



MINUTES of a Meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held at the Village Council Meeting Room, Ashurst Wood, on Tuesday, 13th August 2019 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Forbes (Chair), Arnott, Draper, Haite, Lee, Loveday, Phillips and Spoor
In attendance: Acting Clerk, Rebecca Roberts and 24 members of the public

1. Public questions: Several residents spoke about applications DM/19/3028 – Dirty Lane and DM/19/1025 – Wealden House. Comments were as follows:

Dirty Lane:

- Why were all matters reserved apart from access? Cllr Forbes said it was up to the applicant to decide what matters were reserved
- A resident stated that the Dirty Lane applications had been rejected by residents and the Village Council, not due to the number of houses, but because they are wanting to build on a greenfield site and lowering the number of houses does not change anyone's mind
- Fair Fax show contempt for residents and the site notices were not put up at the correct time. Reading the notes from the meeting Fair Fax had with the Village Council, the developer said they would not be putting in an application until September, so why is it here now, in August when a lot of people are away on holiday.
- Although the application is for 9 houses, it looks like many more could follow and it sounds like Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) have told Fair Fax that 9 houses would be acceptable as the site is on the edge of a built up area – Cllr Forbes said that MSDC made an amendment to the District Plan, which the Village Council strongly objected to and that MSDC had only said it 'may' be possible.
- A resident suggested that if the Dirty Lane application is approved, the AONB team is about to publish a design guide to fit in with the High Weald and this should be considered.
- It was stated that the access to the site is in Hammerwood Road, which is already very congested.
- Residents were concerned that developers could start putting in applications of 30+ houses for example and then lower the amount to 9 in order to try to get permission – does this set a precedent for the future applications. There is supposed to be protection from this in the District Plan

Wealden House:

- A resident spoke on behalf of the Ashborne Park Owners Association. It is felt that the developer has a complete disregard for the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan – it is like they have never read it. Their objections to this application are exactly the same as to the previous applications. They contravene Policy ASW9 (a). The owners association have never had a satisfactory answer as why a 50+ capacity was allocated, but they have discovered thanks to Parish Online mapping that the calculated area for development has a fundamental error in the capacity of the site, therefore the error needs to be recognised, rejected and any future proposal should be for mixed dwellings.
- There was concern over the other side of the site – Life Improvement Centre (LIC) and a resident asked if the Village Council has had any details of proposals. Cllr

Forbes stated that the Council had not.

2. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr Tyrrell and District Councillor Belsey (Cllr Forbes read an email from Cllr Belsey saying that he is following all the comments on the applications and will do his best to represent the views of residents); apologies were received and **resolved; the reasons were accepted.**
3. **To receive Declaration of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda** – None
4. **The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on the 23rd July 2019 were approved as an accurate record of the meetings.**
5. **Recorded Meetings:** None
6. **Planning applications:**

DM/19/2856

Location: The Three Crowns 10 Hammerwood Road Ashurst Wood RH19 3TJ
Desc: Single story flat roof extension to rear of property, installation of timber framed bi-fold doors and new single door within existing external wall. Extension of existing single story lean to on front elevation and relocation of entrance within. New windows and fence.

Recommend: Approval. Members strongly support the improvements of this community asset.

DM/19/3028

Location: Land East Of Dirty Lane Maypole Road Ashurst Wood West Sussex
Desc: Outline planning application with all matters reserved apart from access, for 9 new private dwellings with access from Hammerwood Road.

Recommend: **REFUSAL**

The Village Council is surprised to see this application as it was informed during a meeting with the developers on the 9th July that they were hoping for allocation in the District Council's Site Allocation Document and awaiting publication of the Issues and Options document in September before taking any further action.

The Village Council objected to the previous application for 22 dwellings DM/17/1497 as the proposal did not comply with the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan, the site having been fully assessed by the Plan makers and rejected on sustainability grounds. Furthermore, policies in the NPPF specifically indicated that permission for development at this site within the AONB should be refused.

Although this is for a smaller number of dwellings, the proposal does not change the Village Council's opposition to development of this highly sensitive landscape in the AONB.

