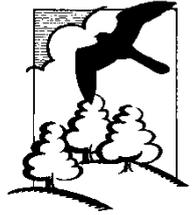


HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES

Monday 12th August 2019 at The Copt Hall, Cophall Avenue

Present: Cllr Escombe (Chairman), Cllr Taylor-Smith (Vice Chairman) Cllr Pyne, Cllr Lusty, Cllr Appelbe, Cllr Blake, Cllr Cory, Cllr Hunt, Cllr Green and Cllr Weeden

1. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- i) Community Safety Update – Simon Humphreys PCSO discussed a number of issues mainly crime figures, recording of crime, anti-social behaviour, scams an increase in PCSO's / Police numbers.

Nationally, the recording of crime has changed and plus an emphasis on reporting crime which has resulted in an increase both nationally and locally of reported crime. In addition, the figures are for "Hawkhurst" and the police areas "Hawkhurst and Sandhurst. This can lead to two separate crime figures. Fundamentally, every crime is important but Hawkhurst is a safe area to live in comparison to some areas of Kent and the country.

Anti- social behaviour and neighbourhood disputes are a focus for much of PCSO Humphries time in Hawkhurst.

There is a move nationally and locally to move back towards neighbourhood policing with an increase in PCSO's and Police numbers. Not sure how that will pan out in Hawkhurst.

The major concern at the moment is an increase in scams targeting the elderly population – please be aware and inform residents do not give bank details to anyone.

Cllr Escombe thanked PCSO Humphreys for his update and any we would be happy to promote any policing initiatives.

- ii) Update from KCC Member and TWBC Ward Members – NA
- iii) Update on Cranbrook Rd / Heartenoak Rd junction - NA

2. APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE:

Cllr Whittle, on holiday, Cllr Jones illness and Cllr Fitzpatrick on holiday

TWBC Cllrs Palmer, Thomson and Bland apologies

KCC Cllr Holden Apologies

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS: *To receive notice of personal interests, whether of a prejudicial nature or otherwise, in respect of items on this agenda, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.*

Cllr Appleby Planning application 32

4. HCT 2018 – Council Nominated Trustee

Cllr Escombe introduced the paper proposing Ellen Neville as a Parish Council nominee to the HCT 2018 Trust Cllr Green asked why we are nominating and the Clerk responded that it is part of their constitution.

Cllr Escombe proposed and Cllr Weeden seconded and Ellen Neville was approved unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

5.1 Approval

i) Cllr Escombe proposed and Cllr Taylor-Smith seconded the minutes of the 8th July 2019, agreed unanimously.

5.2 To note

i) The minutes of the Community Hall Working Group held on the 22nd July 2019 were noted.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES - none

7. PLANNING

7.1 Planning applications to be considered

No	Application No	Proposal	Location
29	19/01159/Full	Erection of single storey shed in south eastern corner of rear garden	Church Court, The Moor, Hawkhurst, Kent Tn18 4NT

Background:

No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

The proposal is for a small timber shed for storage purposes. It has been located well away from the house and it seems unlikely it will impact on neighbouring properties.

We **support** this application.

Note TWBC agreed extension and then have already decided – we have complained about this.

30	19/01658/full	Erection of garages/store	Suncourt, Copt Hall Avenue, Hawkhurst Kent TN18 4LR
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Background:

Materials will largely match existing. It will result in a large willow tree being removed and cutting back or possibly removing a hedge. There will be an extra off-road parking space, as the garage will be set back beyond where the drive currently ends. No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

The materials seem appropriate and in keeping with the host house (in line with HD4 of the NDP). The garage is not excessive in terms of size and will be subservient to the house. The houses in Copthall Avenue are set at varying distances from the road and the proposed location of the garage would not be out of keeping with the position of other buildings in the road.

The proposed garage will be visible from the road. It is very close to the boundary and will be positioned right next to the neighbour's summer house. Although single-storey, the garage will be taller and bigger than the summer house. However, it seems unlikely to block the sun.

We are unclear from the documents provided whether the intention is to remove the hedge and replace it with a fence or to cut back the hedge. We would be concerned if the hedge were to be removed. The design guidance notes in the NDP state a preference for hedges over fences. It is a shame that the willow tree needs to be removed although we note that the location proposed for the garage would enable the entire drive to be retained, therefore, having a beneficial impact on the parking situation in Copthall Avenue. Hawkhurst's draft tree policy expects that removal of trees will be avoided wherever possible. If this is not possible, the requirement is that any tree that is removed should be replaced with three trees.

Whilst we are minded to **support** this application, we request that the planning officer follow up on the following points:

Who owns the boundary hedge that will be removed/cutback?

Whether the positioning of the garage will impact on the neighbour's summer house?

Seek agreement to replace the willow with three other trees, to be located in the part of garden behind the host house rather than the land which appears to run behind neighbouring properties.

Vote: In Favour 10, Against 0 Abstain 0 – **Decision Support**

31	19/01624/TPO	Trees Eucalyptus (T1) Reduce by 5 metres	Pinners, Ockley Rd, Hawkhurst TN18 4DP
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Background:

The request is based on the recommendation of a tree surgeon. The tree has not previously been maintained and is overhanging the road and driveway. Eucalyptus have a tendency to shed branches. No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

Given the size of the tree and the extent to which it overhangs the road, we **support** this application.

Vote: In Favour 10, Against 0 Abstain 0 – **Decision Support**

32	19/01660/TPO	Trees Oak (T1) – Crown reduce by approximately 2 – 3m and removed deadwood over 50mm in diameter	1, Dickens Way, Hawkhurst TN18 4PQ
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Background:

A professional has recommended that the work is required to make the tree safe.

Comments and Recommendation:

We **support** this application.

Vote: In Favour 9, Against 0 Abstain 1 (Cllr Appleby) – **Decision Support**

33	19/01829/TPO	Sycamores (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5) Reducing 4-5 metres of growth on to existing unions. Sycamore (T6) removal of 4 of the trees lowest branches and to reduce the lateral growing capacity over the garden and house by 2 metres.	The Oaks, Queen Rd Hawkhurst TN18 4HH
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Background:

Row of sycamores is on the boundary with Queens road. The advice is that the trees have previously been reduced and are now due again as the unions are becoming weak with the regrowth.

Comments and Recommendation:

We **support** this application.

Vote: In Favour 10, Against 0 Abstain 0 – **Decision Support**

34	19/01914/Full	Demolition of existing extension and erection of replacement two storey extension	Woodsden Oast, Water Lane, Hawkhurst TN18 5AP
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Background:

Planning permission was previously being granted for an extension at the end of 2018 and prior to that in 2016 (18/02512/FULL and 16/07205/FULL). We objected to the 2018 application on the grounds it was too big and detracted from the Oast house. There is very limited information available other than the actual drawings. No comments from residents.

Comments and Recommendation:

This appears to be a very big extension. The previously approved extension (18/02512/FULL - to which HPC objected due to its size) was judged to just comply with H11 due to the removal of outbuildings. However, this proposal is bigger as it is entirely two-storey rather than a mix of one and two-storey. Therefore, it cannot be considered a modest extension in line with H11. Policy H16 of the Draft Local Plan includes a similar requirement. Whilst this is not yet in place, it does indicate that policy H11 is still relevant.

The proposed materials are very dark and result in an "agricultural" appearance. In this respect, it fits with the Oast. However, the size of the proposed extension, coupled with the dark materials results in the extension dominating the Oast house. In our view, this detracts from the Oast house and is overly intrusive. We are also concerned that the amount of glazing is excessive. Indeed, the delegated report on the previous application commented that "the proposed extensions are not over glazed and this prevents them becoming too domesticated and retains the appearance of a rural outbuilding."

The property is set well back from the road, but the open views out across the AONB mean that it is visible from the road. We are concerned about the negative impact of such an imposing extension on the landscape character. The delegated report on the previously approved application noted that the two-storey element of the extension was set back from the Oast house meaning that it did not compete with the strong features of the Oast. This is not the case with this application.

We **object** to this application.

Vote: In Favour 0, Against 10 Abstain 0 – **Decision Support**

8 MATTERS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- 8.1 Litter Angels** – Cllr Escombe introduced the paper which aimed at working with a Charity (Litter Angels) who liaise with the local MP and draw down resources to work with local schools on litter education.

Several Cllrs felt that it would be best to work with HCT 2018, local youth groups and add to the parishes portfolio of anti-litter initiative.

Cllr Green proposed and Cllr Taylor-Smith seconded that we “Work with HCT 2018, local schools and youth organisations to deliver a litter education programme” – This was approved unanimously and Cllr Pyne will take the lead.

- 8.2 Development in Hawkhurst** – The Council discussed the approach / role of the Parish Council to developments in Hawkhurst now that the draft Local Plan has been published.

The debate focused on several points;

- **The Parish Council has a formal role to act as a consultee on planning applications and the Local Plan.**

It was agreed that the Parish Council has a formal consultee role to consider planning matters and either support / object to planning applications / Local plan. The Parish Council must deliver on this as the representatives of the parish.

- **Engaging with the public through the process and not pre-determining your position as a Councillor and thus baring oneself from voting**

In discussing a planning application or the Local Plan a Parish Councillor as an individual can opening discuss a view, however they run the risk of placing themselves in a difficult position that when it comes to a vote they have to declare that they have “pre-determined their views” and cannot vote on that item.

Several Councillors emphasized that this has been an issue and legal cases have been brought against Councillors elsewhere. Saying that, Hawkhurst Parish Council is a consultee on planning not a decision maker so the legal cases are unlikely. The conclusion was that Councillors should not express their views if they wished to vote on an application.

- **Support or not of local organisations for or against planning applications / local plan**

The conclusion was that we need to listen, engage but not directly support or grant aid such organisations. However, if we commission work on planning issues we should be transparent and make the reports publically accessible.

- **Public meeting / referendums**

The Parish Council decide against holding referendums on specific planning issues, but should host public meetings where both sides of an argument can be heard.

8.3 Communications – Cllr J Hunt felt there was unnecessary email communications between the Cllrs. If a Councillor wants to contact the clerk on a matter not all councillors need to be copied in. – there was general agreement to this.

Cllr Weeden requested that the clerk circulate meeting information from TWBC – Clerk Agreed.

Cllr Hunt raised the concern that decisions were being made by email rather than decisions being made by Council.

The clerk explained that under the recently adopted Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations decision making and been delegated to the Clerk and Committees within the agreed limits. Therefore, if appropriate, to ensure transparency the Clerk email's the Councillors if an opportunity arises which requires delegation to be used, takes a view from the Councillors and acts appropriately.

In every case there is a report back to the appropriate Committee and or Council as required by the adopted Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

It was agreed that a common sense approach should be taken.

9. REPORTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND UPDATES

- i) Facilities and Services Committee – Cllr Hunt stated that actions were on track, a report on the cemetery would be forth coming
- ii) Strategy, Administration and Projects Committee – Next meeting 19th August 2019
- iii) Personnel – 31st July 2019 see confidential report
- iv) Community Hall Working Group 22nd July 2019 – Cllr Cory noted the move to change the name to Community Centre Working Group, also see confidential report
- v) Fete Committee – Cllr Hunt reported starting to gear up towards Winter Festival
- vi) Crime figures – see discussion by PCSO, item 1.1

10. FINANCE:

10.1 Finance figures for July 2019 – 12.8.19

Accounts for payment	£	11,346.97	to 12.08.19
Payment received	£	12,019.80	to 31.07.19
Net Expenditure	£	672.83	
Cambridge & Counties	£	86,786.66	to 30.04.18
Cambridge Building Society	£	75,339.40	to 31.12.18
Lloyds Current	£	10,771.00	to 31.07.19
Lloyds Access Reserve	£	103,258.62	to 28.06.19

10.2 Cllr Escombe proposed and Cllr Taylor-Smith seconded the payments schedule, agreed unanimously.

10.3 Cllr Escombe proposed and Cllr Taylor-Smith seconded the account reconciliation, agreed unanimously. Cllr Escombe thanked Cllr Green for his hard work in obtaining

a refund of £7,151.20 on Small Business Rates for the Council. See footnote at end of Council minutes.

11. CORRESPONDENCE – see file

No	Date	From	Issue
1	23.7.19	Mr. Priest	Dangerous verges – discussed and linked up with KCC
2	24.7.19	DHA	Hawkhurst Golf Club proposal

12. NOTES & INFORMATION on file

13. BURIALS AND MEMORIALS

Date	Name	
16 th July 2019	Brian Chaney	Internment of ashes

14. CONFIDENTIAL:

- 14.1 The Council discussed an update on Hawkhurst NDP and TWBC Local Plan
- 14.2 The Council discussed a Personnel Report
- 14.3 The Council discussed CHWG report - appointment of Architects for new community building on King George V Playing Field

CLOSURE: 9.44pm

Chairman of the Council.....

Date.....

Agenda Notes for Members:

Item 3 on the Agenda, Declaration of Interests. If a Member has a prejudicial interest, this should be declared at the start of the meeting. Personal interests may be declared at this point or alternatively can be declared at the time when the specific item is being discussed, if a Member wishes to speak on an item in which s/he has a personal interest. Members in doubt about such a declaration are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer before the date of the meeting. This may also be used by Members to advise the Council of any relevant changes that may have occurred since they first completed the register of interests.

Footnote – Small Business Rate relief.

The rules state that you qualify for small business rate relief if your property's rateable value is less than £15,000; and that you use one property. However, you may still be able to get relief if you use more. You should not pay business rates on a property with a rateable value of £12,000 or less. For properties with a rateable value of £12,001 to £15,000, the rate of relief will go down gradually from 100% to 0%.

If you use more than one property you can still get small business rate relief on your main property if none of your other properties have a rateable value above £2,899; and, the total rateable value of all your properties is less than £20,000 (£28,000 in London).

If you don't qualify for small business rate relief but your property in England has a rateable value below £51,000, your bill will be calculated using the small business multiplier, which is lower than the standard one.

To apply for relief, you need to contact your local council that issues Business Rate Demands – for Hawkhurst that is Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Hawkhurst Parish Council - specifics

Cemetery

Rateable value is £1,800. Using the Small Business Rate Multiplier gave us a bill of £883.80.

Parish Office

Rateable value is £2,050. Using the Small Business Rate Multiplier, we got a bill of £1,006.55.

The Parish Council was also sent zero Business Rate demands (based on 80% mandatory and 20% discretionary rate relief) for two buildings. The Copt Hall - a community hall owned by a charitable trust (rateable value £2,800); and, The King George V Playing Field owned by charitable trust (rateable value £3,500). The Parish Council is the backstop funder for both.

I first contacted Jane Fineman, Head of Finance & Procurement at TWBC (Email: jane.fineman@tunbridgewells.gov.uk). She in turn passed my query to Mrs. Sheila Coburn, Head of Mid Kent Revenues and Benefits Partnership - a shared service for

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells councils (tel: 01622 602093, email: Sheila.Coburn@MidKent.gov.uk). She confirmed that The Parish Council can claim Small Business Rate Relief and this was applied to the Parish Office and backdated to 1st April 2012.

This resulted in;

- The direct debit for the Parish Office Business Rates being cancelled for 2019/20.
- A refund of £7,151.20.
- Unfortunately, you can only get SBRR on one property, so it could not be given on the cemetery as well.