PARISH COUNCIL BY MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION

401.1 For each application, the observations of the members who had specifically studied the plans, and whose names are shown in the heading, were read out before any public comments and discussion by the Committee.

401.2 10/00235/FUL - NEWTON ROAD FIELD LAND PARCEL, NEWTON ROAD RE-PROFILING OF LAND AT BEGGARS GROVE FIELD (Cllrs Blunden and Upton).

Councillors Blunden and Upton had declined to offer comments on this application ahead of the meeting as they felt it was one which should be discussed by the Committee as a body.

Mr John Jesson, Lindfield Preservation Society (LPS), said that the volume of clay was shown as 16500 cubic metres which he estimated equated to 1100 lorry loads, or 2200 vehicle movements; hence, the application understated the number. He supported the idea of disposing of spoil within the site as that would minimise movements through the streets. However, he voiced a number of concerns:

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- § Timing: he understood that the development was to be constructed in, possibly, three phases; hence the re-profiling would not happen in one operation.
 - § Water run-off: he felt this was an issue as water may run to the south-east or to the footpaths to Hangman's Acre.
 - § Omissions: the application failed to address the impact on views; or the matter of top soil or the spoil on which the trees might be grown.
- He recommended the application be deferred pending clarification.

Mr John Root, of Oaklea House, The Wilderness, said that Beggars Grove was hitherto unspoilt countryside. The run off could possibly go to the stream in the (Eastern Road) Reserve. It was hard to argue against spoil remaining on site. However, if the PC were to support the application, he asked that control be exercised over the working hours as for the building site. In sum, he had some concern over the 3 phases and the impact on the environment.

Members then gave their views:

Cllr Blunden said that he and Cllr Upton had studied the plans and would welcome anything that minimised disruption to the neighbouring properties as it would be a great benefit. Barratts would not be encroaching on other land as they owned the site. There would also be benefits with the screening for those walking in the open countryside. Although the application did not take into account the run off, he was aware that the stream which feeds into the Scrase would be more than adequate for overflow. Cllr Upton agreed.

Cllr Gomme said that he felt the Environment Agency would have a view on this matter. The drainage needed to be properly managed otherwise the water could go anywhere.

Cllr Willcox concurred with the views of his colleagues. There would be an advantage in reducing the traffic flow but he felt the PC needed assurance about the timescale. We did not need, long-term, an adverse effect from water run-off.

Cllr Nicolle accepted the benefits of dealing with the spoil on site, but she echoed the concerns of Mr Jesson with respect to timing. She was worried about an ugly mound being created and the impact on the visual aspect. She too had concerns about the use of top soil for the tree planting. More information was needed about the water run-off.

Cllr Leach supported his colleagues' views.

The Chairman said that the development had been foisted on the village by the Planning Inspector and it would make sense to use Dukes Road as little as possible. He did not dissent from putting the spoil on Beggars Grove field. He noted that it was intended that the application be determined at the meeting of the Central Area Planning Committee on 4 March. He summarised by asking the Deputy Clerk to draft a response to the effect that the PC accepted the need for the resiting of the spoil, but had a number of reservations:

- § Timing: there were genuine concerns about the phased building pattern; not all 120 houses would be built straightaway. There was also the matter of operating hours.
- § Top soil: the use of top soil from the site needed careful management and monitoring.
- § Water run-off: he felt that the PC could only speculate on its impact.
- § Finally, there was the matter of the impact of the new site, including work in Beggars Grove field, on residents.

AGREED RESPONSE: "The Parish Council accepts the arguments for relocating the spoil to the Beggars Grove field as it would bring a number of benefits, including: fewer heavy vehicle movements to and from the site along Newton Road and Dukes Road; and improved screening of the new development from leisure activities on the land to the north-east. However, the Council does have a number of reservations:

- a. We are aware that the development is to be built in phases and that consequently not all 120 houses will be completed immediately; indeed, given the current economic situation, the build period could extend some years. This staged build is likely therefore to impact on the period of execution of the re-profiling of Beggars Grove field and the planting of trees thereon. Additionally, the Council would want assurances that the hours of operation under Condition 13 relating to the construction of the houses will apply equally to the re-profiling/tree planting.

