



**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee
held at the Billingshurst Centre
on Thursday 20 February 2020 at 7.00pm**

Present

Cllrs Dave Homer (Chairman), Graeme Acraman, Edna Benger, Garry Commins, Sue Kingston, Jon Perks and Sarah Wilson.

In attendance

G Burt, Clerk to the Council
J Booth, Assistant Clerk
Cllr Paul Berry
Cllr Sandy Duck
17 members of the public

035/20 Apologies for Absence. An apology was not received from Cllr Sue Rogers, contrary to Standing Order 1u.

036/20 Declarations of Interest and notification of change to members' interests.
Cllr Graeme Acraman declared a personal interest in item 039/20v (DC/20/0244) as the applicant is a neighbour.

037/20 Public Session.
There were no members of the public who wished to speak at this time.

038/20 To consider the Horsham District Council (HDC) Local Plan Review Regulation 18 consultation and attached Options Report.
Concentrating on the housing aspect of the Review, in particular the 3 strategic sites (East and West of Billingshurst and Adversane), members felt that the assistance of a professional Planning Consultant would be needed. A recommendation will be made to F&GP to set aside appropriate funds for this purpose.

HDC is under enormous pressure from the Government to achieve the housing figure and saying no to all development could lead to all sites being delivered. Choosing the least bad option is equally difficult as this is very subjective and, therefore, hard to define. Members of the public agreed.

A member of the public attended the public consultation hosted by HDC on 17 February and was surprised to find that there were insufficient comment forms made available for those people who prefer not to respond online or who do not have internet access. The resident also reported problems accessing the HDC website and, once online, the difficulty of cutting and pasting comments into the online form. A

Councillor reported that he had been unable to access the website at peak times during the evening. The Assistant Clerk will contact HDC and ask for an electronic copy of the comment form for the Parish Council's website and social media accounts. A request that copies be made available in all public areas, i.e. the Centre and Library, will also be made. A member of the Strategic Planning Team had confirmed that respondents can write a letter if they do not want to use the online response or the comments form.

A resident asked who the new housing was for and where was the evidence that the houses are needed. He had noted that none of the site summaries within the draft document talk about sustainability which is a priority in backing up any proposals. He noted that there were inconsistencies within the document and was advised to raise these points in his response to HDC.

It was suggested that a Working Party of Councillors and members of the public be set up. However, given the time constraints, it was agreed that any such Working Party should concentrate on the Parish Council's response. Residents should make their own representations and are welcome to copy them to the Parish Office.

On the proposal of Cllr Dave Homer, seconded by Cllr Sue Kingston, **RESOLVED** that Tony Fullwood be appointed Planning Consultant to the Parish Council and that Cllrs Dave Homer, Graeme Acraman, Sue Kingston and Jon Perks form a Working Party to liaise with him. The Assistant Clerk will pass on the reported website issues to HDC and request an electronic version of the comments form for the Parish Council's website and social media accounts.

Cllrs Paul Berry and Sandy Duck left the meeting along with seven members of the public.

039/20 Planning Applications.

With the agreement of those present, the following two plans were brought forward.

- i. **DC/20/0212** Retrospective application for the change of use of land from agricultural grazing for the use of the school for educational purposes. **ADVERSANE HALL (ADJOINING TO THE REAR), ADVERSANE LANE, BILLINGSHURST.** The Chairman invited the neighbours, who have objected to the plan, to address members. They explained that they have not objected because they do not want to have an open area for the children but that, as riparian owners of the ditch, the positioning of the fence makes it impossible for them to carry out the required maintenance. They are also concerned about the use of stock fencing and have made comments to that effect. On the proposal of Cllr Sue Kingston, seconded by Cllr Garry Commins, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application provided the fence is moved off the ditch edge to allow the neighbours to maintain it properly:

- ii. **DC/19/2396** Erection of 1 detached two storey dwelling and 2 semi-detached two storey dwellings with associated parking. **LAND ADJACENT TO NO 81 ROMAN WAY, BILLINGSHURST.** The Chairman invited a resident to comment on the amended application. The Assistant Clerk was advised by the Planning Officer that the Agent had been asked to submit a formal plan showing the revised car parking layout which then triggered this re-consult. The Planning Officer then asked for clarification on whether or not any residents would be allowed to use the car parking spaces and was told that they would only be for the use of the occupiers of the proposed houses. Residents ask how can spaces be “unallocated” and yet be “allocated” at the same time? If they are, in fact, allocated, then there should be 10 spaces as opposed to the 7 in the plan. The Assistant Clerk will ask for clarification.

