

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the Meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Monday 10th June 2024 in the West End, Fletching Parish Church, Church Street, Fletching (6.30 – 7.40pm).

PRESENT: Councillors R Hannay (Chair), A Abraham, R Borton, N Collum, W Constantinou, K Minch and S De St Croix.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO) and Councillors C Coleman (WDC) and R Galley (ESCC)

Members of the Public in Attendance: 1

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Greenish.

24/101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

24/102. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 13th May 2024 were a correct record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

24/103. MATTERS ARISING

The Actions List as prepared and circulated by the Clerk was noted.

The Code of Conduct 2024 approved at the meeting held on 13 May was duly signed by Councillors Abraham and Constantinou who had not been present at that meeting.

24/104. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Councillor Galley stated that, due to the general election taking place on 4th July and the pre-election period, there was not a great deal to report. It was noted that some progress had been made in respect of mending potholes on Ruston Bridge Road but was hoping for more. He also reported that, as he was now the Chairman of ESCC, he would be standing down as the Chair of the Fire Authority.

With regards to the pollution issue in Shortbridge Road it was noted that tests had confirmed that the spillage related to trade waste but the Environment Agency (EA) was not going to be taking any action as it was deemed a class 3 spill. This was very disappointing and frustrating particularly as both Councillors Galley and Coleman had requested for a meeting either online or onsite but had not had a response from the EA. It was confirmed that the EA was the enforcement agency. Councillor Coleman confirmed that she was continuing to fight the EA on the matter.

24/105. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Councillor Coleman reported that Wealden officers were still uploading all the responses that had been emailed in on the local plan consultation. Once this was completed a summary report would be written – probably in another two or three weeks. In response to a query Councillor Coleman stated that she was not aware of the timetable slipping due to the number of responses received. It was noted that no date had been set for the Local Plan Sub-Committee due to the pre-election period – this was the meeting where the submissions would be considered. However, the four-year land supply mark had now been passed.

Councillors noted that the District Council had approved £600k of CIL funds that organisations would be able to bid for, later in the year, on projects relating to sports provision.

It was also reported that the Planning Portfolio Holder had thoroughly investigated the rumours that London Boroughs were purchasing houses in Wealden and he had found no truth in the rumours as if that were the case the councils in question would have to notify Wealden of the fact. Councillor Galley confirmed that the rumours had been circulating for a long time and he had also investigated them in the past and found them to be untrue.

Councillor Coleman praised everyone who had been involved in the D-Day 80 Anniversary commemorations in Fletching as she had attended the event and thoroughly enjoyed it.

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Note: Councillor De St Croix arrived at the meeting at 6.45pm at the end of this item.

24/106. PLANNING APPLICATION RECEIVED

The following application was discussed. See Minute 24/114 (ii) below for further information.

WD/2023/2989/F Piltdown Poultry, Fairhazel, Piltdown TN22 3YE

24/107. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

- i. *Neighbourhood Plan:* Councillor Hannay reported that the Steering Group had met with the planning consultant the previous week and had taken him around the parish. The next stage was for the consultant to produce a plan as to how the draft policies could be delivered as well as tying them to the emerging Wealden Local Plan. Councillor Hannay also informed the Parish Council that the £10k grant bid to Locality had been approved which would cover the consultant's costs for this phase of the plan.
- ii. *Fletching Recreation Ground Committee (FRGC):* The Clerk reported that the pavilion refurbishment had been completed and that the next phase would be to apply for grants to refurbish the kitchen and toilets. It was noted that the hiring fees and terms and conditions for non-sports club use were being looked at and would be published in due course. There was also a new online bookings calendar for the Pavilion and Recreation Ground available through the Parish Council website.

24/108. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

There had been no correspondence received.

24/109. FINANCE AND ASSETS

- i. The invoices and payments for June 2024 were **AUTHORISED** and the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation were noted.
- ii. CIL Funds – replacement bins. This item was **DEFERRED** to the next meeting as the information had only just been received by the Clerk.

24/110. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

- i. The internal audit report from Mulberry Local Authority Services was **NOTED**.
- ii. The AGAR Section 1 Annual Governance Statement was **APPROVED** and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.
- iii. The AGAR Section 2 Accounting Statement was **APPROVED** and signed by the Chairman.

