



**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee  
held at the Billingshurst Centre  
on Tuesday 26 March 2024 at 7.00pm**

**Present**

Cllrs Faye Algar, James Marchant, Kate Rowbottom, Doug Waller (Chairman) and Sarah Wilson.

**In attendance**

Jo Booth, Assistant Clerk  
15 members of the public

**35/24 Chairman's Announcements.**

The Chairman advised

- i. The meeting is being streamed to the internet.
- ii. Cllrs wishing to speak should raise their hand and, when invited to do so, speak loudly and clearly.
- iii. Mobile phones should either be switched off or silenced.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Kate Rowbottom to the Parish Council and to this Committee. He also asked that his thanks to former Councillor Caroline Beresford Pratt for her contribution to this Committee be recorded.

**36/24 Election of Vice Chairman.**

On the proposal of Cllr Sarah Wilson, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that Cllr James Marchant be elected Vice Chairman.

**37/24 Apologies for Absence.**

None.

**38/24 Declarations of interest and notification of change to members' interests.**

None.

**39/24 Public Session.**

A member of the public said that the proposal for the gypsy accommodation site at Oakhurst Centre constituted overdevelopment of the site. It is currently a riding centre and small industrial units which only operate during the week and in daytime hours. Should the pitches be allowed, there will be an intensification of the use of the site which will lead to noise, light pollution and traffic movements at all times. The impact on wildlife is a major consideration as the area is habitat for several species, including protected ones. Highway safety is of concern given that there will be an increase in vehicle movements at the narrowest part of West Chilmington Lane. There are 2 public footpaths in the location and the site can be seen from both. The potential increase in the population that an

additional 12 dwellings would bring is a disproportionate percentage increase on the existing population of Coneyhurst.

Additional concerns raised included the amount of hardstanding which is proposed. The potential for run off to pollute the nearby Arun is a concern. There is no drainage at the site and the land already floods due to blocked drains and gullies. The road bridge on the approach to West Chiltington Lane is in a poor state of repair and has a very large crack in it.

No other members of the public present wished to speak.

#### **40/24 Planning Applications.**

With the agreement of those present, the following 2 applications were brought forward.

- i. **DC/24/0298** Proposed settled gypsy accommodation site comprising 12no pitches and associated utility buildings. **OAKHURST CENTRE, WEST CHILTINGTON LANE, CONEYHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Faye Algar, seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council strongly objects to this application. Councillors did not feel that the new proposal and additional supporting documents overcame any of the previous objections. Despite moving the development to a different location within the site, it is still considered that this proposal is not in the correct location. Additionally, the application should be called in to be decided at Planning Committee (South) should the Officer's recommendation be contrary to this view.

Grounds for objection include:-

- **Policy 23.** This site fails to meet the requirements of Policy 23, which it will have to be assessed against as it is a speculative application on an unallocated site;
- **Prematurity.** The application is premature – coming in advance of the examination of the Draft Local Plan which has allocations for 69 pitches throughout the district;
- **Water Neutrality.** It is noted that a water neutrality statement has been added to the supporting documentation. HDC Officers are best placed to assess this;
- **Flood Risk.** In the Assessment of Flood Risk chapter of the application form, the applicant has stated that there is no risk of flooding and that the proposal will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The site is, however, within the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. The amount of hardstanding proposed, the current situation with blocked drains and gullies and no drainage on the site, will combine to worsen the situation;
- **Highway Issues.** The proposal fails to provide safe and convenient pedestrian access – of particular concern for the users of the existing therapy business on the site. Due to the location, the proposed development would represent unsustainable development which would be remote from local services and facilities and would, therefore, lead to increased reliance on motor vehicle usage on a rural, narrow and twisting lane;
- **Public Rights of Way.** The site will be visible from footpaths 1924 and 1925;
- **Grade II Listed Buildings.** The site is in proximity to at least 4 Grade II Listed Buildings and would compromise these heritage assets;

- **Wildlife and Biodiversity.** The location is considered by residents to be wildlife rich, including protected species;
  - **Urbanising Effect.** The scale, siting and layout represent an urbanising form of development which will be detrimental to the rural character of the location. The number of pitches proposed will result in a significant intensification and increase in the level of activity on the site and will lead to noise and light pollution in the open countryside;
  - **Proximity to Existing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Sites.** The proposal is equidistant from sites at Kingfisher Farm and Greenfield Farm just out of the Billingshurst Parish Boundary in Itchingfield, and the WSCC-run caravan park at Adversane. It also remains to be seen where new allocations will be situated when the Local Plan is approved and adopted;
  - **Compliance with Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).** Parish Councillors are aware that this national policy sets out the approach that Local Authorities must take when considering applications of this nature. Once again, a very comprehensive response has been submitted by Greenhayes Planning addressing the principles of site provision. The Parish Council is sure that this will be taken into account by the Planning Team when this application is being considered.
- ii. **DC/24/0322** Erection of an agricultural storage building. **FOUR SEASONS FUEL, CONEYHIRST ROAD, CONEYHURST, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Sarah Wilson, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council objects to this application. Councillors felt that the proposed building is too large, is incompatible with current uses on the site and will lead to an increase in traffic movements.
- iii. **DC/24/0111** Surgery to 1 x Oak **5 THE WILLOWS, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller, seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- iv. **DC/24/0152** Erection of a detached two storey residential dwelling. **LAND TO THE REAR OF 8 STATION ROAD, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr James Marchant, seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds that the design of the building is out of keeping with houses in the area.
- v. **DC/24/0373** Erection of a first floor extension above the existing single storey wing, internal alterations, and the creation of a new link at both ground and first floor levels. **DERWENT LODGE, WEST STREET, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Sarah Wilson, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application. Councillors would, however, like to suggest that this would be an ideal opportunity for the installation of solar panels.
- vi. **DC/24/0315** – Erection of first floor extensions to existing single storey East and West elevations. **THE GRANARY, TEDFOLD STUD, ROWNER ROAD, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Sarah Wilson, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.

- vii. **DC/24/0090** Fell 1x Ash Tree (Works to Trees in a Conservation Area). **27 EAST STREET, BILLINGSHURST**. On the proposal of Cllr James Marchant, seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council suggests that surgery would be preferable whilst recognizing that this may not be possible.

**41/24** **Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 9 April 2024** at 7.00pm (Please note change of date from 2 April 2024).

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

**Chairman**

**Date**