

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held at the Pavilion, Sparrows Green Recreation Ground, Wadhurst on 13th August 2022 at 9.30am.

Present: - Cllrs C Moore, P Moore, Murphy (chair), Shairp, Smith

Meeting commenced at 09:34 hrs

Comfort break 10.14 hrs – 10.16 hrs

1. To receive apologies for absence – **apologies received from Cllr Niell**
2. To receive declarations of interest and updates to members' register of interests - **none**
3. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 30th July 2022 – **approved with amendment - item 13.5, it was not agreed in principle that WPC request a committee decision if delegated to officer.**
4. To discuss matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 30th July 2022 – **item 13.5 - Agreed that WPC request that applications for any new dwellings within the parish, together with applications relating to facilities of the parish are referred to the appropriate WDC committee and not decided by officers under delegated authority – Action Clerk. Items 7.3/7.4 – WDC have advised that the LPA does not tend to consult neighbouring parish councils, because they do not have access to town/parish boundary lines outside of their control, and they only really have a duty to work with neighbouring planning authorities. They did not consult neighbouring planning authorities regarding these two applications at Bewl Water because the works do not seem to adjoin neighbouring authorities and the works are minor; however, given the public interest, they have agreed to send a consultation to the neighbouring authorities. Action – Clerk to advise Ticehurst and Lamberhurst parish councils of this, and in the light of this, to request that WDC reset the clock for these consultations for all consultees**

Additional item – Cllr Murphy proposed that item 13.1 was sufficiency confidential as to warrant exclusion of members of the press and public under the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to meetings) Act 1960. This was seconded by Cllr C Moore and unanimously approved.

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/2022/1671/FA](#)

Date of notification: 28th July 2022

Consultee expiry date: 18th August 2022

Location: GREEN CAP NURSERY, SLEEPERS STILE ROAD, LOWER COUSLEY WOOD, WADHURST, TN5 6QX

Description: removal of planning condition number 2 from application WD/2002/0880/F

COMMENT: Object. We object to the removal of any agricultural occupancy condition. The High Weald AONB Management Plan objective LBE2 is as follows:

“to improve amenities, infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing), and skills development for rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty”.

To remove an agricultural occupancy condition from a dwelling in the High Weald AONB does not support this objective in its broadest sense and is detrimental to the land-based economy for which the High Weald AONB is renowned.

6.2.2 [WD/2022/1940/PO](#) (Planning Obligation)

Date of notification: 28th July 2022

Consultee expiry date: 18th August 2022

Location: GREEN CAP NURSERY, SLEEPERS STILE ROAD, LOWER COUSLEY WOOD, WADHURST, TN5 QX

Description: Removal of section 106 planning agreement dated 9th October 2022 attached to application WD/2002/0880/F (erection of a two-storey agricultural dwellinghouse with farm office).

COMMENT: Object. We object to the removal of any agricultural occupancy condition. The High Weald AONB Management Plan objective LBE2 is as follows:

“to improve amenities, infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing), and skills development for rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty”.

To remove an agricultural occupancy condition from a dwelling in the High Weald AONB does not support this objective in its broadest sense and is detrimental to the land-based economy for which the High Weald AONB is renowned.

6.2.3 [WD/2022/2026/F](#)

Date of notification: 8th August 2022

Consultee expiry date: 29th August 2022

Location: 23 Oakwood Way, Wadhurst, TN5 6FJ

Description: Conservatory to rear

COMMENT: Object. The dwelling is located in Environmental Zone E1 (intrinsically dark) with the proposed conservatory facing open countryside to the north east and east. The proposed fully glazed conservatory would cause light spillage conspicuously out of keeping with local nocturnal light levels, causing harm to the High Weald AONB, contrary to the NPPF, and contrary to objective OQ4 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

An intrinsic part of the beauty of the High Weald 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 Reserved, 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 landscapes”*.

We note the objection of the High Weald AONB Unit to the development within which this dwelling is located, as follows:

“the environment statement fails to mention that the site is in the AONB, or that illumination of the night sky is a significant issues in an AONB...not attempted to consider the impact of the proposed development to the landscape.”

We also note the following condition in the decision notice:

“the artificial lighting to the development shall confirm to requirements to meet the Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations for Environmental Zone E1 contained within Table 2 of the Institute of Lighting Professional’s Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting 2012...