24/111. POLICIES

The following Policies were **APPROVED**:

- i. Document Retention and Disposal Policy
- ii. Freedom of Information Policy and Scheme
- iii. Pay Policy
- iv. Planning Protocol

24/112. BURIAL GROUND

- i. *Parishioner / Non-Parishioner status* – Councillor Hannay asked the councillors to consider what the criteria should be for determining whether a non-parishioner be treated as a parishioner in terms of fees to be paid as this was currently down to the discretion of the Parish Council.

Members discussed this in some detail and agreed that it was difficult to have hard rules as each case was taken on its merit. However, as a rule of thumb it was felt that those who had lived in the Parish for at least five years but had then had to move into supported living outside of the parish in the years before they died should be classed as a parishioner. Equally those who were

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the spouse, parent or child of someone already interred in the burial ground and had lived within the parish in the past five years should also be classed as a parishioner. It was also agreed that anyone who had been working within the parish for at least the last five years should be classed as a parishioner.

Councillor Hannay reported that a request for the purchase of a burial plot had been received by a non-parishioner whose parents and brother was buried in the burial ground, but they were asking to be treated as a parishioner. It was explained that they did not live in the parish and had not done so for many years. It was also noted that the brother had not been classed as a parishioner when they were interred. It was, therefore, **AGREED** that the request to be classed as a parishioner be **REFUSED**.

- ii. The application for the purchase of a burial plot and subsequent interment were **APPROVED**.

24/113. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING

- i. *Flitteridge Farm*: There was nothing to report at this time.
- ii. *Lay-by Opposite Piltdown Service Station*: It was reported that the Clerk had received an email from Wealden District Council explaining that the Street Scene Team Leader had visited the site and spoken to the owner of the business that had been parking the cars in the layby. The owner had agreed to move the vehicles as soon as he could as they were not taxed. It was noted that he would be able to park one car in the layby, which is classed as the public highway, with a for-sale sign on it provided that the vehicle was taxed.

Councillor Minch reported that there had only been one car parking in the layby that day. It was also discussed whether it was possible to request ESCC to extend the bus stop markings so that it was only possible to park one car in the layby. The Clerk to contact ESCC to ask whether this could be implemented as part of the highway works being carried out in that area later in the year.

24/114. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED

It was **RESOLVED** to make the comments as set out after each application in respect of the following:

- i. **WD/2023/2741/F The Old Archery, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3SA**

Proposed extension works to the existing dwelling house including remodelling of front elevation with small corner extension, attached garage and works to first floor accommodation including new roof structure. Amended Plans and Description.

This house lies within the AONB. Planning consent was given for a replacement (and larger) house in 2017. That consent lapsed and the current application was made last year for alterations to the existing house. The Parish Council objected to the application principally on the ground that the effect of it was to convert what is a modest cottage-type property into a much larger country house. Revised plans have now been submitted. The Parish Council considers, the alterations now proposed result in a more modest altered dwelling with a much reduced footprint and overall scale compared to the original application and, therefore, SUPPORTS the amended plans and description.

- ii. **WD/2023/2989/F Piltdown Poultry, Fairhazel, Piltdown TN22 3YE**

Conversion of existing barn into a single dwelling.

In 2017, consent was given for the adjacent barn to be converted into two larger dwellings. That consent was not implemented and in consequence lapsed. In 2022, an application to convert this barn to a single dwelling was made. That application, although then supported by the Parish Council, was refused. The grounds of refusal can be summarised as:

- *The application site is situated within a rural location outside any development boundary*
- *Significant modification would be required to make the existing building suitable for residential use.*

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- *The change of use and alterations to the barn and the domestic use of the site would not lead to overall enhancement to the immediate setting of the building*
- *the unjustified intensification of existing scattered development would urbanise and be harmful to the existing visual and rural amenities of the area.*
- *The weight to be afforded to the delivery of a single dwelling in terms of housing supply and support to the existing rural services in the area and short term economic benefit of the construction phase are outweighed by the significant impacts in terms of sustainability from the dwelling where residents will be reliant on private vehicle trips to access most facilities and services on a day to day basis.*
- *Overall the identified harm outweighs the benefits and the proposal would represent unsustainable development under the NPPF.*