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- b. Retaining the spoil on site would have benefits for Barratts, not least in the reduction of the costs of removal off-site. Given that the sub soil is largely clay, it behoves the developer to ensure that any existing top soil on the site of the development is retained so that it is used, not only for the landscaping of the new dwellings and environs, but also for the planting of the trees in Beggars Grove field. We seek assurances that this work will be carefully managed and closely monitored by the Tree and Landscape Officer.
- c. Again, given the clay on site, there are genuine concerns about water run-off, especially in view of the height of the re-profiling which the plans show would be as much as 4 metres higher than the existing field.
- d. We would look for the impact of the re-profiling activity to be minimised for surrounding residents, not least those in Dukes Road, but also including those who will occupy the new dwellings.

Finally, it is pleasing to note that we are now copy addressees of correspondence between MSDC and Barratts relating to this development. These are inevitably matters of interest to the Parish Council and Lindfield residents and we trust that such open communication will continue."

401.3 10/00159/ADV – 35-37 HIGH STREET ILLUMINATED EXTERNAL FASCIA SIGN AND PROJECTION SIGN (Cllrs Blunden and Upton).

Mr Jesson said that the LPS did not like acrylic lettering and it was traditional in the village to favour hand painting. He had a slightly more moderate view of the illumination proposals but said that the fascia should be lit only when the shop was open. On the other hand, the projection sign was totally out of character and most are hung from wrought-iron brackets. If indeed it would be projecting, it might be much more in keeping.

Mr Kerslake said that B20 was the relevant planning Policy, which showed what should happen with shop signs in the Conservation Area (CA). He would discourage illumination but, if introduced, it should be discreet. He reiterated the point from the LPS that there should be sign-writing rather than acrylic, in keeping with the character of the CA. He said that the application breached all three criteria. Currently, the only illuminated sign in the High Street was at Artefact which was at a very low light level; this application was for strip lighting which literally breached B20. He said that he had a strong objection on the grounds of the Policy.

Members then gave their views:

The Chairman said that this store was the most prominent aspect in Lindfield as one entered the village from Lewes Road. Whilst he could sympathise with the new owners, he felt that they perhaps underestimated their duty to the village.

Cllr Gomme said that the Co-operative chain was presumably trying to do the same everywhere, but they needed to reconsider to meet the needs of the village.

Cllr Nicolle said that the store should be amenable to the village.

The Chairman then summarised by saying that, although it is a chain, there are different options. All Members agreed the response offered.

AGREED RESPONSE: "We object to the fascia sign being illuminated but would support the change of sign to the Co-operative Store. We object to an internally illuminated box sign as it would not be appropriate in a Conservation Area and contrary to MSDC Policies B12, B19 and B20. There are alternative options which would be more in keeping with the needs of the village and complement the signage of other commercial properties."

401.4 10/00219/FUL – 35-37 HIGH STREET NEW EXTERNAL PLANT INSIDE EXTERNAL SECURE ENCLOSURE WITH A PROTECTIVE BARRIER AROUND TWO NEW A/C UNITS MOUNTED ON THE REAR WALL. NEW SHOP-FRONT AND STALL RISER WHERE NECESSARY, WITH RELOCATED AUTOMATIC ENTRANCE DOOR. NEW AND EXISTING SHOP- FRONT TO BE RE-DECORATED FROM BROWN TO WHITE (Cllrs Gomme and Willcox).

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Mrs Christine Watson, resident of Lynn Hatch, 31 High Street, was concerned about noise levels with the new equipment at the rear of the store. She felt the proposals could lead to further encroachment upon the car park where she had a private garage with a right of access. However, she said she would have no objections provided the sound levels did not increase.

Mr Jesson offered some clarification with respect to the noise level to be expected: he believed that it would be halved. The LPS had no difficulty with noise levels but were concerned about the clutter of equipment. With respect to the proposals at the front of the store, he said he could not fathom out the plans; indeed the Planning Officer could not interpret them. The application was completely inadequate. The Policy in the CA was clear, whereas this application was not.

Mr Kerslake said that he would comment on the front only: it was a very visible shop front and the work needed to be done correctly. Currently, the plans were ambiguous and he recommended the application be deferred pending clarification.

Members then gave their views:

Cllr Leach said that an inverter should be included in the control panel. The Chairman said that the Committee was unable to come to a conclusion as it was not possible to identify what precisely the proposals were at the front of the store and therefore the PC could not support the application.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection to changes at the rear of the property. However, we note that the refrigeration plant data sheet shows that an inverter is not included in the control panel and would question whether this should not feature to ensure quieter start up in the silent hours, as recommended in the acoustic assessment of noise report. Additionally, the PC is concerned about the general state of untidiness at the rear of the store resulting from the trader's apparatus, a perennial issue.

With respect to proposals for the front of the property, we are unable to come to a conclusion as it is not possible, on the basis of drawings supplied, to identify precisely the resultant window layout and key dimensions of the new front door. Attempts to gain clarification ahead of our meeting did not meet with success despite the enquiries made of the applicant by the MSDC Planning Officer. We are conscious that the entire store is conspicuous lying as it does at the heart of the village and within the Conservation Area, for which planning regulations are clear. Thus, we cannot support this application and we believe it should be resubmitted with more detailed proposals for the front aspect."

401.5 10/00205/FUL – OAKWOOD, ROUNDWOOD LANE
INCREASE HEIGHT OF EXISTING FENCE BY 30 CM (Cllrs Blunden and Upton).

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

401.6 10/00224/TCA – SOUTH MALLING LODGE, LEWES ROAD
REDUCE THE CROWN OF ONE SYCAMORE BY ONE THIRD (Cllrs Blunden and Upton).

Mr Jesson said that this tree was a highly visible public amenity. From the car park in the White Horse it could be seen to its full effect. The reduction proposed was significant and he would be minded to recommend a TPO be placed upon it.

Mr and Mrs Steven Bollschweiler of South Malling Cottage spoke on behalf of the residents at a number of properties neighbouring South Malling Lodge. They said that all wanted to see the tree reduced; all were quite badly affected as the tree took the light from their dwellings. Whilst there were two or three places that the tree was visible from the public road, after the reduction, most people who were not immediate residents would not notice the change. They noted that there were a number of other trees in the vicinity, for example, a Birch in the garden of the Evangelical Church at the junction of Chaloners Road and Lewes Road, which had been drastically reduced and for which there had been no objections. They did not believe a TPO was appropriate. In the past 5 years, growth had been very uneven and pruning would enhance it. At present, the tree was quite foreboding and in summer the canopy very dense.

Members then gave their views:

Cllr Blunden said that he was mindful that sycamores can get to a great height, citing one that had been in the Chairman's garden and which had suffered in high winds and was eventually felled as it had become unsafe and was no longer an amenity. He would rather see this specimen pruned.

Cllr Upton said that she would not change her opinion (no objection).

Cllrs Willcox and Leach agreed with their colleagues, whilst Cllr Nicolle offered no comment.

The Chairman said that the tree adversely affected a number of residents and the case for its reduction was strong. On balance, he supported the original conclusions; Members agreed.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

401.7 10/00276/TCA – 13 FRANCIS ROAD
FELL CONIFER (Cllrs Snowling and Gomme).

Mr Jesson said that this was virtually the only tree in the cottages which fronted the road. Therefore, it was an interesting feature of the street scene in the CA. He had a difficulty as he felt that there would not be a case for a TPO on an inconspicuous conifer. He said that the tree did not cause a nuisance but would one day need pruning, although not yet. He offered the Committee a photograph to study.

Members then gave their views:

Cllr Gomme said that it was taking light from the neighbour's front room. There was another very fine specimen in the garden whilst this one was almost on the boundary.

The Chairman said that, with the sun from the south-east, it was dark on the north side. In sum, there was no objection to felling; Members agreed.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

401.8 10/00080/FUL – 46B APPLIEDORE GARDENS
CONVERSION OF STORE CUPBOARDS TO STUDY/BEDROOM 3 (Cllrs Blunden and Upton).

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

401.9 09/03569/FUL & 09/03571/CON – SPRINGFIELD, SPRING LANE
PROPOSED REPLACEMENT DWELLING. AMENDED PLANS RECEIVED 5/2/10 SHOWING
REVISED SITING (Cllrs Snowling and Gomme).

Following the full examination of the plans at a previous Committee meeting, there were no further observations from Members.

AGREED RESPONSE: "This application is very similar to 09/03569/FUL except that the siting has been moved slightly to accommodate comments made by the MSDC Tree and Landscape Officer and there are also some internal re-arrangements. For that previous application, our P&T Committee Minute 369.2 seems still appropriate and was: "This planning application is within the Conservation Area so careful consideration has been given to the relevant policies, ie, B1, B3 and B13. A tree expert has been consulted in order to maintain a necessary area for healthy root growth. Because of the slope of the land, the difference in the height of the proposed building will not affect the setting. We consider that the existing building is not worth preserving and therefore have no objection to the proposal." The P&T Committee at that time did not consider the relevance to that application of Policy H12 (Proposals to replace existing single dwellings outside defined built-up areas). We have no doubt that MSDC will consider the relevance of that policy to this new application. Subject thereto, we have no objection to the redevelopment of this site."

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- 401.10 10/00306/FUL – 22 FIELDWAY
REPLACING EXISTING FRONT ENTRANCE PORCH (Cllrs Snowling and Gomme).

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

- 401.11 10/00386/TREE – 25 SUMMERHILL GRANGE
ONE BAY LAUREL – REDUCE BY 40%. ONE PORTUGAL LAUREL – REDUCE BY 20%. ONE HOLLY
– REDUCE BY 30% (Cllrs Gomme and Willcox).

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

402. REPORTS ON ANY SIGNIFICANT PLANNING DECISIONS MADE BY MSDC AND THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE

- 402.1 The list had been circulated. NOTED:

- § That application 09/03808/FUL (re-submission of 09/1400/FUL), proposals for a two-bedroom bungalow at 36 High Street, to which the PC had objected, had been refused by MSDC on 16 February.
- § That application 09/03209/FUL, for gates at Betwixt Cottage, 2 Eastern Cottages, Lewes Road, to which the PC had objected, had been approved by MSDC on 23 February with the Condition that the gates open inwards.
- § That the Deputy Clerk had again asked MSDC to clarify the position with respect to the plate glass window on the right-hand flank of 53a High Street (Mansell McTaggart). The DC had advised that the Investigating Officer had written to the Estate Agents requesting a formal application be submitted. The applicant had responded that they would first await the outcome of the Appeal against refusal of an earlier application; however, the DC did not agree that the Appeal had any bearing on the matter and had advised the applicant that formal enforcement proceedings would be considered if an application had not been received within one month.
- § That the Deputy Clerk had received a response from MSDC following the PC's concern that amended plans for Froyls, 125 High Street (09/03573/LBC) had not been passed to the PC before the Committee meeting held on 19 January. The DC had reported that the WSCC Architectural Adviser had raised concerns about the Crittall window in the north wall and consequently the application was amended to remove that element in toto. The DC assured the PC that in future, when substantial amendments were made to planning applications, the comments of the P&T Committee would be sought.
- § That Tree Preservation Order No. 2/2010, relating to two Oaks in Newton Road, had been received with a closing date for consultation of 12 March.
- § That planning application WSCC/013/10/HH, relating to a new Creative Learning Centre at Oathall Community College, had been received but with a deadline for comments of 26 February. Consequently, the plans had been examined by a number of the P&T Members ex committee and a response in support made to the CC; conditional planning permission had been granted on 1 March.
- § That the Temporary Stop Notice placed on the Newton Road development ended on 2 March and that Barratts was expected to return to the site immediately. A formal response from WSCC Highways had been received by the DC indicating support for the Brushes Lane/Dukes Road access route to the site. Licences were expected to be issue to the developer shortly so that they could make repairs to verges et al.

403. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 403.1 There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 9.08pm.