



**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee  
held at the Billingshurst Centre  
on Tuesday 25 April 2023 at 7.30pm**

**Present**

Cllrs Caroline Beresford Pratt, Garry Commins, James Marchant, Dave Homer and Doug Waller (Chairman).

**In attendance**

Jo Booth, Assistant Clerk  
5 members of the public

**56/23 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reminded those present that the meeting was being streamed to the internet and asked them to raise their hands if they wished to speak, and to speak loudly and clearly.

**57/23 Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Edna Benger (prior commitment), Steve Thomas (personal commitment) and Sarah Wilson (work commitment). On the proposal of Cllr Garry Commins, seconded by Cllr Dave Homer, **RESOLVED** that the apologies and the reasons given be accepted.

**58/23 Declarations of interest and notification of change to members' interests.**

There were no declarations of interest or notifications of changes to members' interests.

**59/23 Public Session.**

The Chairman invited Julian Westbrook to speak on behalf of residents of Maple Road and Broomfield Drive.

Mr Westbrook outlined the reasons why local residents were opposed to the development proposal. These reasons included the highway status of the land – it is publicly maintainable highway, the land has been designated as a local green space and it is also subject to an Asset of Community Value registration. The application suggests that the creation of a natural play area is a positive element of development which misses the point that the whole area is currently available as such. There were also concerns that the creation of a more formal play area, confining activities to one portion of the site, could result in noise nuisance, antisocial behaviour and littering. Parking has been raised as a concern as an increase in on-street parking in the locality would potentially obstruct access for emergency vehicles. The proposed dwelling will be at a height which will lead to overlooking of properties adjacent to the site and the resultant loss of privacy. The area is a wildlife haven.

A resident of Broomfield Drive said that the proposed development will alter the character of the estate and will have a negative impact on local residents.

### 60/23 Planning Applications.

- i. **DC/22/1848** Erection of 1no detached two-storey dwelling and creation of a natural play area for public use. **LAND TO THE EAST OF MAPLE ROAD, BILLINGSHURST.** The Chairman thanked the members of the public who were in attendance for their input and invited Councillors to give their comments. Members agreed with all the points raised by residents and added concerns about drainage connection. It was agreed that the matter should not be dealt with under delegated authority (i.e. by the individual Planning Officer) but should be "called in" and be dealt with at Committee level at HDC.

On the proposal of Cllr Dave Homer, seconded by Garry Commins, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council strongly objects to the application on all the grounds given and that the Assistant Clerk be given authority to submit an appropriately worded response incorporating all the points raised. The response should also be shared to Ward District Councillors. The full objection is attached to these minutes.

- ii. **DC/23/0560** Surgery to 1x Hornbeam and 1x Group of Hornbeams (Works to Trees in a Conservation Area). **JUBILEE COURT, HIGH STREET, BILLINGSHURST.** Cllrs noted that the applicant is not the owner of the trees. On the proposal of Cllr Caroline Beresford Pratt, seconded by Cllr James Marchant, **RESOLVED** that in the absence of any representation from the owner, the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- iii. **DC/23/0476** Hip to gable roof extension and enlargement of rear dormer. **1 ROSIER WAY, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr James Marchant, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- iv. **DC/23/0458** Widening of existing dropped kerb. **PARBROOK COTTAGE, PARBROOK, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Caroline Beresford Pratt, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- v. **DC/23/0543** Erection of a single storey rear extension and associated works. **SUMMERLEY, WEST STREET, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Garry Commins, seconded by Cllr Dave Homer, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- vi. **DC/23/0541** Erection of a single storey rear extension. **1 WOODCOT, NEW ROAD, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Dave Homer, seconded by Cllr James Marchant, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- vii. **DC/23/0505** Replacement of conservatory structure with oak frame and tiles roof. **14 MORRIS DRIVE, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Caroline Beresford Pratt, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.

- viii. **DC/23/0613** Fell 10x Conifer and Surgery to 2x Oak. **46 WOOD CROFT, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Garry Commins, seconded by Cllr Caroline Beresford Pratt, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application but commends the applicant for replanting with 20 trees of native species.
- ix. **DC/23/0365** Conversion of existing outbuildings into a residential annexe ancillary to the main dwelling, including the provision of 3no rooflights. **LEE PLACE HOUSE, BLACKGATE LANE, PULBOROUGH.** On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Dave Homer, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.

**61/23 Any Other Matters – for information only.**

None.

**62/23 Date of Next Meeting : Thursday 18 May 2023** at 7.30pm. The meeting scheduled for 1 June 2023 has been postponed until **Thursday 8 June 2023.**

The Chairman thanked Councillors Dave Homer and Garry Commins for their years of service to the Parish Council and, particularly, to the Planning Committee. He said that they would be missed especially for their local knowledge and the contribution they had made.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Chairman

Date

## **DC/22/1848 – Land to the East of Maple Road, Billingshurst**

At its Planning and Environment Committee meeting last evening, it was agreed that the Parish Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to this planning application for the following reasons:-

**Highways.** The Parish Council is aware that the land for the proposed development, although not owned by West Sussex County Council is publicly maintainable highway and, as such has highway status. In order to implement any planning consent, a stopping up order under S247 Town & Country Planning Act 1990 would be needed to remove this status in advance of any construction or clearance works commencing. **It is vital that the Planning Department is aware of this as there has not (to date) been a consultation response from WSCC.**

**The (made) Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan** shows this area has been designated a local green space. Although this is recognised within the application documentation, Councillors do not feel that it has been given sufficient weight.

**Asset of Community Value.** The Parish Council applied to HDC in August 2020 to have the land registered as an asset of community value. The application was successful as the land “furthered the social wellbeing and social interests of the local community” and the decision notice was issued on 5 October 2020. There is no mention of this status within the application documentation.

**Loss of general amenity.** Residents have already pointed out that the offering of a portion of the site as a natural play area does not in any meaningful way compensate for the loss of the use of the entire site. In fact, there are concerns that the creation of a more formal play area, confining activities to one portion of the site, could result in noise nuisance, antisocial behaviour generally and an increase in littering. It was never the intention of the housebuilder, Sunley Homes, that this portion of land would be developed. Indeed, it was used as the site’s storage compound and the developers took all appropriate measures to protect the oak tree which used to grow there.

**Trees and Landscaping.** The TPO oak tree was felled due to disease and a replacement tree has been planted by WSCC. In addition to this particular tree, there are others on the site and it is not clear from the application which are to be retained. The planning statement refers only to the retention of “existing mature trees and hedging”.

**Privacy Light and Noise.** The position of the proposed development within the site will lead to overlooking of adjacent properties due to the natural sloping nature of the land.

**Highway Access and Parking.** It is noted that the planning statement suggests that there is unrestricted on-street car parking available in Maple Road. While this might be true, residents are concerned that any increase in the current levels might lead to the obstruction of access for emergency vehicles.

**Street Scene.** Development of this key location within the estate will alter the character of the area which is currently dwellings with generous garden grounds.

**Drainage.** The application does not give due consideration to the matter of disposal of foul sewage and connection to any existing drainage system. There is, to date, no consultation response from Southern Water.

**Ecology and Wildlife.** Residents have said that the area is a wildlife haven. The application is not supported by the inclusion of an Environmental Impact Assessment and the Parish Council would ask that the Planning Team considers whether or not an assessment should be a requirement in this case.

The Statement of Community Involvement (Sept 2020) para 3.21 states that a planning application can be elevated to be determined at planning committee where eight or more persons ... make written representation..." This has clearly been achieved in this case but the Parish Council would like to ensure that this particular application is referred to Planning Committee South rather than being a delegated decision and, therefore, requests that the application is called in and the Parish Council is invited to address the Committee at which the application will be considered.