

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

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MINUTES of the Meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Monday 4th March 2024 in the Village Hall, High Street, Fletching (7 – 8.35pm).

PRESENT: Councillors R Hannay (Chair), D Greenish (Vice-Chair), R Borton, N Collum, S De St Croix and K Minch.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO) and Councillor Christina Coleman (WDC).

Members of the Public in Attendance: 3

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Abraham, W Constantinou, L Snelgrove and Councillor R Galley (ESCC). It was noted that Cllr Greenish would be late arriving due to a prior commitment.

24/38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24/39. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 5th February 2024 were a correct record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

24/40. MATTERS ARISING

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

Minute 24/47v Litter Bins: It was agreed that the replacement bins should be wooden, have a top and be approximately the same size as the existing ones. The Clerk to contact Wealden District Council to ascertain availability and costs of those that met the specification.

24/41. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR GALLEY

Councillor Galley was unable to attend the meeting and had circulated a written report which was noted.

24/42. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR CHRISTINA COLEMAN

Councillor Coleman reported that the District Council, at its Full Council meeting, had approved a 2.99% Council Tax increase. Alongside that an enhanced council tax reduction scheme had also been approved with an increase in the rate for second homes.

The Draft Local Plan Consultation would be going live at 5pm on 15 March 2024 and would run until 10th May 2024 at 5pm. Cllr Coleman encourage everyone to access the online virtual exhibition if there were not able to make any of the exhibitions being put around the District. She also explained that although the Council would accept responses to the consultation via email and letter the preferred method was through the consultation portal as that method would produce and acknowledgment. It was noted that it was just as important to state in the response what areas were considered positive with the draft plan not just those that were being objected to.

Cllr Coleman reported that she had requested that the planning application at Fletching Garage be considered by Wealden's planning committee. It was **AGREED** that, given the objections raised, a parish representative should speak at that planning meeting.

In response to a question an update was given on the Ashdown Business Park extension site. It was explained that the site was within the Draft Local Plan and that objections to it needed to be made by responding to that consultation.

24/43. PLANNING APPLICATION – RECEIVED

The following application was discussed. See Minute 24/54 below for further information.

WD/2024/0103/F Malling Farm, Down Street, Piltdown TN22 3XU

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24/44. CORRESPONDENCE – Keep Britain Tidy Campaign

The Parish Council noted that David McGibney had taken over as the co-ordinator of the Keep Britain Tidy (Great British Spring Clean) for the parish. The timing of the litter picking was discussed and it was **AGREED** that this should be an ongoing activity throughout the year not just during the campaign week. The Parish Council thanked Mr McGibney for undertaking this role and co-ordinating the arrangements on behalf of the Parish Council.

24/45. COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPOINTMENTS TO WORKING GROUPS

The following changes to the councillor responsibilities and appointments to working group were **AGREED**:

Assets: Addition of Cllr De St Croix

Finance: Addition of Cllr De St Croix

Planning Group: Addition of Cllrs Borton and Snelgrove (where possible at least three cllrs attend site visits).

FRGC: Cllr Greenish to be replaced by Cllr De St Croix

24/46. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

- i. *Neighbourhood Plan*: Councillor Hannay reported that the proposed policy areas along with the aims and objectives were being refined and once these were finished the Clerk would be sending out an invitation to quote to planning consultants for the next phase of the project.

Note: Cllr D Greenish arrived at the meeting at 7.33pm before the following items of business.

- ii. *Fletching Recreation Ground Committee (FRGC)*: The Clerk reported that the pavilion refurbishment works were ongoing and were due to be completed on time. It was noted that a couple of leaks in the roof had been dealt with.

24/47. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED – Speedwatch

Councillor Hannay reported that at the Piltdown Residents' Association (PRA) AGM the Parish Council had been asked to support the Speedwatch campaign that the PRA runs. It was noted that additional volunteers were required in order for the speed checks to take place on a regular basis at the two approved locations – the A272 in Piltdown and Ruston Bridge Road/Church Road in Fletching. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council would put out a request for volunteers.

