

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held at The Pavilion, Sparrows Green Recreation Ground, South View Road, Wadhurst on 17th July 2021 at 09.30 hrs.

Present: - Cllrs Anderson, C Moore, P Moore, Murphy (chair), Tincombe (substitute)

Meeting commenced at 09.40 hrs.

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence – **apologies received and reasons accepted from Cllrs Niell and Smith**
2. To receive declarations of interest and updates to members' register of interests – **none declared**
3. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 3rd July 2021 – **approved subject to the following alterations – Apologies from Cllr Niell (rather than Cllr Neill); typing error on item 4 - should read “June” not “Junw”.**
4. To discuss matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 3rd July 2021 – **item 6.2.1 refers to the “Dark Skies Compliance Policy”, and item 6.2.4 to ‘dark skies’ compliancy. Wadhurst Parish Council does not have a documented dark skies policy. An intrinsic part of the beauty of the High Weald AONB is its unusually dark skies, some of the darkest in the South East. The High Weald AONB unit report that Sky Quality meter (SQM) readings taken around Wadhurst indicate skies as dark as 21.09 mags/arcsec² – a figure that corresponds to Silver Tier International Dark Sky Reserve, described by the International Dark Sky Association as being: “Night-time environments that have minor impacts from light pollution and other artificial light disturbance, yet still display good quality night skies and have exemplary night-time lightscapes.” The parish council supports actions and activities to maintain the dark skies it enjoys, including when considering planning applications, such as the avoidance of upward facing lighting and consideration of the maintenance of dark skies when installing roof lanterns and other glazing in roofs; Item 6.2.3 – Clerk to confirm if planning committee are permitted to consider items on the agenda when inquorate (action Clerk); item 11 concerns the decision notice in respect of application WD/2020/1722/F, St Valentine; item 12, Wadhurst Parish Council declines to respond to the Rother District council draft statement of community involvement (sci) consultation; item 13 to be included on the agenda of the next planning committee (action – Clerk).**
5. Public forum – time limit 15 minute - no members of the public present
6. Licence and planning applications
 - 6.1 Licencing: *None*
 - 6.2 Planning:**
 - 6.2.1 [WD/2021/1313/F](#)**

Consultee expiry date: 23rd July 2021
Location: MONTROSE, 1 MAYFIELD PARK, WADHURST, TN5 6DH
Description: Single storey rear extension

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Comment – **No objection.** The parish council notes the inclusion of a roof lantern in the planning application, and requests an appropriate condition in relation to this in order to remove the harm to the dark skies.

6.2.2 [WD/2021/1019/F](#) and [WD/2021/1020/LB](#)

Consultee expiry date: 27th July 2021

Location: WADHURST POST OFFICE, HIGH STREET, WADHURST, TN5 6AA

Description: Change of use from shop to residential to create single dwelling. Minor integral alterations and construction of internal lobby.

Comment – **Objection.** This is an iconic listed building in the heart of the conservation area and at the centre of the village. This application is for an unsympathetic conversion, including the loss of the iconic post box and signage which have a very special place in our parish heritage. Both are cherished features of the village street furniture scene, with a deep connection to the building and the village centre, making a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the high street. The façade of the post office is a tourist attraction, and the subject of a postcard which can be purchased in the village. The façade should be retained and conserved in its entirety, and the post box and signage should be treated as heritage assets in their own right, aside from the listed building status of the post office building. Further, the post box is the priority post box for the collection of coronavirus tests, and there is no other post box in the centre of the village (Jempsons, which contains the post office, does not have a post box, so mail cannot be accepted outside the shop opening hours).

In terms of the future viability of the village high street, the proposal does not draw footfall, does not support local businesses, reduces the potential for business growth and undermines the vitality of existing retail. Objective WL1 of the emerging Wadhurst neighbourhood plan is to retain and enhance existing community facilities. Policy PLE 1 of the emerging plan states that “proposals for the use of land or buildings on existing employment sites for uses other than employment purposes will only be permitted if all the following criteria are met: 1) it can be demonstrated that the on-going use of the premises or land for employment purposes is no longer viable, to be assessed by a registered accountant; 2) it has not been in active use for a minimum of 12 months; 3) active steps have been taken to obtain suitable alternative occupation for employment or community purposes. This must be proven through an independent sustained marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least 6 months; and 4) the proposal would provide some employment of community use or benefits to the community.

Further, policy PWL 2 of the emerging plan states that proposals to encourage the retention, improvement or re-use of an asset of community value will be strongly supported, including retaining the existing local businesses in the parish. However, any proposals that will result in either the loss of or change of use of such sites, or in significant harm to the integrity of the sites, will be strongly resisted. This policy area protects and enhances existing facilities which are integral to the wellbeing and wishes of the community from any change of use of their premises or grounds, unless it will improve the facility, provide an equivalent or better local facility or the community no longer requires the facility.

There is a much needed public bench located adjacent to the side return of the building, which wholly overlooks the proposed living area. There is no suitable location for the relocation of this public bench. In addition, mobility scooters are often temporarily parked in this area, which is adjacent to Carillon Cottage, which provides an important information service including Citizens Advice. There is no other suitable location for the temporary parking of mobility scooters.

The size and location of the fenestration would cause a privacy issue if use of the building was to change to residential. Obscure glazing would not be appropriate, given the listed status and significant contribution to the character and appearance of the high street.

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic means that this is not the right time to assess the viability of the business which currently uses this property. There is emerging evidence that there will be a resurgence, rather than a decline, of local high streets with working from home and local shopping set to continue.

We disagree with the heritage statement that the frontage is of modern design.

There is no parking provision, therefore the change of use to a domestic dwelling would add to the issues of the well-known congestion and parking on our high street, referred to by WDC in their withdrawn local plan. The emerging Wadhurst neighbourhood plan policy PGA3 states that “parking spaces for new development applications of change of use (eg, offices) should be accommodated within the curtilage of the development site in the form of a garage and/or off-street parking space. Development applications will only be supported if they include the maximum level of such parking spaces (in direct relationship to the number of dwelling bedrooms – 2 spaces for 2 bedroom and 4 spaces for 4/5 bedroom) or the overall employee capacity (if commercial development) and include guest parking, together with sufficient associated electric vehicle charging infrastructure, which adheres to the highest national standards. Parking spaces provided in connection with such applications will be required to be made available for the lifetime of the developed site. Development proposals that would result in the overall net loss of existing on-street and/or off-street parking will not be supported.”

6.2.3 [WD/2021/1617/F](#)

Consultee expiry date: 2nd August 2021

Location: RAVENSDALE BARN, RAVENSDALE FARM, FAIRCROUCH LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6PT

Description: Minor external alterations including fenestration changes: replacement windows, new slit windows, lowered sill, and new weatherboarded section.

Comment: **No objection**

To consider notices of decisions received:

Certificate of Lawful Development: *None*

Raise no Objections: *None*

Prior Approval Required: *None*

Not Issued: *None*

Issued:

Application: [WD/2021/0862/F](#)

Location: FIELDHAVEN, OLD STATION ROAD, WADHURST, TN5 6TZ

Description: Proposed loft conversion to create additional bedroom along with new ensuite.

Application **approved** by Wealden District Council

Comment from WDC: The applicants and agent have been in pre application discussions with regard to the dormers and these have been reduced significantly from a submission in 2018 which was withdrawn as the wraparound dormer was considered to overwhelm the rear roof slopes. The previous application WD/2020/2651/F was refused and with the objection from the parish to this application the agents have again reduced the dormer further in size and position within the roof scape. The dormer now sits 500mm in from the edge of the roof to the dormer cheek and 650mm down from the ridge line. There are other examples of dormers in the vicinity and it is considered that the location of the property although being within AONB the property is within a tight ribbon of development on the western side of Old Station Road where differing house types can be found and not open to wide views in the locality. The impact upon the public realm would be very modest as the works are largely concealed. The alterations would allow a family to continue to enjoy village life and whilst not an approach condoned within design guidance, the impact would not be so great as to warrant refusal. The required accommodation would be hard to achieve by other approaches in terms of useable headroom within the roof area.

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Application: [WD/2021/1043/F](#)

Location: COOMBEHURST, COOMBE LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6NU

Description: Rear extension to existing garage to accommodate owners' cars. Replacement of existing single garage door and additional single garage door to existing double garage. relocation of existing drive entrance and addition of new estate rail sliding gate.

Application **approved** by Wealden District Council.

Application: [WD/2021/0961/FA](#)

Location: NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK, HIGH STREET, WADHURST, TN5 6BH

Description: Removal of condition 3 (sound insulation) of WD/2020/1086/F (conversion of the former bank premises to a retail unit at ground floor level, and 2 no. flats at first and second floor levels) on the grounds that it is unnecessary and unreasonable.

Application **approved** by Wealden District Council. Comments from WDC to WPC: *The sound proofing works undertaken on site exceed the requirements laid out in the Building Regulations and have been approved by the applicants' Building Inspectors for the scheme therefore it is considered that no further details are required for approval.*

Application No. [WD/2021/1103/F](#)

Location: NEULANDS FARM, DEWHURST LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6QE

Description: Proposed annexe to existing garage with new loft.

Application **approved** by Wealden District Council.

Application No. [WD/2021/1104/F](#)

Location: NEULANDS FARM, DEWHURST LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6QE

Description: Enclosing of the existing open style porch to north elevation.

Application **approved** by Wealden District Council.

Refusals:

Application: [WD/2021/0854/F](#)

Location: RAVENSDALE BARN, FAIRCROUCH LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6PT

Description: Minor external alterations including fenestration changes: replacement windows, insertion of window/glazing panels, alteration to existing openings. Enclosing covered area on south elevation: relocation and addition of posts. New weatherboarding section. associated works.

Application **refused** by Wealden District Council.

Withdrawn: *None*

Permits the Modification: *None*

Appeals: *None*

Enforcement Notice: *None*

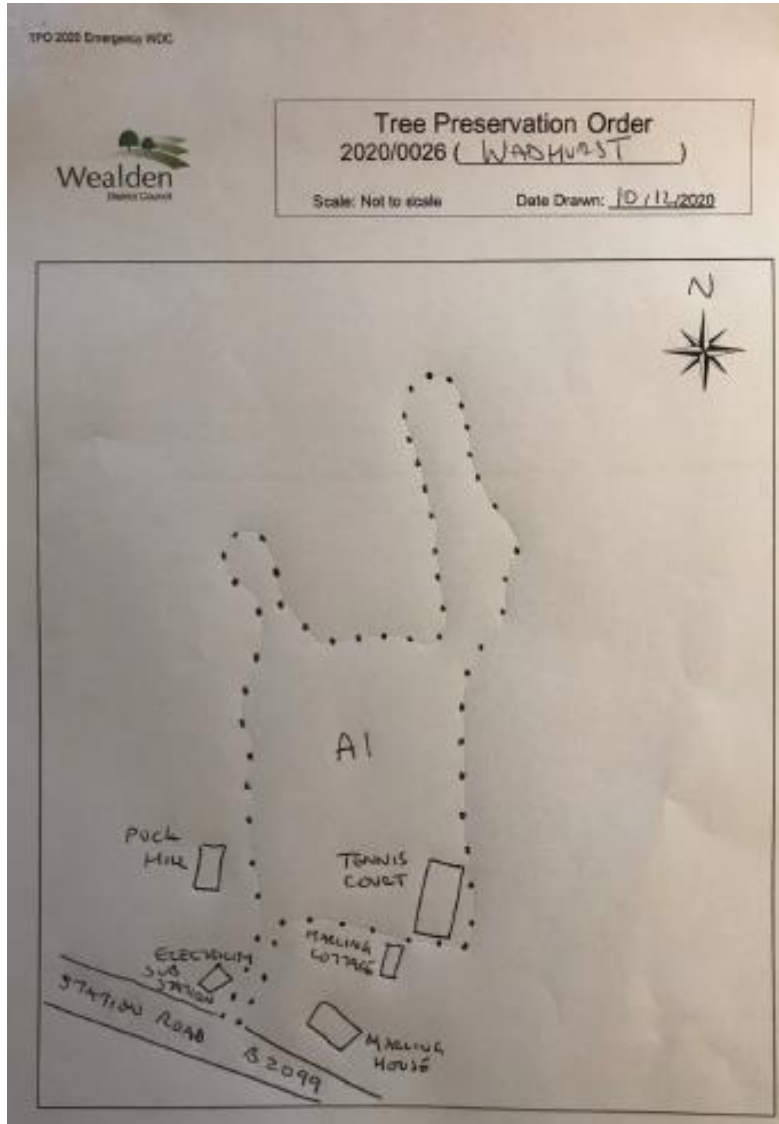
Breach of Conditions Notice: *None*

7. Planning Control & High Street Planning Enforcement

8. To discuss Tree Preservation Orders:

Confirmed Tree Preservation Order 2020/0026 (Wadhurst) dated 10/12/2020, confirmed 08/06/2021. Land at Marling House and Marling Cottage, Station Road, Wadhurst, East Sussex - **noted**

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL



9. Conservation areas - none

10. Community Infrastructure Levy - none

11. Urgent Issues - none

Meeting ended at 10.35 hrs