On the proposal of Cllr Garry Commins, seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council strongly objects to this application for the following reasons, some of which have been previously stated:-

- whilst members appreciate the intention of using the land for the provision of social housing, this proposal is overdevelopment of the site;
- car parking is insufficient for the number of dwellings and will also lead to -
- loss of existing visitor car parking. This will have a negative impact and could lead to on-street parking which, in turn, will cause obstruction of the road for all users but, particularly for larger, emergency vehicles;
- as the proposal includes a disabled person’s dwelling, it is feasible that ambulances or similar vehicles may need to access the property but there is nowhere for them to park;
- Councillors share the concern of residents that construction traffic will cause damage to the road and do not believe that any development should be to the detriment of people who use the road;
- flooding is of major concern in this locality. Residents have reported on flooding occurrences in the past and one member of the public in attendance at the Committee meeting reported that she had contacted Planning Enforcement on several occasions but has never received a response. The local Member of Parliament has also written to Planning Enforcement and it would appear that he has not received a reply either. The response to the consultation by the HDC Drainage Engineer makes reference to the imposition of “a model MD17 Drainage Strategy” but it has proved impossible to find out what this model is and what the implications are of applying it as a condition. Drainage issues are a real concern and should not be lightly dismissed;
- part of the proposed access and, possibly the road, appear to be in 3rd party ownership. It should be known whether or not the agreement of that party has been established;
- residents were assured by developers of the 475 houses to the North and East that the trees and hedgerows which separate the development from existing dwellings in Roman Way would be retained. Councillors share the concerns of residents at the number of trees which HDC is proposing to remove and would like clarification that all of these trees are within HDC’s ownership;

- the comment in the Design and Access Statement Conclusion that “the site in its current condition does little to enhance the area” diminishes the value to the residents who appreciate the open aspect – particularly now that largescale development is taking place in very close proximity;
 - as Local Planning Authority, Councillors were very disappointed that HDC has chosen not to submit a construction management plan for this application. Thought must be given to timings of construction traffic movements to avoid large vehicles queuing in Roman Way waiting to gain access to the site. Access to the top of Roman Way is limited by its width when cars are parked on-street, including vehicles belonging to users of the GP surgery. The potential for vehicular conflict given the blind corner is already of concern and will be exacerbated both by construction traffic and then by the increased vehicle movements to serve the new dwellings;
 - a footpath, to West Sussex County Council (WSCC) standard, should be provided to connect to the development of 475 houses. This would be a valuable connection, enabling residents to walk to the GP Surgery, Roman Way and the High Street.
- iii. **DC/20/0181** Removal of existing roof, raise eaves level and re-roof with dormers to provide rooms in the roof with associated alterations. **11 CLEVE WAY, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Jon Perks, seconded by Cllr Graeme Acraman, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- iv. **DC/20/0243** Fell 1 x Oak. **CHURCH PATH, BILLINGSHURST.** This item is for information only as it is a Parish Council application.
- v. **DC/20/0244** Surgery to 1 x Willow. **LITTLE BOXES, NATTS LANE, BILLINGSHURST.** Having declared an interest in this application, Cllr Graeme Acraman abstained from voting. On the proposal of Cllr Dave Homer, seconded by Cllr Sue Kingston, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- vi. **DC/20/0213** Removal of condition 3 to previously approved application DC/04/0441 (construction of a sand school) to allow the use of sand school for commercial purposes. **PRATTS FARM, WEST CHILTINGTON LANE, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Sue Kingston, seconded by Cllr Jon Perks, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council objects to this application for the following reasons:-
- this is a private lane with a narrow bridge. The lane from the bridge to the T-junction next to Pratts Farm is a public footpath but becomes a bridleway further on. As such, there is potential for highway safety of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to be compromised through the resulting increase of traffic and heavier vehicles, including horse boxes, if the potential clients are, as is suggested, bringing their own horses to the site;
 - whilst the bridge is adequate for existing levels of vehicular activity, Network Rail should be consulted with regard to its loading capacity;