24/48. FINANCE AND ASSETS

- i. The invoices and payments for March 2024 were **AUTHORISED** and the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation were noted.

24/49. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

It was agreed that the existing grounds maintenance contract be extended for one year in order to give the Parish Council time to consider the requirements for the contract going forward taking into account the ecological friendly projects it had signed up to eg. Wealden to Waves. The Clerk reported that there had been an increase in the costs for the next year above what was being budgeted for. Councillors, therefore, looked at the schedule and discussed whether there was a need to have 18 cuts a year in all areas covered by the contract in order to reduce the cost. It was felt that the cuts need not commence until April (reducing the number of cuts by two) and that two further cuts could be removed towards the end of the season. This would reduce the overall number of cuts for the year to 14. It was also considered that Splaynes Green should only be cut every other week as a trial.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Grounds Maintenance Contract be extended for one year and that the number of cuts be reduced to 14 in all areas except Splaynes Green which would be cut every other week.

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24/50. GRANT APPLICATION

The Grant application from the Fletching Bonfire Society for £400 for road diversion signs, to also be used by the Parish Council if required, was considered and it was **RESOLVED** that the grant be awarded in full.

24/51. BURIAL GROUND

- i. No requests or permits for the Burial Ground had been received.
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** that there be no increase to the Burial Ground Fees and Charges for 2024/25

24/52. POLICIES

- i. The Publicity Policy was **APPROVED**
- ii. Resilience Plan – it was **AGREED** that Cllr Minch take the lead on developing the plan (with support from the Clerk) and that Cllr Hannay be the Emergency Co-ordinator and Cllr Minch the Deputy Co-ordinator. Other members of the team to be geographically spread between Fletching, Piltdown, Sheffield Park and Down Street. All councillors were asked to suggest names of those they considered would be effective on the team and any additional resources that could be added to the list.

24/53. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING

- i. *Flitteridge Farm*: There was no further update on this site.
- ii. *The Griffin Inn*: It was noted that an appeal had been lodged against the enforcement notice relating to the gazebo. It was **AGREED** that the Planning Working Group liaise on a response to be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council to the inspector by the deadline of 4 April 2024.

24/54. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED

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

i. **WD/2024/0103/F Malling Farm, Down Street, Piltdown TN22 3XU**

Replacement of a lawful park home with a new dwelling.

Saved Policy DC22 provides that the redevelopment of existing mobile homes by permanent dwellings will be resisted unless on an individual basis where proposals meet the criteria of DC2. However, there is a technical conflict with DC22 in terms of replacement of a mobile home with a permanent dwelling and previous appeals have identified that, where a replacement for the mobile home has compliance with DC18, this is accepted as being a supportable position. The criteria under DC18 are that (1) the proposal is of a comparable size and massing to the existing building; (2) it is in keeping with the character of the locality; (3) it is similarly sited within the plot; (4) it does not result in the loss of a property of valuable local character. The application appears to meet these criteria.

In principle therefore, the Parish Council SUPPORTS the application subject to appropriate conditions, to include (i) detailed proposals for drainage being satisfactory (ii) removal of the existing park home(s), caravans and other such structures from the site (the applicant indicated that she intends to do this) preferably before the work starts and (iii) removal of permitted development rights relating to future extensions and other structures as provided by DC18.

ii. **WD/2024/0218/F North Hall Shooting Club, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3SA**

Metal storage building.

This application relates to the construction of a metal single-storey outbuilding for storing clays and ancillary equipment for the shooting school together a forklift truck and similar. Currently there is no storage facility for these items which are stacked on an uncovered concrete slab. The building would be 16.8m x 8.9m with an eaves height of 3m and a ridge height of 4m.

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In accordance with Policy DC14, it is considered that the proposal will not be visually intrusive in the AONB landscape and will be well screened by existing vegetation and within the bunded area.

The Parish Council SUPPORTS the application, provided appropriate conditions are imposed including a condition in accordance with DC14(5) for the building to be removed from the site on cessation of the recreational use.

iii. **WD/2024/0230/F The Flying Engine, Mill Lane, Fletching TN22 3PY**

Mounting of 3kw solar array to south facing slope of existing detached double garage. Solar array will be demountable, and therefore fully reversible.