Notwithstanding the case put forward by the applicant's Planning Statement, those grounds apply equally to the current application. Also, those grounds are strengthened by recent decisions: the two appeals dated 23rd August 2023 (APP/C1435/W/22/3297916 and APP/C1435/W/22/329.438) for the Lower Field and the Upper Field at Little Barkham Farm and the refusal of the in principle planning permission for a house on the site of the former Sand School at Little Barkham Farm (WD/2023/3137/PIP) all at Piltdown. Furthermore, there is concern about the size of the house, which would comprise 4 bedrooms plus a separate self-contained "granny annex". The Parish Council, therefore, OBJECTS to this application.

iii. **WD/2024/1041/LB The Griffin Inn, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS**

Internal refurbishment works to listed building and curtilage listed buildings.

Given that these are internal works the Parish Council has NO COMMENTS to make on this application.

iv. **WD/2024/1232/F Vaughans, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3TJ**

Demolition of single storey sunroom and erection of a two-storey extension to south eastern elevation.

This property is not within the AONB but does lie on the edge of the village Conservation Area. The application is supported by a comprehensive Design and Access Statement. The Parish Council agrees with the conclusion reached in the Statement that the alterations would improve the appearance and balance of the house by replacing an unattractive single storey extension with a more attractive and better functional two-storey extension far more in keeping with the design of the rest of the house. The Parish Council, therefore, SUPPORTS the application.

v. **WD/2024/0929/FA North Hall Shooting Club, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3SA**

Variation of condition 2 of WD/2005/2619/FR to enable the clubhouse to also be used for Northall CPC meetings, training courses accredited by the CPSA and BASC, first aid training and occasionally for local community and charity events.

The following comments were submitted to Wealden District Council, as agreed by the Planning Working Group after the last meeting:

This is an application to permit a wider use of the Clubhouse than that permitted by Condition 2 of the planning consent dated 7th February 2006 (WD/2005/2619/FR). The current restriction on use is that the Clubhouse can only be used " for ancillary clubhouse/office purposes in connection with the clay pigeon shooting units at Northall Farm". The proposal is that, when the Clubhouse is not being so used, the permitted use should be extended to allow use for:

- Northall CPC meetings;*
- Training courses that are accredited by the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association (CPSA) and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC);*
- first aid training, and*

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(iv) occasionally for local community and charity events.

The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and regard needs to be had, not only to para 182 of the NPPF, but also to the guidance in the High Weald AONB Management Plan (2024-2029). The Parish Council notes the references in the applicant's Planning Statement to paragraphs of the Local Plan (Saved Policies) and the NPPF. The Parish Council also notes that there is no objection to the application from ESCC Highway Authority.

In consequence:

- 1. The proposed extended uses should (if permitted) be ancillary only so that the existing permitted use remains the principal use.*
- 2. On that basis, the Parish Council OBJECTS to the complete removal of the existing restriction on use as contained in the said Condition 2, for the simple reason that that use will continue to be the principal use of the Clubhouse. As regards the proposed additional uses:*
- 3. The Parish Council questions whether any additional permission is required for use of the Clubhouse for meetings of Northall CPC given that the existing condition allows for "ancillary clubhouse/office purposes".*
- 4. The Parish Council DOES NOT OBJECT in principle to the use of the Clubhouse by Northall CPC for it to hold CPSA/BASC accredited training courses ("training days") provided that (i) such training days are run by Northall CPC and to be by private invitation only (ii) no shooting takes place on a training day (iii) training days shall not be held on a Sunday or on a bank or public holiday (iii) the number of training days shall not exceed 6 in any calendar year and (iv) use of the Clubhouse for training days shall take place only between the hours of 10am and 5pm.*
- 5. The Parish Council is concerned at the potential impact on the amenities of occupiers of adjoining and neighbouring properties through unrestricted use of the Clubhouse for events. Therefore, if Wealden District Council is minded to give permission for such a use ("event days"), it should be on the basis that, in order to protect those amenities (i) such use is only for events which benefit the local community of the Parish of Fletching and/or for local charities from which the residents of the Parish of Fletching derive benefit (II) no shooting to take place on the event days (iii) restrictions on noise levels on event days to be agreed with Wealden District Council (iv) event days shall not be held on a bank or public holiday (iii) the number of event days shall not exceed 6 in any calendar year and (iv) use of the Clubhouse for event days shall take place only between the hours of 10am and 5pm.*

Note: This application was subsequently **withdrawn** – see Minute 116 below

24/115. PLANNING APPLICATION – APPEAL

It was **AGREED** that representations be made to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the refusal of the following application:

WD/2023/3137/PIP Little Barkham Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XL

Erection of three-bedroom single storey dwelling with car port and associated works.

The Parish Council Objected to this application.

24/116. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS

Planning decisions **RECEIVED** from Wealden District Council since the last meeting:

Applications Approved

i. **WD/2023/2653/F Fletching Garage, Bell Lane, Splaynes Green, Fletching TN22 3TN**

A partial demolition of the existing garage building and converting it to a 4 bedroom house and erection of 2 x 4 bed roomed houses with associated car parking, amenity space and landscaping. (APPROVED, subject to a legal agreement, at Planning Committee North on 23 May 2024)

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Response to Parish Council

The Council's Conservation Officer supports the principle of the development and acknowledges that the proposal provides an opportunity to enhance the former forge building and general character of the Conservation Area. Amended plans have been submitted to address the concerns raised by the Conservation Officer.

The sustainability of the site / area was assessed during the approved housing application on the adjoining site. There have been no significant changes in the Council's five year housing land supply position and no material changes in planning policy since this decision was made. The adjoining site was considered to be sustainable and acceptable for housing development, on balance, which is a material planning considered when determining the current application.

The design and scale are considered to be acceptable and the pot pattern and garden sizes are consistent with the adjoining site. In addition, the gardens meet and exceed minimum standards.

Drainage can be controlled by condition. The application site is located in flood zone 1 and is therefore not susceptible to flooding. It is understood that some of the surface water flooding issues relate to the construction works on the adjoining site and highways ditch running along the western boundary of the site.

Specific drainage details could be secured by conditions to prevent surface water runoff onto the public highway.

ii. **WD/2023/3115/F Wilmshurst, Bell Lane, Fletching TN22 3YB**

Part single, part two-storey front extension, new canopy to proposed new entrance, material face-lift to existing office with terrace above. A glazed link addition linking the main dwelling to existing barn and a single side extension to barn with material alterations with change of use of barn to form part dwelling. An outdoor swimming pool addition with associated hard landscaping and external works. (APPROVED 10 May 2024)

iii. **WD/2024/0075/F Barkham Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XL**

Proposed vehicular access and driveway to serve dwelling and adjoining agricultural land with existing access remodelled to provide access for pedestrians/cyclists only. (APPROVED 31 May 2024)

Applications Refused

i. **WD/2023/2627/MAJ Wilderlands Farm, Bell Lane, Fletching TN22 3YB**

Proposed change of use of land for mixed agricultural/educational purposes with temporary rural workers' dwelling, agricultural building and ancillary development, and part retrospective application for wildlife pond. (REFUSED 28 May 2024)

Applications Withdrawn

i. **WD/2024/0929/FA North Hall Shooting Club, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3SA**

Variation of condition 2 of WD/2005/2619/FR to enable the clubhouse to also be used for Northall CPC meetings, training courses accredited by the CPSA and BASC, first aid training and occasionally for local community and charity events. (WITHDRAWN 6 June 2024)

24/117. FLETCHING BONFIRE SOCIETY SUMMER FETE

It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council should have a stand at the Fletching Bonfire Society Summer Fete taking place on the Recreation Ground on Saturday 20 July 2024. Parish Councillors would take charge of the stall on a rota basis. The Clerk to book the stall with the Bonfire Society.

24/118. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE

It was agreed that the following items be included for the next edition of the Parish Magazine:

- CIL – request for ideas for Piltdown area

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- Stall at the Bonfire Society Fete
- D-Day Anniversary – thanks to Jamie and Cindy Buchanan and all other contributors to the event
- Parish in Bloom judging day

24/119. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Replacement litter bins and other CIL items

It was requested that Councillors contact the Clerk with any other items they wish to be considered at the next meeting.

24/120. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The start time of the meetings was discussed and the majority agreed that 6.30pm was the preferred time.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is due to be held on Monday 8th July at 6.30pm in the Pavilion on the Recreation Ground.