- there is no need for a commercial operation in this rural location;
 - the application site is in close proximity to two Grade II Listed Buildings.
- vii. **DC/20/0234** Part retrospective application for the conversion of existing garage into habitable living space and removal of garage door on front elevation and installation of window. **10 EASTON CRESCENT, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Sarah Wilson, seconded by Cllr Edna Benger, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application. Members would like to comment on the photograph within the Design and Access statement which shows two cars parked in front of the house and a visitor's vehicle on the road. This photograph suggests that the road could be compromised and would bear closer examination by the Planning Officer when considering the impact of the proposal on residents.
- viii. **DC/19/1870 AMENDED PLAN** Erection of 2 No. semi-detached two-bedroom bungalows, 1 No. detached two-storey four bedroom dwelling and 2 No. detached two-storey three bedroom dwellings. **ROWFOLD KENNELS, CONEYHURST ROAD, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Jon Perks, seconded by Cllr Sue Kingston, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council maintains its objection to this application. Members agreed that the electric vehicle charging points and making the car parking arrangement more appropriate to the proposed units were positives. However, the issues of the access road and drainage information needs to be resolved.
- ix. **DC/19/1947** Variation of condition 1 to previously approved application DC/18/2090 (Erection of a two-storey dwelling to the East of No. 7, incorporating ground floor rear extensions to Nos. 7 and 8, and a rear and first-floor extension to No. 7, roof lights and solar panels) Relating to fenestration changes including repositioning of windows/rooflights and additional windows to side elevation at ground floor level, and alterations to internal layout. **7 AND 8 CHESTNUT ROAD, BILLINGSHURST.** On the proposal of Cllr Garry Commins, seconded by Cllr Jon Perks, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council does not object to this application.
- x. **DC/19/2319 AMENDED PLAN** Creation of a 16 space car park within the land at the rear of 54A High Street, Billingshurst, with vehicular link between the Sainsbury's car park and Jengers Mead. **54A HIGH STREET, BILLINGSHURST.** Members considered this proposal in December 2019 and strongly objected to the removal of the pedestrian link. On the proposal of Cllr Jon Perks, seconded by Cllr Sarah Wilson, **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council considers that its previous no objection to the car park element has now been overridden by the alterations that have been proposed. Members made the following observations:-
- the link to Jengers Mead is welcome but has the owner of that car park been advised and consented to the proposal?
 - members concur with the comments of the Landscape Architect and share her disappointment at the scheme;

- there are to be 2 electric vehicle charging points although WSCC has asked for 3. HDC should show a lead on this and set a good example to others by including more EV points;
- members are very concerned for the safety of pedestrians who will walk through the gap whether it is a pedestrian link or not. The Parish Council would like the pedestrian link to be reinstated;
- to discourage the existing antisocial behaviour, additional lighting would be needed as the car park is very dark at night;
- it is not clear if traffic is to flow in a one-way direction or whether the link will be two-way. How will this be policed?
- will the car park be under the HDC remit for the annual parking permit so that shoppers can use their parking discs or will it be pay and display?
- this proposal adds a layer of confusion for visitors who will arrive in the Library car park (parking discs and pay-and-display), travel into the Sainsbury's car park (free), into the proposed car park and then onward into Jengers Mead – a private car park which is notorious for issuing parking fines.

040/20 Any other matters for information only. None

041/20 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 5 March at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Chairman

Date