REASON: To preserve the character of the AONB, rural and residential amenities of the locality having regard to SPO2, SPO12, SPO13 AND WCS 14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013,

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Saved Policies EN6, DN26 and EN29 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 109, 115, 116 and 125 of the NPPF 2012.”

We note that the officer report for the development recommended such a condition to ensure that the development would be designed to accord with an environmental zone E1 – intrinsically dark.

Internal light spill is as detrimental to the dark skies as poorly considered external lighting. The South Downs National Park DNS TAN Appendix: Glazing – internal light spill 2021 notes that:

“In general, internal glazing will cause light to spill horizontally and – in the case of sky lights – directly upward, which are the most damaging paths of light. Internal spill can – and will – have a similar impact to external lighting, particularly in interrupting and disrupting the continuity of the dark landscape.”

They recommend that glazing should not exceed 25% of the floor area, and should not be on roofs or ceilings without sufficient mitigation.

They also note that “although visible light passes through glass, it makes glazing – when viewed from a sufficient distance outside in the landscape – an ‘effective luminous surface’, where the level of luminance (light emitted from the surface) will be a function of the internal illumination (light falling onto the glass from inside) and visible light transmission (VLT) properties of the glass. In this respect, glazing can be categorised as a ‘special’ type of illuminated advertisement.”

Given the open countryside to the north east and east, the light spillage from the unshielded glazing would affect the foraging, mating and migratory behaviours of a wide range of nocturnal wildlife, as well as create an ‘effective luminous surface’ when viewed from the open countryside.

The High Weald AONB Unit include the following advice to maintain the dark skies for which the High Weald AONB is renowned:

“Always remember to draw your curtains or blinds at night to prevent intrusive light unnecessarily spilling out of your home”.

There is no information provided with the application to indicate that curtains or blinds will be affixed and used.

6.2.4 WD/2022/2039/F

Date of notification: 8th August 2022

Consultee expiry date: 29th August 2022

Location: ROUND OAK MEAD, OLD STATION ROAD, WADHURST, TN5 6QH

Description: Addition of dormers and roof lights

COMMENT: Objection, solely on the grounds of the proposed roof lights which would cause light spillage conspicuously out of keeping with local nocturnal light levels, causing harm to the High Weald AONB, contrary to the NPPF, and contrary to objective OQ4 of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. The dwelling is outside of the development boundary and close to open countryside.

An intrinsic part of the beauty of the High Weald 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

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Tier international Dark Sky Reserved, 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 landscapes*”.

Internal light spill is as detrimental to the dark skies as poorly considered external lighting. The South Downs National Park DNS TAN Appendix: Glazing – internal light spill 2021 notes that:

“In general, internal glazing will cause light to spill horizontally and – in the case of sky lights – directly upward, which are the most damaging paths of light. Internal spill can – and will – have a similar impact to external lighting, particularly in interrupting and disrupting the continuity of the dark landscape.”

They recommend that glazing should not exceed 25% of the floor area, and should not be on roofs or ceilings without sufficient mitigation.

The High Weald AONB Unit include the following advice to maintain the dark skies for which the High Weald AONB is renowned:

“Always remember to draw your curtains or blinds at night to prevent intrusive light unnecessarily spilling out of your home”.

There is no information provided with the application to indicate that curtains or blinds will be affixed and used. If this application is approved, we request a condition requiring blinds to be affixed to the rooflights.

6.2.5 WD/2022/1828/F (as per 30th July 2022 agenda/minutes, also included on 13th August 2022)

Date of notification: 26th July 2022

Consultee expiry date: 16th August 2022

Location: HOMEDENE, HOLLYDENE ROAD, WADHURST, TN5 6TT

Description: Partial demolition and extension to form two storey dwelling

COMMENT: As per approved minutes of meeting of 30th July 2022 – Action – Clerk to submit Objection as per approved minutes of meeting of 30th July 2022.

7. Live planning applications

7.1 [WD/2021/0559/MAJ](#)

Weald Hall Residential Home, Mayfield Lane, Wadhurst, TN5 6HX – **no further comments**

7.2 [WD/2022/0535/MAO](#)

Land to the north of Marling House, Station Rd, Wadhurst TN5 6RT – **no further comments**

7.3 [WD/2021/2924/F](#)

The Boat House Bistro, Bewl Water, Bewlbridge Lane, Cousley Wood, Wadhurst, TN3 8JH. – **no further comments**

7.4 [WD/2021/2925/F](#)

Bewl Water, Sailing Hut, Bewlbridge Lane, Cousley Wood, Wadhurst, TN3 8JH

COMMENT: There are currently three “live” applications for the conversion of buildings to tourist accommodation Bewl Water – WD/2021/2925/F; WD/2021/2924/F and WD/2021/0638/F, which was

refused by WDC, but which is currently subject to appeal. Wadhurst Parish Council considers that all three applications taken together are creating a holiday village and should be refused on this basis. The applicant has previously stated publicly the desire to create a “Center Parcs” like offering at Bewl. This is effectively being created bit by bit, despite holiday villages being prohibited within the High Weald AONB. Wealden’s Local Plan, Policy TN4 states very clearly:

“proposals for new holiday villages or chalet parks will be strongly resisted in the Sussex Downs and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”

As a result, these proposals should be assessed in their entirety and should all be refused.

7.5.1 WD/2022/1610/MAO

Land to the south of Cousley Wood Road, Sparrows Green, Wadhurst TN5 6SX

COMMENT: Further to the WPC objection dated 2 August 2022, the Wadhurst Parish Council would like to add the following points in support of objection points (9) and (11) – in the light of additional evidence:

(9) Access: This is a very dangerous exit point for 15 homes onto Sparrows Green Road

East Sussex Highway Authority in its statement of 10 August has objected to the planning application, in part due to insufficient information.

Key points from the objection are quoted as follows:

- 1) *‘Adequate information has not been submitted to satisfy the Local Planning Authority that the proposal is acceptable in terms of access, visibility splays, road layout, road gradients, surface water drainage, on site turning facilities and would therefore give rise to increased hazards to highway users and would be contrary to para 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework*
- 2) *The proposal would lead to increased traffic hazards on the B2100 [Cousley Wood Road] by reason of the inadequate visibility at the proposed access and would therefore be contrary to para 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework*
- 3) *The proposed development is poorly placed in terms of sustainable transport modes due to the lack of non-car travel choices for residents and would therefore be contrary to para 104 and 106 of the National Planning Policy Framework.’*

‘Drawing No. ITP311-1-02 revision P2 shows visibility splays of 2.4m x 59 metres to southeast and 60 metres to the northwest to be provided at the access onto Cousley Wood Road (B2100), which is stated as being in accordance with Manual for Streets. However, given the status of Cousley Wood Road being a B Class road (B2100) and the fact that the site is not in a “street” location visibility splays should be provided in accordance with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges thus splays of 2.4m x 90m should be provided. [WPC emphasis]

The location of the VAS suggests that speeds here are higher than the posted speed of 30mph.’ [WPC emphasis]

In addition it is noted that from looking at historical weather data rain occurred on some of the days thus 2.5mph would need to be added to obtain the dry weather speeds. [WPC emphasis]

Vehicle tracking showing the swept path of a 11.997m long refuse vehicle has been provided. However, as mentioned above the body of the vehicle would take up the whole of the B2099 carriageway and also appears to travel over the land/hedge opposite the access which would not appear to be wholly within the limits of the highway or within the applicant’s control. Whilst the TS states that the junction radii could be enlarged this has not been shown on any plans together with

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any revised tracked drawings. Furthermore, the plans do not give the dimensions of the vehicle tracked [or any scale bars].

Parish Council 'Black cat' data

Wadhurst Parish Council has now completed a Black Cat traffic survey at the position of the new proposed site access, between 31 July 2022 and 6 August 2022. This new traffic survey raises further objections to this dangerous new access proposal.

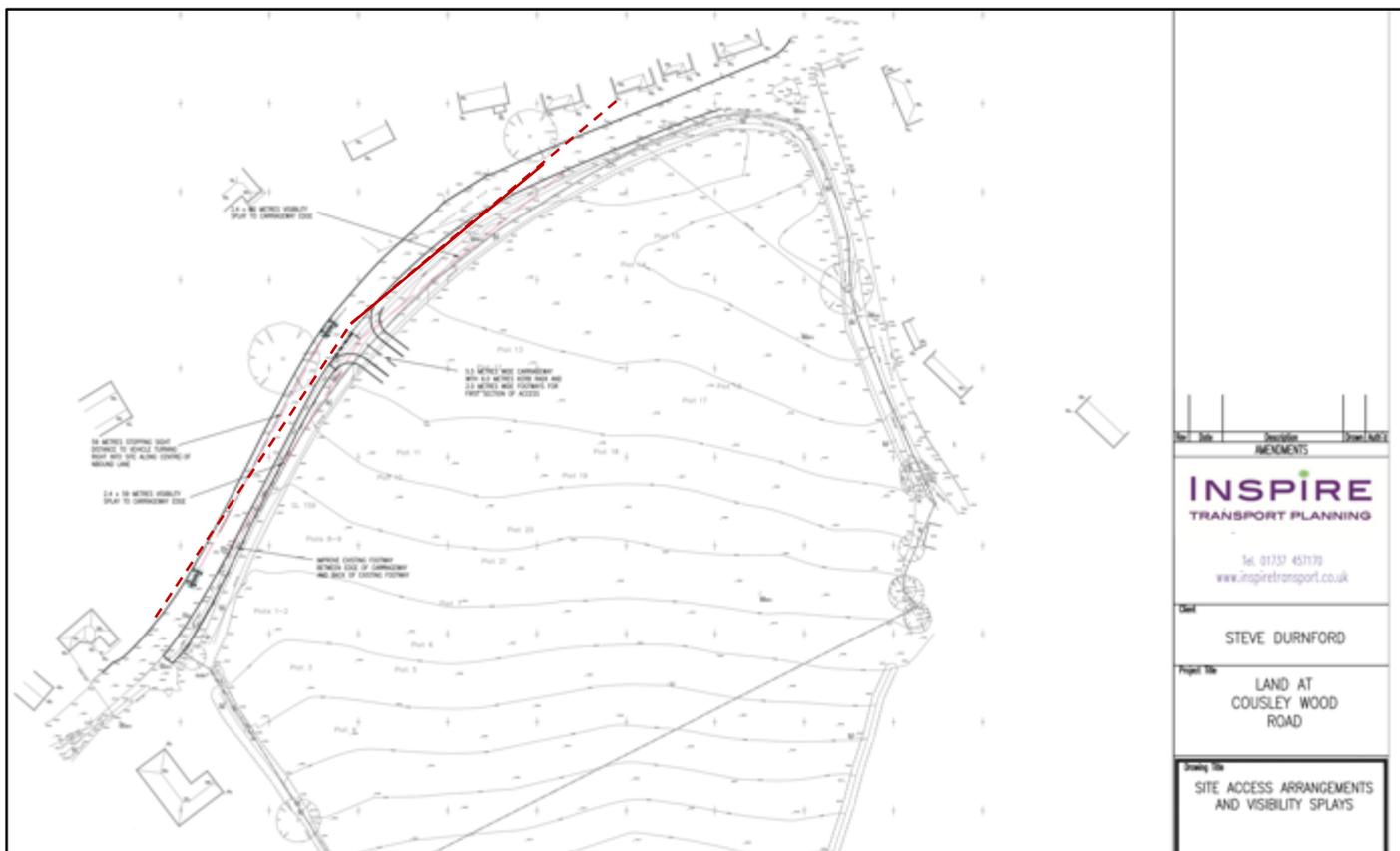
Specifically, the 85th percentile speed out of Sparrows Green (heading towards Lamberhurst) was 36mph, while the 85th percentile speed for traffic heading into Sparrows Green was 39mph (please see data below). Indeed, this evidence strongly suggests that speeds here are higher than the national speed limit of 30mph.

Wadhurst Parish Council Black Cat Traffic Survey 31/07/22 - 06/08/22							
Site Location : Cousley Wood Road (B2100) at proposed Primmers site centre access on the 30mph warning post							
		South Bound (Channel 1)			North Bound (Channel 2)		
		Total	Mean	85%ile	Total	Mean	85%ile
		Vehicles	Average	Speed	Vehicles	Average	Speed
<i>Fri</i>	<i>05/08/2022</i>	2028	33	39	2031	31	36
<i>Sat</i>	<i>06/08/2022</i>	1725	33	38	1718	31	35
<i>Sun</i>	<i>31/07/2022</i>	1278	33	39	1709	31	36
<i>Mon</i>	<i>01/08/2022</i>	1999	33	38	1881	31	36
<i>Tues</i>	<i>02/08/2022</i>	2023	33	38	2033	31	35
<i>Wed</i>	<i>03/08/2022</i>	2028	33	39	1986	31	36
<i>Thur</i>	<i>04/08/2022</i>	2001	33	39	2020	31	36
Week Total		13082			13378		

Conclusions:
Recording started c. 12.00 on Sat 30/07/22 and finished recording at 12.00 on 07/08/22
Comparison to the Primmers Field Developer's Traffic Survey Assessment is not available.
ESCC to evaluate new proposed (centre site) access for application WD/2022/1610/MAO
(ESCC have said original proposed site access nearer Sparrows Green Road / Cousley Wood Road is not viable)
 c. 20 vehicles daily recorded at over 45-50mph on Southbound channel
 c. 6 vehicles daily recorded at over 45-50mph on Northbound channel
Extreme danger of southbound traffic coming over blind hill by Primmers Lane
Extreme danger of northbound traffic due to blind bend at proposed access site
Recommend objection to this new proposed access.

This means that the proposed visibility spays of 2.4m x 59m and 2.4m x 60m are woefully inadequate (see solid red line in sketch below from the Transport Statement).

If visibility spays of 2.4 x 90m were adopted, as required by East Sussex Highways, then the site does not seem viable, because there is insufficient visibility to turn right out of the site – towards Cousley Wood – (see dashed red lines over-laying the sketch – overleaf - in the Transport Statement, which are estimated to show what 2.4 x 90m splays would look like).



As non-specialists on road safety, WPC defers to the greater expertise of consultants. Nevertheless, WPC believes that access arrangements are not feasible and are therefore hazardous. Indeed, the parish council believes that the access arrangements of such a development, as presented, are dangerous and could risk fatalities given the proposed visibility splays proposed by the applicant.

It is not good enough for the developer to suggest that since there have been no fatalities in the *past* 10 years that there is no risk in the future. The Safe Systems Approach gives greater consideration to risk factors on the road network and (rightly) places credence on *anticipating future* risks rather than seeking refuge in the historic track record, which may prove to be a poor guide to future risks.

Once more, we also draw attention to one of the top five issues identified the High Weald AONB Management Plan:

“insensitive high engineering including passing bays, deep visibility splays to entrances and suburban signage and lighting.”

Not only do the recommended visibility splays give insufficient visibility to turn right out of the site, they would cause significant harm to the character of Cousley Wood Road, a historic routeway at the settlement edge. This is contrary to objective R1 of the Plan.

(11) Ecology: Negative environmental considerations

We draw attention to the objection, dated 5th August 2022, submitted by Mrs Charmaine Noel, a professional Ecologist, professional member of CIEEM, and chartered landscape architect registered with the Landscape Institute. We adopt this objection as our own, and attach for clarity.

8. Appeals: None

9. Planning control and High Street Enforcement: *None*

Breach of Conditions Notice: *None*

10. To discuss Tree Preservation Orders – WPC notes that any parishioner may contact WDC with regard to an application for a TPO.

11. Conservation areas

12. Community Infrastructure Levy

13. Policy/Correspondence/Consultations

13.1 Monkhill Ruling response from Simon Bell (Clerksroom) – **taken as a confidential item.**

13.2 Wealden Landscape Character Assessment 2022 – **Action, Clerk to retain this as a standing agenda item until 30/9/22**

13.3 Wealden Open Space Assessment Report 2022 - **Action, Clerk to retain this as a standing agenda item until 30/9/22**

13.4 Wealden Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy 2022 - **Action, Clerk to retain this as a standing agenda item until 30/9/22**

13.5 Wealden Draft Wadhurst Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2020 - **Action, Clerk to retain this as a standing agenda item until 30/9/22**

14. Items for Noting:

14.1 WDC motion to protect Wealden's rivers and seas. - **noted**

To consider notices of decisions received:

Certificate of Lawful Development: *None*

Raise no Objections: *None*

Prior Approval Required: *None*

Not Issued: *None*

Issued: *None*

Approvals:

Application No WD/2022/1195/F

Description: Erection of domestic driveway to serve dwelling

Location: WESTERLEIGH COTTAGE, MAYFIELD LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6JE

15. Urgent Issues at the discretion of the Chair for noting or inclusion on future agenda - none

Meeting ended: 11.48 hrs.