This building is listed, dating back to the 17th century. There is a detached garage which is generously described as being of "low historical or architectural significance". The solar panels would be erected on the south slope on the roof of the garage and it is considered that they would have little (if any) impact on the listed building and its curtilage.

The Parish Council SUPPORTS the application.

iv. **WD/2023/2741/F The Old Archery, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3TN**

Proposed extension works to existing dwellinghouse. (Additional information received)

Previously, the Council agreed a response to this application to object to it. Since then, further information has been provided by the applicant's agent in support of the application. This information includes:

1. *A Comparison Schedule*
 - a. *Comparison of proposed extension works with existing house.*
 - b. *Comparison of proposed extension works with Approved 'House A'*
2. *Comparison Plans with Approved House A*
As submitted house plans shown next to and overlaid with Approved 'House A'
3. *Comparison Elevations with Approved 'House A'*
As submitted house elevations shown next to and overlaid with Approved 'House A'

Approved 'House A' is a larger house to replace the existing house on the site for which a planning permission was granted in 2017.

In light of that, Wealden District Council has asked the Parish Council to reconsider its objection.

We made the point in our original objection that, given that the site lies within the AONB (with the additional planning constraints that provides), it was surprising that the applicant had not been asked to provide a Design and Access Statement in support of the application; for example, such a Statement would no doubt have dealt with the points now raised. Furthermore, although we note that in 2017 a planning consent was granted for a larger replacement house, that permission was not implemented and had expired. It should not be assumed that, should such an application be made now, it would necessarily be supported by the Parish Council.

The applicant's agent advises that this application amounts to an:

1. *Increase in ground floor GIA (habitable space) of proposed of 22sqm (19%)*
2. *Overall increase in habitable space of proposed house (ground and first floor) of 47%, and*
3. *Increase in footprint of proposed including extensions and garage compared to existing house of 52%.*

Our principal objection to the application was that: "The proposed works are substantial and will effectively convert what is presently a modest cottage-type property into a much larger country house." That would appear still to be the case.

The comments submitted to Wealden District Council since the last meeting, agreed by the Planning Group, in respect of the following application were **NOTED**:

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v. **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. (Amended Plans)

Having considered the amended plans submitted, the Parish Council's original comments and objection still stand.

24/55. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS

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

Applications Approved

i. **WD/2023/2612/F 2 Fern Cottages, Bell Lane, Splaynes Green, Fletching TN22 3TP**

Proposed single storey rear extension, proposed replacement garage and proposed front fence and gates. (APPROVED 1 February 2024)

Applications Refused

i. **WD/2023/3137/PIP Equestrian Manege (Sand School) at Little Barkham Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XL**

Erection of detached three-bedroom single-storey dwelling with carport and associated works. (REFUSED 12 February 2024)

Applications Withdrawn – none since the last meeting

24/56. SPLAYNES GREEN PHONE BOX

Councillor Hannay reported that he had spoken to Mr Tapp who had agreed to undertake the works required to straighten the phone box. Once that had occurred the box would be refurbished by Mr Forcier (who has the glass and paint etc) and then the Parish Council would purchase a replacement door as had previously been agreed. It was noted that the current intention was to display footpath maps and have a book and seed swap.

24/57. D-DAY 80 ANNIVERSARY

It was noted that a parishioner had agreed to co-ordinate an event to take place on 6th June 2024 which would commence at 6.30pm with bellringing followed by an event in the church and at the war memorial. The Beacon would then be lit at 9.15pm as part of the national event. Consideration was still being given as to how to fill the gap between the event at the church and the beacon lighting.

24/58. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE

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

- Speedwatch
- Keep Britain Tidy Campaign
- Splaynes Green Phone Box
- Draft Local Plan Consultation
- D-Day 80 events

24/59. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Draft Local Plan
- Dates for future meetings

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

24/60. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting would be held on Monday 8th April 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall