

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning and Traffic Committee** held on **14 June 2012** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 8.00pm.

Present: Mr A Gomme (Chairman)
Mrs M Hersey (Vice Chairman)
Mr M Amor
Mr W Blunden
Mrs J Chatfield
Mr S Hodgson
Mr C Snowling
Mrs V Upton

Also Present: MSDC Cllr Mr C Hersey and 10 members of the public.

In Attendance: Mr P Hemsley

Absent: None

175. WELCOME AND EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

176. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

176.1 There was none.

177. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

177.1 Cllr Hersey stated that she reserved the right to express a different opinion from that given at this meeting, when present at meetings of the Mid Sussex District Council's (MSDC's) Central Area Planning Committee (CAPC) or at any other meeting which subsequently considered any matter discussed at the present meeting, having seen the Officers' reports and heard representations from members of the public and fellow members.

178. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 MAY 2012

178.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 22 May 2012. There was a minor amendment relating to attendance: Cllr Chatfield had given her apologies but was shown as absent. With that amendment, it was **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as a true record of that meeting.

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

179.1 For each application, the observations of the members who had specifically studied the plans were read out before any public comments and discussion by the Committee.

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179.2 12/01543/FUL – FORMER BLACKTHORNS NURSING HOME, BLACKTHORNS CLOSE ERECTION OF 13 DETACHED AND SEMI-DETACHED TWO STOREY HOUSES WITH ACCESS ROAD AND PARKING.

Mr David Walters, resident of 20 Blackthorns which property abutted the rear of the development, said that he supported the Cllrs' comments. He felt the density of housing would be too great and one dwelling would lie within two metres of his boundary fence. However, he commended the design.

The applicant, Shanly Homes (Leatherhead) Limited, was represented by the Regional Planning Manager, Mr James Amos, who was present with a colleague. Mr Amos said this was a scheme of 13 houses in place of a nursing home which could proceed and would be larger in scale and mass than his company's proposals. The development had been carefully designed to take account of the slope; it was difficult to create a layout that would sit comfortably on this site. The developer had had 3 meetings in the school with residents and 30 had attended, the majority of whom were in favour of the present proposals versus the nursing home. He said there would be agreement with the residents re landscaping. Drainage was a technical issue. As for traffic, it was an issue for residents as it would be similarly for a nursing home; the site manager would ensure deliveries would take place outside peak school hours. He said that the County Council (CC) were comfortable with the proposals although they had asked the developer to make changes which they were in the process of undertaking. The site included 6 houses on one side: Mr Amos said that they could provide more variety of finish through the use of other materials and could look to making such changes. Regarding the trees, he said all behind were in the Conservation Area and he believed they were already protected under TPOs.

The Committee then discussed the application. Cllr Hersey said that she would add her concerns regarding drainage; Blackthorns had a history of flooding and, when the applications for the nursing home had been presented, concerns about drainage had been aired. It was a serious issue. Cllrs Gomme, Blunden and Upton agreed with the views of the other Members. Cllr Chatfield said she felt it was overdevelopment. Cllr Amor said that there was a need for more housing and the site was of no current use. If he could be assured about the drainage issue, he would have no objections. Cllr Hodgson said he had nothing further to add to the comments of colleagues. Cllr Snowling said that he was intrigued by the CC view regarding traffic. It was an odd site in a cul-de-sac. Originally the CC had given permission for the school and later for bungalows below the school. Having himself lived in Blackthorns, he believed that it was impractical to walk to the heart of the village and he was concerned about the implications for traffic not only for the school but also for the whole of Blackthorns. In his opinion, it was not 'only minimal' a matter of judgment whether a nursing home would have more or less impact. The Committee should not weigh up the arguments against the option of a nursing home; the application was for houses and should be examined on its own merits.

The Chairman summarised two matters of concern: re traffic flows, he said previous experiences with the CC Highways had been that they 'rubber-stamped' proposals and the Committee retained reservations; on drainage, they again had reservations and expected the District Council would ensure the plan was properly thought through. In sum, Members were unanimous in their support for the proposed response with the addition of the issue of drainage.

AGREED RESPONSE: "Following a review of the plans in the office and a site visit, we consider the proposals for this location are too large and therefore represent overdevelopment. Our main concern is the continuous row of housing on one side with identical design and with no change in layout, giving therefore the effect of a long terrace in the street scene. A further concern is the closeness of the housing to the important tree line on the eastern side of the site which could be affected and will no doubt be subject to work and even removed. We feel consideration should be given to placing TPOs on trees not already so protected. Moreover, the site access is not good as it joins the highway system directly opposite a primary school and therefore there could be conflict between cars and service vehicles visiting the development whilst young children, staff and parents are present during the school day, between 0800 and 1700 hours. Finally, aware of the history of flooding in this area, we have reservations about drainage across the significant slope of the site."

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179.3 12/01448/FUL – 24 SUMMERHILL GRANGE TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION AND NEW GARAGES WITH LINK.

Mrs Jacqueline Fitzgerald, of 23 Summerhill Grange, said that she had written a letter of objection to the PC and would summarise her comments verbally. She had three prime issues:

- First, the proposals for the garage were for erection in the woodland area and she contended there should be no building in virgin woodland which was a natural wildlife habitat including for bats.
- Second, the garage would be positioned too close to a tree protected under a TPO. In this regard, she was surprised that the application did not include a report under BS 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations).
- Finally, the site was too large with the garage two metres wider than the current facility. It was double-skinned and hence in due course could become a small house.

She added that there was a restrictive covenant relating to the woodland area which she had made the PC aware of.

The applicant, Dr Ian Johnson, gave reasons for the proposals: they related to elderly relatives who needed wheelchair-friendly accommodation. The application was for the existing double garage to be converted to a living room with a master bedroom over. The property as a whole would remain as a 5-bedroom dwelling. Hence there would be the need to replace the garage and it was logical for that to be like-for-like, similar to works at No 26 where there was a separate garage with a linked section. This garage would be slightly lower than the house. There would not be a need for any trees to be reduced in size. Although the architect had commented on the fir tree, when it was measured out it was found to be satisfactory. All the trees that had protection under TPOs were at the boundary and well away from this development. It was news to him that the garage was to be double-skinned; he said he would not incur such expense and there was no expectation of building above. A shed had been included as part of this feature. Regarding the wildlife habitat, he felt the proposals would not affect it. He would not be removing any hedges and he was unaware of any bats. With respect to the legal covenant, he had done checks and the builders had cleared his proposals.

Cllrs discussed the application. Cllr Blunden said that if the Cllrs who had visited the site had had concerns they would have mentioned them. Therefore, he believed it was not an inappropriate development and he supported the response as drafted. Cllr Amor said that it would appear to have little impact on wildlife. Cllr Snowling said that it would be appropriate to mention in the PC's response the matter of bats; Members had not taken them into account but the DC should be made aware.

AGREED RESPONSE: "We have spoken to the neighbour at No. 23 and the applicant about the new garage and its proximity to their common boundary. Having been assured that it will lie between 4 and 2 metres away at its nearest points and that the current hedging and screening will be retained, we have no objection to this application. Additionally, we wish to make the DC aware of the concerns of the neighbour that the habitat for bats could be disturbed."

179.4 12/01772/FUL & 12/01773/LBC – STABLE LODGE, LEWES ROAD EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING DETACHED DWELLING (ALREADY APPROVED UNDER REFERENCES 10/03036/FUL AND 10/03078/LBC, BUT AMENDED TO OMIT APPROVED PARKING AND VEHICULAR ACCESS).

Mr John Jesson, Lindfield Preservation Society (LPS), said that the LPS endorsed the PC's comments. He said that they would face considerable difficulty overturning the previous approvals because there was little or no change in the design. The Listed Building Consent had been decided in favour under delegated powers (in 2010) and hence, when the FUL was examined by the CAPC, Members had been advised that they had to approve it. He believed the matter of the lack of an access road was an improvement. However, the lack of access was also an issue at the southern end, at the horse gate, where there had been a previous application to widen the approach to allow vehicular access and there might be significant pressure in the future for that access to be revisited. There was no access at that point and nor should there be. Moreover, the impact of these proposals on Pelham House remained.

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The applicant, Mrs Cathy Dimsdale, said that this was exactly the same application but without parking or (vehicular) access. The Chairman pointed out that in fact there were minor changes to the plans, including the addition of cycle storage at the side.

Members discussed the proposals. Cllr Snowling said that they were indebted to Cllrs Gomme and Amor for their draft response; he also welcomed Mr Jesson's comments and was sympathetic to the LPS view regarding access through the horse gate. There was no (vehicular) access by that route as it was part of the Common and the metal road had never gone that far. Proposals for such would raise further questions. Cllr Hodgson had nothing to add to his colleagues' comments. Cllr Amor had visited the site; he had not seen it before. He was not convinced that some of the objections bore scrutiny. He agreed there would be a lot of disruption and there would be the need to get a great many materials over the (listed) wall but, thereafter, he did not feel it would be a detriment to users of the Common. The dwelling would be a long way from the wall and the playground and, unless there were damage to the wall, he would have no objection. Cllrs Upton and Chatfield supported the original draft response as did Cllrs Blunden and Hersey.

The Chairman summed up by saying that the original draft response was agreed with the addition of reference to the horse gate access.

AGREED RESPONSE: "Our comments made on the previous applications, 10/03036/FUL & 10/03078/LBC, relating to the extensions and alterations to the existing building, but removing comments we made relating to parking and vehicular access, remain, ie:

- i. The impact of the proposed development would undoubtedly be adverse to the amenities of the neighbouring properties and to the enjoyment of users of the Common.
- ii. The proposed development would be contrary to Policies B1, B12 and B13 in that it would neither enhance nor preserve the character of the Conservation Area.
- iii. The proposed development would be contrary to Policy B10 in that it would have an adverse effect on the Listed Building, Pelham House, in which curtilage it falls.
- iv. Regarding the LBC application, it is unclear whether the reason is that the building falls within the curtilage of a LB – Pelham House – or whether it is listed in its own right as it is surrounded by a wall we believe to be listed.
- v. On the other hand, we welcome the proposed amendment to omit approved parking and vehicular access, matters which were previously of considerable concern to residents and the PC alike.
- vi. The consequence of the loss of vehicular access is that attention refocuses on the horse gate at the southern end. We are aware that a previous application, LF/07/02805/FUL - to widen the horse gate at Stable Lodge to allow for car entrance and parking and for maintenance vehicles - was submitted and withdrawn. The approach to the horse gate has never been metalled that far across the Common and we are concerned that a similar attempt may be made again to create vehicular access there.
- vii. Finally, if despite our objections these re-applications were to be Granted, we believe - with the attendant loss of parking and vehicular access - the issues of access would be exacerbated especially during the construction phase and we feel it essential that a detailed Construction Management Plan be included as a Condition, especially given concerns regarding the vulnerability of the listed wall."

179.5 12/01712/TCA – 2 CHURCH VIEW COTTAGES, FRANCIS ROAD
ASH TREE – FELL.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

179.6 12/01589/FUL – 28 BECKWORTH LANE
ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION TO FORM NEW KITCHEN AND DINING AREA.
GARAGE TO BE DEMOLISHED.

AGREED RESPONSE: "No objection."

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- 179.7 12/01771/COU – 69 HIGH STREET
CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICE (A2) ON FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR, TO RESIDENTIAL 2
BEDROOM APARTMENT.

AGREED RESPONSE: “No objection.”

- 179.8 12/01774/TREE – 20 SUMMERHILL GRANGE
Ta – SILVER BIRCH – REDUCE CROWN BACK TO OLD POINTS BY APPROXIMATELY 1.5
METRES. Tb – SILVER BIRCH – FELL.

AGREED RESPONSE: “No objection.”

- 180. TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON ANY SIGNIFICANT PLANNING DECISIONS MADE BY MSDC AND THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE AND TO AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTION WHICH MAY NEED TO BE TAKEN BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

180.1 The Deputy Clerk had no matters to report.

- 181. TO CONSIDER ACTIVITY ON THE LIMES DEVELOPMENT, ANY DOCUMENTS RELATING THERETO AND AGREE ANY ACTION WHICH MAY NEED TO BE TAKEN BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING**

181.1 The Deputy Clerk reminded the Committee that on 18 May 2012 he had written to the Case Officer, Mr Steve Ashdown, with a list of matters outstanding on the development. Mr Ashdown had provided an interim response by email which addressed all the points raised and he would shortly be writing formally. The Deputy Clerk advised that progress on these matters appeared satisfactory and the Chairman was content that no further action was required at this point.

- 182. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

182.1 As it was Mr Hemsley’s last P&TC meeting as Deputy Clerk, Cllr Blunden, Chairman of Council, thanked him for the great contributions to the village that he had made during his time with the Council and particularly for his support to this Committee.

The meeting concluded at 8.37pm.