DP6 only supports the growth of a settlement where such growth meets identified local housing and community needs.

Ashurst Wood is currently meeting identified housing needs and therefore there is no need that justifies expanding the settlement under DP6.

Furthermore, and as stated above, the development is not sustainable; which is required by DP6. The site (together with the field to the west of Dirty Lane) was considered for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan (albeit for a larger number of dwellings). After a lengthy and robust site assessment process, including assessment against sustainability objectives, the conclusion of the steering group was that *development would create an unacceptable extension of the village into the countryside and would fail to enhance or conserve the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB.*

DP6 would also require the developer to satisfy MSDC that a large site is not being brought forward in phases. There is concern that there would be future pressure to develop land both on the site and on adjoining land which is currently under the same ownership as the site, and the developers have not demonstrated how this will be prevented.

DM/19/1025

Location: Wealden House Lewes Road Ashurst Wood

Desc: Proposed new build residential development consisting of 54 units following the demolition of all existing site buildings. (Additional Information – Statement of Community Involvement received 04/04/2019). Amended plans and revised information received 31 July.

Recommend: **REFUSAL**

The minor amendments to the application do not address the objections of the Village Council set out in detail in the consultation response dated 24th April 2019.

The Urban Designer, in his response dated 30th May 2019, states that *'the scheme still represents a high density for its edge-of-settlement location and has been justified by the 50+ dwelling allocation in the Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan.'* As previously stated, there is not a 50+ dwelling allocation in the Plan. The application must be assessed against policy ASW9 and the Urban Designer's statement confirms that the scheme conflicts with ASW9 (a). The number of units therefore needs to be reduced.

The Applicant's Planning Consultant, Frank Taylor, states *'If EDF were not to be developed to its allocated 50+ units, one wonders where else development would be preferred. There is no obvious way of meeting the required 62 units..'*

The Neighbourhood Plan, policy ASW5, provides for 62+ new dwellings over the Plan period 2015 – 2031, to be delivered on both allocated and windfall sites. Since 2015, permission has been granted for 14 dwellings on allocated sites and 14 dwellings on windfall sites. 50 dwellings were delivered between 2001 and 2014 (including the developments at Ashbourne House and Carlton House). The Village Council is confident that sufficient sites will come forward between now and 2031, even with a lower number on the EDF site than suggested in the Plan.

The Village Council produced the Neighbourhood Plan with the support of the community and the Plan stresses the importance of respecting the scale and positive features of the character of the

surrounding area (not of the existing EDF building on the site) – ASW9(a) and (b), ASW14(a) and (b).

The applicant has ignored the many objections to the urban style of design and only made changes suggested by the Design Review Panel and Urban Designer. The Village Council repeats its view that 3 and 4 storey buildings are inappropriate to the site and in conflict with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Car parking provision remains inadequate and fails to comply with ASW21.

The Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report stated that the site was large enough to supply a mix of accommodation, including affordable housing. The mix of housing is to be determined by a Housing Needs Survey, which the applicant has failed to supply. It is not enough to say that *'the scheme provides for a type of accommodation and a sector of the market that is not catered for in Ashurst Wood.'*

It is noted that Dixon Searle's review of the applicant's Viability Report concludes that the scheme is capable of including a percentage of affordable dwellings. It should also be noted that the nearby allocated site is providing two units out of a net gain of just 5 dwellings (DM/17/2695). The Village Council therefore sees no justification for excluding affordable dwellings from this site.

The Village Council urges the applicant to go back to the drawing board and produce a new scheme that is of an appropriate scale, density and design to reflect the site's edge of settlement location in the countryside, and which contains adequate provision for parking and affordable housing.

7. To receive notification of planning decisions: DM/18/3242 – Outline application for demolition of existing dwelling and nursery buildings and construction of up to 6 dwellings with creation of new access onto Cansiron Lane and provision of layby. All matters to be reserved except for access. – Mount Pleasant Nursery, Cansiron Lane – Permission - GRANTED

8. Correspondence: None

9. Any items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda: None

Meeting Closed at: 8.15pm

Chairman..... Dated: