

WADHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held at the Pavilion, Sparrows Green Recreation Ground, Wadhurst on 3rd December 2022 at 9.30am.

Present: - Cllrs Gadd (Chair) Cllr C Moore, Cllr P Moore, Cllr Anderson, Cllr Crawford
There was 1 members of the public present

Meeting started at: 09:30 hours

Members all approved for Cllr Gadd to Chair the meeting.

MINUTES

1. To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Shairp and Cllr Smith.
2. To receive declarations of interest and updates to members' register of interests
None
3. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 19th November 2022
Minutes to be approved next meeting due to Cllr Murphy's resignation
4. To discuss matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 19th November 2022
None
5. Public forum – time limit 15 minute
*A parishioner spoke in connection to Marlin House; he questioned whether the hedge could be taken away, as it is on someone else's land. Also concerned about traffic survey being done during half term and while the trainline was closed, so questioned whether it shows the correct figure.
Member of public asked if WPC could find out when the local traffic survey was done.*
6. Pre- application briefings
7. To consider licence and planning applications received and make recommendations
8. To consider live planning applications for further consideration and recommendations
9. To consider planning appeals received and make recommendations
10. To consider any footpaths modification orders and make recommendations
11. Planning Control (& High Street Planning Enforcement)
12. To discuss Tree Preservation Orders
13. Conservation areas
14. CIL
15. Policy/Correspondence/Consultations
16. Items for noting
17. Urgent issues at the discretion of the Chair for noting or inclusion on future agenda.

6. Pre-application briefings

7. Licence and planning applications

7.1 Licencing: *None*

7.2 Planning:

7.2.1 Application No. [WD/2022/2368/F](#)

Date of notification: 18th November 2022

Parish Council Consultee expiry date: 9th December 2022

Location: UPLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, LOWER HIGH STREET, WADHURST, TN5 6AZ

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Description: (1) extension to existing arts & music block to accommodate proposed reception space and addition of new emergency exit stair. (2) Replacement of all doors and windows to the arts & music block and james building. (3) Associated works including installation of fencing/gates.

Comment: **OBJECTION:** the WPC objects to the proposed new aluminium windows / replacement of wooden windows with aluminium. These are out of keeping with the HWAONB, particularly the new reception / Arts building which faces the conservation area and because of the unsustainability of the materials chosen (aluminium is environmentally unfriendly particularly compared to timber). The Wealden Design Guide gives indicative examples (in section 4) of embodied energy being 110kWh/m³ for local timber versus 2,793-55,868 kWh/m³ for aluminium. The existing wooden cladding material requires similar periodic maintenance to wooden windows so utilising wooden windows would not be difficult to incorporate into their maintenance programme.

Parking and traffic management: the WPC is concerned that school busses are not currently using the bus parking area due to the gradient of the school entrance (which causes them to 'ground') and hence they stop outside the school causing severe congestion at least twice in a school day. The WPC request that any proposed scheme addresses this issue. Outside of school hours the car park named in the proposal is used by shoppers as overflow parking; the WPC are concerned that closing off the car park with a sliding gate would take this facility out of their use.

Local residents and businesses raised congestion and parking as their number one issue in the Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey and hence are keen that any proposals improve rather than exacerbate these issues.

Objection to Aluminium Windows: references

The Wealden Design Guide,

Section 4, Materials:

paragraph 11.1 , “ *The careful selection of building materials can make a major contribution to sustainability objectives. Natural materials can be recycled and, in the case of timber are best drawn from renewable sources. This is in contrast to many modern manufactured materials, such as PvCU and even cement, which are environmentally unfriendly in their manufacture and can give rise to problems over removal and disposal.*”

paragraph 11.2 “ *Materials for developments should be selected on the basis of: - Low embodied energy n Sourcing from renewable sources - Local sourcing to reduce pollution from transport - The use of Independently accredited timber by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)*”

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Section 10 para 10.2 “ *Aluminium and uPVC doors and windows are generally unsuitable as replacements on older buildings as they can spoil their intrinsic character. Aluminium or uPVC products are easily identifiable due to the nature of their sections, jointing methods, finish, window division and opening lights, particularly when compared to traditional designs. Therefore, wooden frames from sustainable timber sources are generally preferred to aluminium or uPVC.*”

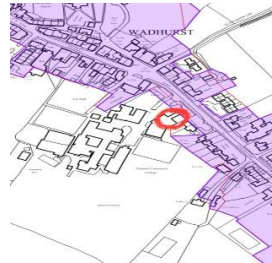
The High Weald AONB Management Plan encourages the use of timber.

Objective G1 “*To help secure climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald’s valued landscape and habitats*” proposed action “*Maximise local timber use in construction*”

Objective S1 “*To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside*” proposed action “*Preferentially select goods and services which support AONB landscape conservation in procurement decisions e.g. locally produced food, fuel, fencing, timber for construction*”

development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.” proposed action “*Support innovation in timber technology and its use in construction*”

Objective W4 “*To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.*” proposed action “*Seek to use local timber for furniture and construction*”



Proximity to the conservation area (see image)

7.2.2 Application No. [WD/2022/2955/FA](#)

Date of notification: 21 November 2022

Parish Council Consultee expiry date: 12th December 2022

Location: WOODLARK HOUSE, BALACLAVA LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6EH

Description: removal of condition 4 of WD/2017/0356/F (construction of new dwellinghouse land between Farthings and the Winnats, Balaclava Lane, Wadhurst, TN5 6EH

Withdrawn by WDC after the publication of Agenda.

7.2.3 Application No. [WD/2022/2788/FA](#)

Date of notification: 22nd November 2022

Parish Council Consultee expiry date: 6th December 2022

Location: WOODLARK HOUSE, BALACLAVA LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6EH

Description: Variation of condition 7 of WD/2021/2365/FA (construction of new dwellinghouse land between Farthings and The Winnats, Balaclava Lane, Wadhurst) to vary the design of the windows and allow for installation of 1 new window and 1 new roof light.

The description of development has been changed

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OBJECT on the grounds that there is no change and Condition should stand: **Condition 7:** *“Notwithstanding the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no windows or openings (other than those expressly authorised by this permission) shall be inserted into the east and west side elevation(s) and no rooflights (other than those expressly authorised by this permission), or other openings or extensions shall be added above eaves level to the dwelling hereby permitted. PD06 REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to regulate and control the development of land and to protect the residential and visual amenities of the locality having regard to SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy EN27 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.”*

7.2.4 Application No. [WD/2022/2884/F](#)

Date of notification: 22nd November 2022

Parish Council Consultee expiry date: 13th December 2022

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

Description: Partial demolition and extension to form two storey dwelling

OBJECT COMMENT: Objection on similar grounds to the WPC’s objection to the withdrawn application WD/2022/1828/F. The WPC does not consider that the new application addresses the concerns raised by the WPC re that proposal and reiterates and expands on them below.

The WPC also kindly requests that the application is considered by Committee for the following reasons

- whilst the building incorporates part of the existing dwelling, the changes to it are so dramatic as to effectively render it a new building in the HWAONB
- the WPC is concerned that the applicant reports via social media that the planning officer “*wasn’t bothered by the parish objection, they object to EVERYTHING*” so “*are largely ignored*”.

• Objection on the grounds that the proposed dwelling’s mass, flat roof and materials fail to conserve and enhance the High Weald AONB; the proposal fails to provide a sense of place;

is harmful to the dark skies for which Wadhurst is renowned; the materials are not sustainable and fails to meet paragraph 130 of the NPPF and WDC policies EN6, EN27, HG4 and HG10.

The WDC Landscape Character Assessment 2022 (LCA) defines landscape character as: *“a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.... understanding the character of place and evaluating an area’s defining characteristic is a key component in managing growth sustainably, and ensuring that the inherent character and qualities of Wealden’s landscape can continue to be appreciated. An understanding of character can be used to ensure that any change or development does not undermine whatever is valued or characteristic in a particular landscape and helps guide positive changes that conserves, enhances, restores, or creates local character.”*

It states that where any of the key characteristics and/or landscape qualities within the LCA will be affected by a proposal, it should be asked if the proposal can be altered in any way to avoid adverse effects on the key characteristics. Our view is that it can.

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Wadhurst is in the High Weald AONB, a unique and protected outstandingly beautiful landscape.

The LCA states that the following feature is characteristic, and particularly valued for its contribution to character in the High Weald AONB:

- The vernacular architecture of brick, oak, sandstone and flint which reflects the locally available materials and provides a sense of place

It recommends that:

- New buildings reinforce and respond to local character in their scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in the use of materials;
- Development should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB design guidance (HWAONBDG), High Weald guidance on the selection and use of colour in development and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

The proposal fails on each of the above recommendations. It also fails to meet the following requirements:

1. The NPPF, para 130, requires that developments are “*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting...establish or maintain a strong sense of place.*”
2. WDC policy HG4 states “*within the development boundaries...the established character of existing residential areas will be protected.*”
3. WDC policy HG10 states “*within the development boundaries...the extension and alteration of existing dwellings will be permitted where the scale, style, design and materials are appropriate and sympathetic in relation to the existing buildings.*”
4. WDC policy EN27 states “*the scale, form site coverage, density and design of developments and use of materials and landscaping should respect the character of adjoining development and promote local distinctiveness.*”
5. WDC policy EN6 states that “*Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as defined on the Proposals Map, will only be permitted if it conserves or enhances the natural beauty and character of the landscape. Particular care will be paid to the siting, scale, layout and design of development. In considering any proposals, particular regard will be had to:- (1) the landscape characteristics.....(7) the traditional settlement pattern, building styles and materials*”;

This application is for the partial demolition and extension of an existing dwelling, but

The extension is not subservient to the existing dwelling; in fact, the existing dwelling can no longer be read at all. We do not object to this in principle, but it does mean that the proposal should be considered as a new, replacement dwelling, rather than partial demolition and extension.

Whilst the existing dwelling is of no particular architectural merit, it reflects the local vernacular, with a steeply pitched clay tile roof, and nestles in to the site and wider location.

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The proposed dwelling does not. As above, the LCA states that one of the key characteristics of the High Weald that is particularly valued for its contribution to character is the local vernacular architecture, reflecting locally available materials and providing a sense of place. The proposed dwelling does not respond to local character in its design, and does not meaningfully draw on the principles contained within the HWAONBHDG, High Weald guidance on the selection and use of colour in development and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan. It is urban in character, from the design and materials of the dwelling itself, to the high, close boarded fencing and Resin bonded gravel front yard. It has no positive sense of place, intrinsic to the High Weald character. In particular, the following features are considered unacceptable:

1. Mass – whilst the design and access statement is correct that the building shows only a modest increase in footprint (if the demolition of the outbuildings is assured), the volume of the building has increased dramatically. The bulk and silhouette of the proposed dwelling creates a massing which is too dominant and has no positive relationship with its neighbours, making it visually discordant in relation to the character and appearance of the area;
2. Flat roof – The HWAONBHDG states that *“the roofscape of settlements in the High Weald is one of the key defining built characteristics, and in order to embed a sense-of-place in new housing developments it is critical for new roofscapes to reflect and contribute to a sense-of-place.”* It goes on to detail that roof pitches in clay tiled roofs are reasonably steep; occasionally 42.5 degrees, never lower, **but more usually 47.5 to 50 degrees** (emphasis added). The existing bungalow has a steep roof pitch.
3. Materials –
 - I. Roof - Clay tile roofs and tile hanging is common to most of the High Weald; indeed, the existing bungalow on the site has a clay tile roof. According to the HWAONBHDG, new developments should use small module clay tiles, with natural camber, which give the characteristic undulations of roofs and elevations. Even large module, or interlinked tiles in clay or concrete are considered *“inappropriate”* within the High Weald. The design, access and planning statement does not specify the roofing materials, but given the proposal is for a flat roof, clearly the roofing materials are not clay tiles, and would be inappropriate within the High Weald.
 - ii. Cladding – Typical and characteristic of the High Weald is first floor cladding in weatherboarding or tile-hanging. The HWAONBHDG states that *“locally sourced weather boarding is a good way to use local materials and reference aspects of local design and can also support the AONB by encouraging the sustainable management of woodlands (see Management Plan objective W4).”* The proposed black corrugated metal cladding to the elevations is industrial (not agricultural as is suggested in the Design, Access and Planning Statement (DAP)) and incongruous in this High Weald AONB location.
4. 2m high close board fencing – The HWAONBDG states that private front curtilages are typically enclosed either by hedgerows, low walls, wooden picket fences or

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occasionally metal railings. It goes on to state that “close board fences are not an appropriate boundary treatment to define either the fronts or sides of plots from the public realm. They are uncharacteristic of vernacular treatments, and contribute little to visual quality or placemaking.” We note that the application form states that the site can be seen from public land, but the DAP states that the site is not visible from any public road. If the site cannot be seen from the public realm, the high close board fencing nevertheless adds to the urbanity of the overall proposal, and we object on these grounds.

Roof lights – the proposed roof lights would cause significant light spillage. 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/arcsec – 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.*”

5. Frontage – there is no door on the proposed front elevation, which is untypical of the High Weald. Combined with the 2m high close boarded fencing, bulk, silhouette and materials, this adds to the industrial appearance and urbanity of the proposed dwelling. In addition, all but one of the windows on the ground floor of the proposed frontage are high level clerestory windows, untypical of the High Weald. The remaining ground floor window on the proposed frontage is to a playroom, and the only first floor window on the proposed frontage is to an en suite bathroom. The HWAONBDG states that “*active frontages (building elevations with front doors and windows) should be employed*”.

With regard to the local precedents referred to in the DAP, we say as follows:

- 1) Land between Farthings and The Winnats, Balaclava Lane WD/2021/2365/FA
This can be positively differentiated from the Homedene application in terms of bulk, silhouette and materials, which consist of timber cladding. In addition, the design was a response to the significant constraints of the site.

- 2) Tethers End, Shernfold Park Farm, Frant WD/2019/0817/F
We note from the officer report that “*the reduction in the height of the pitched roof...would reduce the visual impact of the built form on this site in views through the conservation area. In addition, the proposals would lead to a design of building that would be a contemporary nod to the design of the adjacent Shernfold Park Lodge.*”

- 3) Holmwood Farm, Wallcrouch
This dwelling does not sit within the Wealden planning authority area and therefore creates no precedent for the proposed development. We do, however, note that this is a dwelling in the open countryside where the materials used may be considered more appropriate. (This a rural agricultural area rather than the proposed development site which sits between other houses in a village setting).

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Sustainability:

We also observe that the proposed steel cladding and aluminium windows are highly energy intensive to produce, thereby undermining the sustainability credentials of the proposal

outlined in the DAP.

Section 4 of The Wealden Design Guide 11.1 states that “*The careful selection of building materials can make a major contribution to sustainability objectives*” and 11.2 states that “*Materials for developments should be selected on the basis of:*

- *Low embodied energy*
- *Sourcing from renewable sources*
- *Local sourcing to reduce pollution from transport*

The embodied energy of the proposed steel is much higher than the traditional materials used locally and unnecessarily increases the carbon footprint of the building.

Section 4 of The Wealden Design Guide gives indicative examples of embodied energy for steel as up to 80,000 kWh/m³ which compares to only 110 kWh/m³ for the sort of local timber which is traditionally used for cladding in the HWAONB. Hence, as well as conflicting with the aims of the HWAONB management plan to promote the use of local materials and timber (Objectives G3, S1, S3, W4) far from being sustainable, the use of the proposed cladding is over 700 times more energy intensive.

The WPC notes that the proposed Air source Heat pump is sited close to the neighbouring property (the Spinney) and raises a concern that this might cause a potential noise nuisance

Impact on neighbouring properties:

Aside from the massing and visual impact noted before, the WPC notes that the overshadowing survey only shows projections up to 3pm. This is appropriate for winter months but in the height of summer the WPC raises concerns that this may cause significant increases in overshadowing to the Spinney in late afternoon and early evening. The WPC suggest that further information be made obtained.

We note the proposed dwelling is in a tucked away location, but we do not consider that this negates the requirement to conserve and enhance the High Weald AONB.

The WPC considers that the proposed design has architectural merits in another location but is not appropriate in this AONB setting.

According to the HWAONB Management plan “*design of new housing developments failing to respond to, or reinforce AONB character*” and “*Erosion of AONB character through suburbanisation,, large/landscape-intrusive replacement dwellings, and smaller interventions, boundary treatments etc., which have a cumulative effect.*” are two of the top five issues facing the HWAONB today.

and is concerned that the proposal will dilute the local distinctiveness which the rationale of Objective S3 of the HWAONB Management plan elucidates as “*To protect and enhance the character and quality of buildings in the High Weald, and re-establish the use of local materials as a means of protecting the environment and adding to this distinctiveness.*”

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If WDC is minded to grant planning permission, **we request that conditions be attached so that the outbuildings scheduled for removal are removed prior to the commencement of building.**

7.2.5 Application No. [WD/2022/2685/FR](#)

Date of notification: 22nd November 2022

Parish Council Consultee expiry date: 13th December 2022

Location: 3 THE MARLPIT, DURGATES, WADHURST, TN5 6UP

Description: Construction of front entrance porch with decking, addition of natural timber weatherboard to first floor front elevation of property, and alterations to existing garden room.

NO OBJECTION

8. Live planning applications

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

To the north of Marling House, Station Rd, Wadhurst TN5 6RT

We have noted the new Highways report and noted the report and the traffic survey was done during half term, railway was inactive due to repairs plus there were roadworks.

We have also noted that the bus stop is in need of improvement however WPC has looked at this and no improvement is possible, due to the width of pavement. In addition the width of the proposed pavement would encroach on land not owned by the developer.

1. WPC own the lamp post, and would resist any changes due to the high footfall to the station.
2. We question the deliverability of the site access as property is owned by a third party.
3. Recommend the site is visited.
4. We recommend that a Black Cat survey is undertaken and positioned in identical position as the traffic survey.

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

The Boat House Bistro, Bewl Water, Bewlbridge Lane, Cousley Wood, Wadhurst, TN3 8JH.

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

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

8.4 [WD/2022/1610/MAO](#)

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

8.5 [WD/2022/0391/MAJ](#)

Land west of Styles Lane and south of High Street, Wadhurst, TN5 6DZ

8.6 [WD/2022/0550/F](#)

The Paddock, Tapsells Lane, Wadhurst, TN5 6PL

Correspondence from the Agent for this application – *We would have no objection that the application is determined as a Major Development and as such would need to go to the Planning Committee for determination.*

Cllr C Moore advised that this can come off of the next agenda.

8.7 [WD/2022/0662/MAO](#)

Little Windmill Farm, Windmill Lane, Cousley Wood, Wadhurst.

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9. Appeals:

10. To consider any footpaths modification orders and make recommendations:

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

Breach of Conditions Notice: *None*

12. To discuss Tree Preservation Orders:

Application No. [TM/2022/0201/TPO](#) (Included for information, WPC are not being consulted on this application)

Location: WINDMILL HOUSE, WINDMILL LANE, WADHURST, EAST SUSSEX, TN5 6DJ

Description: fell seven ash trees within tree preservation order (Wadhurst) no 24/3, 1982.

Due to disease with Ash Die Back.

13. Conservation areas

14. Community Infrastructure Levy

15. Policy/Correspondence/Consultations

15.1 High Weald AONB Management Plan Consultation 2024-2029 & Biennial Review

Cllr P Moore meeting Jason Lavender on Wednesday 7/12/2022 at 10:00

15.2 Conflict between Wealden District Council approach to contemporary development in the High Weald AONB and the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide

*Update from Deputy Clerk: WDC declined the meeting and referred to parish cluster meeting. **Action:** Deputy Clerk to contact WDC and request date of next Cluster meeting and send to Planning Committee, rep will be member of Planning Committee.*

15.3 [News from the High Weald AONB - October 2022 \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

Update from Cllr Smith re: Communications. Deferred: Cllr Smith was not present at the meeting. Action: Deputy Clerk to add to agenda for 17th December 2022

15.4 Dark skies - matters to be considered by WDC when determining planning applications

Update from Deputy Clerk: WDC declined the meeting referred to parish cluster meeting. Action: as per item 15.2 - Deputy Clerk to contact WDC and request date of next Cluster meeting and send to Planning Committee, rep will be member of Planning Committee.

15.5 Restrictions on permitted development in the High Weald AONB

Update from Deputy Clerk: WDC declined the meeting referred to parish cluster meeting. Action: as per item 15.2 - Deputy Clerk to contact WDC and request date of next Cluster meeting and send to Planning Committee, rep will be member of Planning Committee.

15.6 Etchingam Railway Station and Dark Skies

Correspondence from North Parish Group re Etchingam Railway Station and Dark Skies

*Cllr C Moore said to write back to them to say WPC are in full support and need to organise for Cllr C Moore and Cllr Smith to put on social media. **Action:** Deputy Clerk None given*

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16. Items for Noting:

To consider notices of decisions received:

Certificate of Lawful Development: *None*

Raise no Objections: *None*

Prior Approval Required: *None*

Not Issued: *None*

Issued: *None*

Withdrawn:

Application No. WD/2022/2223/F

Location: RIDGECOTE, MAYFIELD LANE, WADHURST, TN5 6HX

Description: Demolition of existing dwelling; erection of replacement dwelling with associated works including altered vehicular access.

Application No. WD/2022/2338/F

Location: THE OAST HOUSE, BEST BEECH HILL, WADHURST, TN5 6JH

Description: Partial demolition of existing rear single storey mono-pitch extension and replace with a flat roof single storey extension.

Approvals:

Application No. WD/2022/2385/F

Description: Installation of a siphon control kiosk.

Location: LAND AT BEWL WATER RESERVOIR, BEWLBRIDGE LANE, LAMBERHURST, TN3 8JH

Decision: Approved

Response from WDC to Parish Council: *This is a functional kiosk, designed for a specific purpose and providing an important role to maintaining water supply to much of the area. It is modest in size, in a discreet location within the Reservoir site, and it would be disproportionate to expect a high quality design building for such a functional structure*

Application No. WD/2022/1861/F and WD/2022/1862/LB

Description: Dismantle an existing unsafe boundary wall and rebuild in reused bricks and bricks to match.

Location: POND HOUSE, HIGH STREET, WADHURST, TN5 6AA

Decision: approved

17. Urgent Issues at the discretion of the Chair for noting or inclusion on future agenda

Meeting Closed at 11:20am