

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

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MINUTES of an EXTRAORDINARY meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Wednesday 23 February 2022 in the Parish Church, Church Street, Fletching (7 - 8.20pm).

PRESENT: Councillors C Rothery (Chairman), D Greenish (Vice-Chairman), R Borton, N Collum, W Constantinou, R Hannay, D Kerwood, K Minch and A Shaw.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO) and Cllr R Galley (ESCC/WDC)

Members of the Public in Attendance: 36

APOLOGIES: No apologies for absence were received.

22/50. EXTENSION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR THIS MEETING ONLY

It was RESOLVED that, for this meeting only, public participation be extended to include questions and representations from the public during the meeting for all the items on the agenda.

22/51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest RECEIVED in respect of any items on the agenda, as required by the Members' Code of Conduct.

22/52. WDC SHELAA SITES

The Chairman introduced the item and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to show parishioners where SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) applications had been made both in the parish of Fletching and the surrounding area.

He stated that the formal consultation on SHELAA sites would be undertaken by Wealden District Council as part of the wider Local Plan consultation but that it had been confirmed by Wealden officers that feedback could still be given at this stage, preferably through the Parish Council.

The Chairman also informed the meeting that the Parish Council had adopted its own planning principles for the Parish that states that any development in the Parish should be small scale housing on brownfield sites. It was reported that the Parish is kept up to date on planning issues by attending Parish Cluster meetings set up by the District Council and that it had given its support to a campaign being led by Chiddingfold Parish Council in respect of over-development in Wealden.

A map showing the SHELAA sites in Fletching and the surrounding area was displayed at the meeting. It was explained that the sites do not differentiate between housing, business or green use at this stage in the process. It was noted that out of the nine sites within the Parish, five had been part of the previous SHELAA applications in 2018 as part of the withdrawn Local Plan. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council was concerned about any development to the west of the A22 Maresfield By-Pass (within Maresfield Parish) as this had already started to be encroached on by the approval of the electrical charging facility and solar farm (within Fletching Parish).

Cllr Galley also addressed the meeting and gave an update in respect of the status of the Local Plan explaining that, currently, Wealden District Council was waiting for the Government to publish its review of housing numbers requirements following representations made to MPs Michael Gove and Rishi Sunak that a significant reduction in the target number of homes in Wealden was needed. He explained that he was optimistic that the issues were understood and that the numbers would be reduced. However, there would be a delay with the plan and its publication until the review was published.

Set out below are the comments and questions raised by members of the public with the answer given (where relevant):

- How many brownfield sites were there within the parish? There are very few in Wealden as a whole

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- Can planning applications still be submitted on sites that are identified as a SHELAA even though the assessment has not been made? Yes applications can still be made
- Confirmation given that the current application for development at Acorn Garage could be determined before the SHELAA application for the same site is assessed.
- Why was the previous version of the Local Plan withdrawn? Due to the Inspector considering that the 'Duty to Co-operate' requirement had not been complied with and that the methodology for measuring pollution on the Ashdown Forest put forward by Wealden was disputed by Natural England with the Inspector agreeing with Natural England.
- Concern that Wealden is going to be required under the Duty to Co-operate to enable houses to be built that would go towards the Eastbourne Borough Council housing numbers allocation. Therefore, the numbers in Wealden needed to be reduced in order to accommodate the needs of Eastbourne within the District.
- Whether there was likely to be any building on the polo ground site? This is in the SHELAA but no further information is known.
- Confirmation that Maresfield Parish Council has tried to resist any residential housing to the west of the A22.
- Whether it was possible to see the application form as submitted to Wealden for the SHELAA site at Flitteridge Farm? It is believed these may form background papers when the SHELAA is formally published for consultation.
- How is the impact of these sites on the infrastructure in the nearby towns considered? This takes place as part of the assessment of the SHELAA site applications and is currently being worked on by officers. One of the biggest issues being highways.
- The possible number of dwellings that could ensue based on numbers per hectare as determined by one parishioner.
- Thank you to the Parish Council for convening the meeting as it was really useful to get an early context of the situation.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Council, thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reiterated that any comments that parishioners had on the proposed sites should be fed back to the Clerk via email.

Note: Councillor A Shaw arrived at the meeting at 7.35pm during the discussion of the above item.

22/53. APPLICATION FOR APPROVED MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP PREMISES STATUS

The Chairman reported that there had been a misunderstanding as to the nature of the licence application for Trading Boundaries, and that, accordingly, it was not a matter for the Parish Council to comment on.

In response to questions raised by members of the public, the Clerk explained that wedding ceremonies were already taking place at Trading Boundaries in accordance with the appropriate licences issued by Wealden District Council under the Licensing Regulations. The application to ESCC Registration Services was purely to enable a registrar to attend the ceremony at the venue and issue a marriage certificate. Any issues that the public may have in respect of noise, traffic etc would need to be addressed to Wealden District Council if there was considered to be a breach of any licence conditions. The Clerk stated that the licences could be viewed online via the Wealden District Council website.

22/54. THE QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE – COMMEMORATIVE TREE

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The Chairman reported that he had obtained a quote for the purchase of an English Oak as councillors had expressed a preference for an oak tree.

Three prospective sites had been identified for the planting of the commemorative tree as part of the 'Queen's Green Canopy' Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Prior to the meeting the Chairman and Councillor Lady Collum had visited the proposed sites to ascertain whether they were suitable.

Site 1 – Splaynes Green: concern was raised with regards to Splaynes Green given the number of overhead lines that crossed the area. Residents were also worried that if an oak was planted this could, in time, affect the amenities of their properties.

Site 2 – Burial Ground: An area had been identified in the corner of the burial ground next to an oak sapling that was already planted. It was noted that this was in the area of the burial ground set as unconsecrated land but it was felt there was enough space to plant a tree but it would need to be smaller than an oak given the space available.

Site 3 - Recreation Ground: Alongside the boundary with the road there were already a number of trees, including one planted to commemorate the last jubilee. There was space at the end of the existing line for another tree to be planted.

The Council discussed the options and it was RESOLVED that:

- A. An English Oak tree be purchased;
- B. The tree be planted in the Recreation Ground at Site 3 on 11 March 2022 as part of the NACO Tree Planting Day for the Queen's Green Canopy project;
- C. If feasible, the maple tree donated by a parishioner be planted in the Burial Ground at Site 2; and
- D. No tree be planted at Splaynes Green at this time.