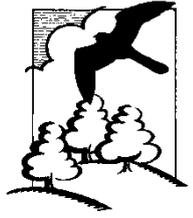


HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes – 25th January 2021

Present: Cllr Escombe, Cllr Taylor-Smith, Cllr Green, Cllr Whittle, Cllr Cory, Cllr Pyne, Cllr Blake, Cllr Fitzpatrick, Cllr Hunt, Cllr Jones, Cllr Lusty and Cllr Appelbe

1. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- i) Mr B Chamberlain spoke on behalf of the 20/03841/FULL planning application and emphasised that they had tried to meet the Hawkhurst NDP – integrated housing mix, bungalows, life time homes, reduced to less than 10 and electric charging points. TWBC will require some windfall housing so why not a modest, well designed application.
- ii) Mr J Finn spoke on behalf of 20/03841/FULL planning application and emphasised full application details, following pre-app advice from TWBC and ANOB, most users will turn right to A 21, the waste and drainage issues are contained on the site so as not to burden the existing system and electric car charging points. As TWBC cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing supply this is a worthwhile application (Cllr Taylor-Smith asked to clarify if a garage was considered in car parking supply – JF responded that yes if the garages are big enough and these are big enough for a car and storage)
- iii) A resident spoke against 20/03841/FULL planning application emphasised that all the concerns of the previous planning applications applied, this was mere speculation outside the village Limits to Build, encroaches on to the countryside and the Council should object.
- iv) Update from Patrick Thomson, TWBC Ward Member, raised concerns about the Doctors surgery at KGV
- v) Cllr Bland – Noted that two large applications in Cranbrook were being heard this week by TWBC and the decisions were challenging. Also that he was extremely disappointed that the local PCN had not signed up to roll out the vaccinations to local residents. All the TWBC Cllrs had asked, argued the case and sought help from local MP's and still no positive response from local GP's. However grateful we are to neighbouring PCN areas (Headcorn and Ticehurst) this is especially challenging for house bound residents or those without transport and it is a shocking situation we find ourselves in.
- vi) Cllr Thomson asked for the Parish Council to write to Ticehurst Pharmacy to

thank them their help. They stepped forward before Christmas and got volunteers from the Ticehurst village to help. It puts our local GP's to shame.

vii) Cllr Escombe emphasised that we had offered facilities and the volunteer support plus the Royal British Legion as well, but it has to be led by PCN / GP's.

viii) Cranbrook Rd / Heartenoak junction – no update

2. APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Weeden due to 20/03841/FULL planning application being considered and Cllr Fitzpatrick - ill

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.*

Note all Councillors know Cllr Weeden, planning application 20/03841/FULL
 Cllr Escombe declared a personal interest as she lives on Horns Rd
 No Cllrs had been lobbied.

4. PLANNING

4.1 Planning applications to be considered

No	Application No	Proposal	Location
56	20/03585/FULL	Demolition of the existing double garage and single storey element of Peel House to allow for the erection of a new 4-bedroom detached dwelling	Peel House Queens Road Hawkhurst TN18 4HQ

Background:

Land is owned by Kent Police who want to release capital. Proposal is for a 4-bed detached house with two parking spaces. No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

This site is within the LBD and within walking distance of facilities. The new dwelling will be constructed on the site of the existing garage. The footprint of the proposed house will be bigger than that of the existing buildings that will be demolished. However, this is a relatively modest increase of 15m². Consequently, this application complies with HD1(a) of the NDP.

Two parking spaces are insufficient for a 4-bedroom house, particularly in a location like Hawkhurst. There are limited employment opportunities within the village and lack of public transport means that residents are reliant on private cars. HD2 highlights the requirement to meet local housing needs through providing smaller houses. In our opinion, this site would be better suited to a 3-bedroom home, which be aligned more with the needs of the village. It does not appear that the applicant has addressed the requirements of HD3, other than

providing storage for bicycles. We would like reassurance that matters such as the efficient use of water (including measures to conserve water), electricity and other forms of energy have all been incorporated into this design.

The design of the proposed dwelling has been informed by the local area and the choice of traditional materials aligns with HD4 of the NDP. Similarly, careful consideration has been given to the way in which the proposed dwelling would integrate within the locality. However, it appears that the Sustainability section of HD4 (paragraph 7.34) has not been taken into account. If this application were to be permitted, there should be evidence of ecological enhancements and consideration given to the provision of a working chimney.

Whilst the planning statement states that "it is not considered that the addition of one dwelling will have any detrimental impact on the local highway in terms of traffic," this needs to be considered in the context of Hawkhurst's already congested road infrastructure. Given that this is just one dwelling; we don't expect the applicant to have undertaken a transport assessment. However, the cumulative impact of traffic on the crossroads does need to be considered.

KCC Highways has already indicated that an additional 22 trips through the junction at peak times would amount to the residual cumulative impact on the road network being severe (in their response to the appeal Ockley/Heartenoak). However, this is not necessarily the threshold at which the impact would be considered to be severe. Since July 2020, 7 new dwellings in Hawkhurst have been given planning permission, plus the 24 dwellings at Springfield approved at appeal. This also needs to be considered in the context of whatever decision is made by the Planning Committee this week relating to the Brick Kiln and Turnden sites in Cranbrook. Therefore, we request that TWBC satisfies itself that KCC Highways has properly considered the residual cumulative impact of each additional property.

Note several Cllrs queried the fact that we should support or object to the actual application rather than suggest changes. The planning training has emphasised the need to comment on potential improvements on an application.

HPC supports this application with the following provisos:

- appropriate revisions are made to comply with HD3 and HD4
- KCC Highways confirm that their model of the Hawkhurst crossroads junction demonstrates that this development (together with any other current application where approval is recommended) does not result in a residual cumulative impact on the junction that would be considered severe.

Vote:

Support 11 Object 0 abstain 0

Decision Support

57	20/03740/FULL	Proposed outbuilding to replace existing sheds	Home Farmhouse Water Lane Hawkhurst Kent TN18 5DL
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Background:

The outbuilding is to be used as a gym/shed/garden store. No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

The proposal is sympathetic to the host house, uses traditional materials and, therefore, complies with HD4 of the NDP.

HPC **supports** this application.

Vote:

Support 11 Object 0 abstain 0

Decision Support

58	20/03558/FULL	Two storey front extension and single storey rear extension	2 Eastview The Moor Hawkhurst Kent TN18 4NX
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Background:

The previous application for a very similar extension was approved, but has now lapsed. HPC supported the previous application. No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

HPC is not usually in favour of front extensions. However, we note that the proposal will not extend in front of the existing front of the house; it is extending the side extension forwards.

The proposal is sympathetic to the host house, using materials to match existing and is, therefore, in line with HD4.

We are concerned that this is quite a tight space, but are mindful that there have been no objections from neighbours and that previous application was approved. Therefore, HPC **supports** this application.

Vote:

Support 11 Object 0 abstain 0

Decision Support

59	20/03748/FULL	Extend the hall at ground floor level to increase the size of the W.C to accommodate a shower; removal of existing front dormer, increase the height of the roof ridge by 325mm, and extend the roof forward; add two new front dormer windows to enlarge Bedroom 3 and add a Study.	Bramble Cottage Stream Lane Hawkhurst Kent TN18 4RD
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Background:

No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

HPC tends not to support alterations to the front of dwellings due to the impact on the street scene. However, the properties on Stream Lane are diverse and in general are well spaced out and set back from the road.

We note that the extension will not move the building line forward. The use of materials to match existing aligns with HD4 of the NDP and, despite the changes to the roofline, it is not felt that this will detract from the street scene or dominate the property itself. However, we note from the planning portal that the property has been extended previously and, therefore, are unsure whether this application complies with H11.

HPC **supports** this application

Vote:

Support 11 Object 0 abstain 0

Decision Support

60	20/03841/FULL	Erection of 9 no. residential dwellings, together with open space, landscaping, new access road and associated garaging and parking	Land Adjacent To Streatley Horns Road Hawkhurst Kent
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Background:

This is the third application on this site. The two previous applications for 40 and 20 dwellings respectively were both refused. There have been 12 comments from neighbours - 12 objecting for a wide range of reasons and 1 neutral, suggesting that the site could be appropriate for a reduced number of dwellings.

Comments and Recommendation:

HPC recognises the amount of work that has been put into this application to make it align with the NDP and to take into account the particular needs of Hawkhurst. Nevertheless, the site remains an unsustainable location within the AONB.

HD1(a) states a preference for small-scale development and gives priority to previously developed sites over greenfield sites. Whilst this application for 9 dwellings is small-scale, it is on a greenfield site beyond the LBD. It is, however, contiguous with the LBD. However, the application site is well beyond walking distance of the village's facilities and does not demonstrate effective physical integration with existing settlement patterns. The proposed development has a far greater density than for existing housing to the west of Streatley. Furthermore, this is agricultural land, graded 3b. Para 7.9 of the NDP is explicit that the need to develop agricultural land needs to be demonstrated as necessary and even so should only be on land graded as 4 or 5. This does not apply in this case. Therefore, this application is contrary to HD1 of the NDP.

The SHELAA (July 19) concluded that this site was unsuitable for allocation for housing due to the harm to the landscape and concerns over the settlement pattern. These factors also make it unsuitable for development. This proposal would extend the built-up part of the village into what is now open countryside. Indeed, the Design and Access Statement indicates that the "properties will in effect provide a new entry point to Hawkhurst".

The provision of bungalows is welcomed, as is the provision of 2- and 3-bedroomed dwellings. Attention has been given to resource efficiency, through water efficiency measures, solar panels and the provision of EV charging points. This complies with HD2 and HD3.

Hawkhurst residents' reliance on private cars means that parking is a significant issue in the village. The provision of 24 parking spaces would appear to be ample. However, this calculation appears to include garages. Our understanding was that garages should not be used when calculating parking, in which case the parking is insufficient.

For the most part, this application also meets the demands of HD4, for instance with the use of traditional materials, colour palette etc. However, we do have reservations about the way in which this proposal integrates with the locality and also the density of the development. The NDP requires that the density of new development should be in character with the local surrounding areas, respect the rural nature of the parish and be designed to give an impression of spaciousness with the opportunity for green landscapes between buildings. This is not the case for this development.

Whilst there are many positives in the landscaping proposals, we do not consider that this application meets the requirements of LP1 and LP2, which refer to the "views out to open countryside" and "sweeping views" respectively. The proposals indicate that the "existing view across open fields to the ancient woodland beyond" would be replaced by a wide wildflower verge, hedgerow and dwellings. The LVIA states that a small number of views would be subject to moderate or high significance of effect. This refers to the views from Horns Road, which is a main approach to Hawkhurst and in particular to the historic heart of the village at The Moor.

The lack of public transport means that housing in Hawkhurst does not contribute to the vision of a low carbon future. Future residents of this development would be reliant on private cars to travel both within Hawkhurst and more widely. Given the paucity of employment opportunities within the village coupled with no train station and no bus service to the local station, future residents will drive on a daily basis. This site does not provide a genuine choice of transport modes as required by paragraph 103 of the NPPF. As can be seen from Table 2.2 of the Transport Statement, all of the main shopping and facilities are well beyond the 800m walking distances required in the NDP. With, at best, an hourly bus service, it is highly unlikely that many residents will choose to use the bus to access these facilities.

Regardless of distance and topography, there is no scope for providing easy pedestrian and cycle connections (NPPF para 91). There is no continuous pavement into the village to reach shops, primary school, doctors etc. The pavements that run alongside the A229, which is a busy road and a primary route for HGVs, are too narrow for people to walk two abreast. The local highway network is not suitable for on-carriageway cycling - speeding is a real issue and the A229 is too heavily-utilised and too narrow for safe cycling. The indicated walking times in the Transport Statement are highly misleading. There is no way that these would be achieved by an average person, let alone an older resident of the bungalows or a young family.

KCC Highways has already indicated that an additional 22 trips through the junction at peak times would amount to the residual cumulative impact on the road network being severe (in their response to the appeal Ockley/Heartenoak). However, this is not necessarily the threshold at which the impact would be considered to be severe. Since July 2020, 7 new dwellings in Hawkhurst have been given planning permission, plus the 24 dwellings at Springfield approved at appeal. This also needs to be considered in the context of whatever decision is made by the Planning Committee this week relating to the Brick Kiln and Turnden

sites in Cranbrook. Therefore, we request that TWBC satisfies itself that KCC Highways has properly considered the residual cumulative impact of each additional property.

In the delegated report for 7 dwellings at Whiteswood Farm, the planning officer states, "*The site is located outside of the Limits to built development of Hawkhurst. A key consideration is whether future occupants of the dwellings would be likely to meet some/all day-to-day needs by walking to facilities, thereby reducing the need to travel by private car, which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Paragraph 150 of the NPPF). Although the site can be considered to be situated within close proximity to services/facilities of Hawkhurst, the lack of pavement along Whites Lane and the lack of footway links within and immediately around the site are material considerations as to the sustainability of the location of the site. Therefore, it is considered that on balance that in regard to the location and accessibility in relation to the village and its associated facilities and taking into account its undeveloped status, the application site is not considered to be sustainable.*"

This is equally applicable to this site, which is well beyond walking distance of facilities. There is no continuous footway to the Moor, meaning residents would have to cross the busy A229, a designated lorry route, twice.

HPC is also concerned by the increase in traffic anticipated to use Delmond Lane, which cannot cope with the additional traffic from this development.

The proposed expanse of wildflower meadow, the use of native species, the additional woodland planting are all positive aspects of this proposal. We are also pleased to note this development recognises the concerns of the village in relation to the lack of capacity in the public sewer system and wider drainage issues. We are concerned that the badger report indicates that one of the badger setts will be impacted by this development. Is this still the case with this reduced development?

We note that several residents are concerned that vehicular access to the wildflower meadow could lead to further development in the future. Our understanding is that this access is to allow for the appropriate maintenance of the wildflower meadow. However, we would request that if TWBC were minded to approve this application a legal agreement was drawn up to ensure that this land would remain open space and could not be developed in the future. There is a very comprehensive management plan for the first five years. What will happen after this? If this application were to be approved, we would expect to see a provision that ensured the appropriate management of this open space for at least 25 years.

There is much to commend this application, and it is refreshing to see a developer make such an effort to align their proposals with the NDP. However, the fact remains that this is not a sustainable location and, consequently, the site is inappropriate for development.

HPC **objects** to this application.

If TWBC is minded to approve this application, we request that our concerns are addressed, in particular:

- KCC Highways confirm that their model of the Hawkhurst crossroads junction demonstrates that this development (together with any other current application where approval is recommended) does not result in a residual cumulative impact on the junction that would be considered severe
- A legal agreement is put in place to ensure that the land behind this development will be maintained as a wildflower meadow in perpetuity.

Cllr Jones felt that out of the applications submitted on this site so far, this is by far the best submission. However, concerned about pedestrian access and the lack of facilities at the Moor mean people need to walk to Highgate

Cllr Taylor-Smith agreed with Cllr Jones that this was a better application – shame other developments did not try and adhere to the NDP. Note that garages of this size can be included in the car parking, some excellent sustainability elements and what type of development do we want – this seems to fit the bill for sustainability, housing mix etc. The 5-year management plan is standard and will then be taken on by the residents. There are many footpaths in the village where you cannot walk side by side so should not be an issue

Cllr Jones was concerned about residents not being able to walk side to side (this was supported by Cllr Pyne)

Cllr Green echoed what others had said and wished other developers followed this example of trying to adhere to the NDP. He felt in quandary – obviously outside Limits to Build but offered much in way of housing mix and diversity of housing stock that we need.

Cllr Pyne added that if one elderly person is caring for another the elderly carer often needs support and it is better to be close to the village centre

Cllr Appelbe felt arguments for and against but it was an intrusion into the countryside

Vote:

Support 4 (Cllrs MTS, PW, DB, PG) Object 6 (Cllrs RC, CE, RL, JP, MA, PJ) abstain 1 Cllr JH

Decision Object

61	20/03648/FULL	Erection of detached two-bay garage	Woodsden Oast Water Lane Hawkhurst Kent TN18 5AP
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Background:

No comments from neighbours.

Comments and Recommendation:

The use of traditional and reclaimed materials is in line with HD4. The application site is set well back from the road and the design of the proposed garage would not appear out of keeping in this rural location.

Therefore, **HPC** supports this application.

Vote:

Support 11 Object 0 abstain 0

Decision Support

5. MATTERS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

i) Replacement of Cranbrook Road Streetlight

Cllr Escombe updated the Council on the cost for the replacement of the streetlight on Cranbrook Road is £4,325.20 plus VAT. This fee is made up of £1,175 from the street light contractor and UKPN are quoting are £3,150.20 (They have a monopoly)

We do not have the funding in the streetlight budget so recommend using General Reserves

The streetlight was knock down in an accident and we will continue to seek the accident number so we can follow up with an insurance claim.

Cllr Whittle emphasised that we need to do the work and then chase the insurance.

Cllr Appelbe felt that this was not a priority with Council finances so tight.

Cllr Whittle proposed and Cllr Pyne seconded the replacement of the streetlight on Cranbrook Road is £4,325.20 plus VAT and to use the General Reserves while an insurance claim is pursued

Agreed majority 8 for and 3 against (Cllrs Lusty, Jones and Appelbe)

ii) Motion – Proposed by Cllr Green and seconded by Cllr Escombe

Cllr Green introduced the motion to grant the Personnel Committee authority to obtain, as and when required, the services of professional advisers to ensure the Council meet its obligations as an employer and comply with employment law. In total the sum of no more than £4,000 in any one year. Any actual spend would be approved by the Committee as a whole and reported to Council.

Cllr Green went on to explain this organisation is recommended by KALC and is based on an hourly rate, initially may need to use to sort out forms / policies but once established should be considerably less than £4,000

Cllr Taylor-Smith assumed this is general HR support – which is good – does it include insurance? (Cllr Green to clarify)

Cllr Hunt asked will this become an annual fee

Cllr Green felt it would be like the Cllr expenses that it was required but rarely drawn down in full.

Cllr Pyne felt we needed to get our house in order

Cllr Green proposed and Cllr Escombe seconded that sum of £4,000 is set aside each year to cover employment law obligations

Agreed - unanimously

CLOSURE: 8:55

Signed.....

Date.....