

Lindfield Parish Council

Minutes of the **PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE** **Tuesday 26th January 2021**

The Meeting commenced at **19:00** and was undertaken using video conferencing.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr R Plass (Chair)
Mrs M Hersey (Vice-Chair)
Mrs A Matthews
Mr I Wilson
Mrs V Upton
Mrs L Grace
Mr C Wood
Mr J Stevens
Mr M Leach (joined after 19.00)

Also present: None

In attendance: Mr D Parsons (Deputy Parish Clerk)

246. Apologies

246.1 Received from Mr W Blunden and the reason accepted.

247. Declarations of Interest

None

248. Approval of Minutes

248.1 The Chair noted that the draft Minutes of the Planning and Traffic Committee meeting held on 5th January 2021 had previously been circulated and sought any members comments. Committee **agreed** that the Chair should sign the Minutes as a true record of that meeting as soon as Coronavirus restrictions allow.

249. Questions/comments from members of the public

249.1 None

250. Planning Applications and other matters referred to the Parish Council by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for consideration

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. For applications where Lindfield Preservation Society (LPS) had no comments to make or their view was 'No objection' this is not individually noted against the applications considered.

i. DM/20/4671 & 4732 – Boarsland, 72 High Street

Ground floor rear and side extension. First floor rear extension over existing ground floor. Second floor rear extension over existing first floor. Alterations to the fenestration to the rear of the house and internal alterations.

Lindfield Parish Council has no objections to this application provided that it is carried out in sympathy with the conservation area requirements.

ii. DM/21/0041 – Humphreys Bakery, 65 High Street

Change of use of bakehouse to residential C3 Use.

Cllr Leach noted that the bakehouse itself was a relatively mundane, brick property and not particularly attractive. Cllr Hersey was particularly concerned at the potential future loss of the High Street unit and that the loss of the associated bakehouse would increase the likelihood of this, as the shop itself was too small a unit to be viable on its own. Accordingly, she considered that the

Lindfield Parish Council

application should be resisted as it was against policies DP 34, 35 and 3; the latter being focussed on appropriate village centre development / A1 units. She felt that the council should vote against the application with a view to protecting future employment and the sustainability of the High Street, noting that together the units were likely to be more viable but if the sought change of use for the bakehouse were allowed, then the shop would also be lost. The Chair noted the loss of the old World of Coffee unit and that it would be a sin to lose another and potentially weaken future objections (e.g. if the old PO sought a similar change), yet the retention of the bakehouse as a retail unit could potentially see it and the front unit contribute to the vitality of the High Street. Cllr Grace fully supported Cllr Hersey's views and the potential slippery slope that could ensue were the application allowed. Cllr Stevens was totally against the proposal, which could open the floodgates to similar applications. Cllr Wood, whilst noting the family's wish to stay, felt that the bakery unit needed the bakehouse. Cllr Upton agreed that LPC should object and the Chair observed that there was a danger of waking up to find that there were no retail units left to sustain the village.

Lindfield Parish Council strongly objects to the proposed change of use and development of the bakehouse behind, and intrinsically important to, the listed building housing the bakery outlet in the High Street. The village has already seen the loss of The Toll House from retail to residential use, following MSDC's approval, and the property has now been vacant and on the market for some considerable time. Further, the old Post Office (more recently barbers) is currently vacant. The loss of another retail unit would be contrary to Lindfield and Lindfield Rurals' Neighbourhood Plan Policy 4 and MSDC's District Plan Policy DP 3 "To create and maintain town and village centres that are vibrant, attractive and successful and that meet the needs of the community; and ... To support a strong and diverse rural economy in the villages and the countryside"

It is considered that without the bakehouse premises, the shop unit itself would likely become unviable as a unit and ultimately lead to its loss with consequent impact on the vibrancy, sustainability and economics of the village High Street, also reducing employment opportunities. The proposal is considered to be in conflict with DP 34 and 35, with the former seeking to protect the setting of listed buildings, within which curtilage the old bakehouse lies, and the latter seeking that "...extensions are designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of scale..." as the proposed extension seeks to inappropriately raise the building's height.

LPC fully recognises the wider challenges facing High Streets generally, exacerbated by the current Coronavirus pandemic, and seeks MSDC's support, in line with its policies, to resist the loss of another retail unit potentially undermining the very fabric of the village.

iii. **DM/20/4627 – 15 Chestnuts Close**

Rear ground floor extension. First floor rear extension with new dormers to the front. Garage conversion of north side garage.

Lindfield Parish Council has no objections to this application

iv. **DM/21/0108 – Saxon Gate, 1A Linden Grove**

3 stem Sycamore - fell.

Lindfield Parish Council has no objections subject to another appropriate tree being planted to maintain the Street Scene

251. To receive reports on any significant planning decisions or issues made by Mid Sussex District Council.

The Deputy Parish Clerk (DPC) advised:-

251.1 **DM/20/4090** relating to The Holt, 78 High Street that MSDSC have given permission for the proposed extensions despite LPC's strong objections

251.2 **AP/20/028** relating to Tremains Farm that the Planning Inspector had dismissed the applicants appeal to MSDC's refusal of planning permission for new buildings and lagoons. Members **noted** these decisions.

252. MSDC Planning Policy Update – Call for sites

252.1 Committee **agreed** that LPC had no sites to offer and that the Call for Sites should be publicised on LPC's website.

Lindfield Parish Council

253. Matters Arising

253.1 None

The meeting closed at 19.25.

The **next P&TC Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 16th February** and is expected to be held online using video conferencing. Full details to follow.