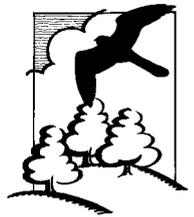


# HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL



## PLANNING COMMITTEE

### Copt Hall and Zoom meeting

Wednesday 5th January 2022, 7:45PM

## Minutes

**Present:** Cllr Escombe (Chairman) Cllr Hunt, and Cllr Cory

**1. Welcome**

**2. APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Blake plus Cllr Faulkner via Zoom

**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. NA*

**4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 deferred

**5. Matters arising from last meeting**

i) Update on the Hawkhurst Golf Club Planning Appeal – still waiting a decision.

**6. Planning applications to be considered -**

<https://twbcpa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Note the public can speak prior to the planning application they are interested in.

No	Application No	Proposal	Location
90	21/04042/FULL	Minor repair works to existing property	The Walled Nursery Water Lane Hawkhurst Kent TN18 5DH

HPC is pleased that the current owners have plans to restore the Walled Nursery. It is evident from the application that the Bothy needs work to maintain it and ensure its continued use.

HPC supports this application.

Vote: For 3 Against 0 Abstain 0 – Decision Support

91	21/04043/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Minor repair works to existing property	The Walled Nursery Water Lane Hawkhurst Kent TN18 5DH
<p>Whilst HPC supports this application, we do have some reservations about the impact of demolishing the wall and laying underfloor heating. We would like reassurances that this is appropriate in the Conservation Officers view.</p> <p>Vote: For 2 Against 0 Abstain 1 – Decision support</p>			
92	21/03970/FULL	Erection of three detached dwellings with garages	Land Off Stream Lane Hawkhurst Kent
<p>Several residents spoke on this application; a summary of the main points are;</p> <p>Sustainability,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 same style houses do not complement the area</li> <li>• 5 beds likely to be unaffordable – space for 18 car parking spaces</li> <li>• Access - Too far from facilities, errors in application 650m is to end of lane, it is up to 2km to centre of village and facilities</li> <li>• Car parking 6 cars each – car parking bigger than the house footprint</li> </ul> <p>Planning application facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TWBC local plan defines countryside as outside Limits to Build – therefore site not in settlement – error in application</li> <li>• Shortfall of housing provision in borough but should not ignore AONB – recent Court Case highlighted that AONB should not be ignored – error in application.</li> <li>• Consolidation principle is argued, but Hawkhurst is actually under housing pressure – error in application</li> <li>• Application states does not impinge on landscape views, but NDP notes the site is only a few metres from “identified views” – error in application</li> </ul> <p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The land has been agricultural for 30 plus years, not a garden – in fact Grade 3 Agricultural</li> <li>• Sussex Border path crosses in front of site</li> <li>• Hard landscape will lead to run off – no mitigation</li> <li>• Car usage – 30 plus car journeys a day</li> <li>• Stream Lane is a single track and very well worn, will further damage road and problems on the road</li> <li>• Pond on site, no plan to wildlife conservation / environmental impact etc</li> <li>• Urbanisation of Stream Lane, incremental development</li> </ul>			
<p>Hawkhurst Parish Council strongly <b>objects</b> to this application, which is completely inappropriate for this rural location in the AONB. Stream Lane is a quiet rural lane which is recognised in the NDP as a space that contributes to local landscape character (paragraph 3.22), both in terms of its verges and the nature reserve and pond. It is also of great recreational value: The Sussex Border path runs along Stream Lane before following the byway WC230, which runs alongside the application site. The views across the countryside from the byway at this point are stunning and would be lost forever if this proposal were to be allowed. The paperwork supporting this application significantly downplays the harm that would be caused by this development.</p> <p>Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that "great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in... Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The</p>			

conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas... while development in their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impact on the designated areas." This application flies in the face of this requirement. It neither conserves nor enhances the landscape, and instead would block far-reaching views across the High Weald AONB.

The application does not comply with HD1 of Hawkhurst's NDP, which requires development to be within or contiguous to the limits of built development and within walking distances of shops and amenities. The application site lies some distance from the LBD, and is not within walking distance of shops and facilities. It is 1000 metres to the Eight Bells and St Laurence's Church, and significantly further to Wish Valley Surgery. Other amenities such as shops, the primary school etc are all to be found at Highgate, a distance of about 1.5 miles. Even ignoring the hilly topography of Hawkhurst, this is at least a 30-minute walk. In practice, it would take much longer for many residents.

Paragraph 7.17 of the NDP indicates that walking distance should be no more than 800m from origin to destination, and states "It should be noted that the hilly topography of the parish can make even short walks challenging for some so these guidelines need interpretation on the ground regarding any site-specific proposals." In this case, the absence of a pavement along Stream Lane, the requirement to ascend and descend Moor Hill and ascend Highgate Hill to reach the facilities at Highgate mean are all relevant factors. Moreover, it is not a particularly pleasant walk along the busy A229, which is a designated lorry route.

HD1(a)3 also requires development to demonstrate effective physical integration with the existing settlement patterns found in and around Hawkhurst. Stream Lane, which is classed as being in the top 10-20% of lanes in the borough in terms of landscape and amenity value (Rural Lanes - SPG), has houses along its north/east side. Once beyond the Moor end of Stream Lane, there are very few houses on the south/west side, the exceptions being Cranford Farm, the cluster of buildings at East Heath and the associated workers' cottages. Consequently, this application does not integrate with the existing settlement pattern.

This would be further exacerbated by the fact that the application site is significantly higher than Stream Lane itself and the nearby properties, something which is not clear from any of the paperwork. Moreover, the proposed houses are large 5-bed houses of similar designs and would, therefore, appear as a development. This is completely uncharacteristic of the lane: the vast majority of the properties are individual designs, many of which are single or 1.5 storey.

Hawkhurst Parish Council also believes that this development would be detrimental to the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

TWBC's lack of a five-year housing supply is given as justification for this development. However, three houses would not make a sufficiently meaningful contribution to housing numbers to warrant destruction of a greenfield site in the AONB. Indeed, in a recent appeal decision relating to a considerably bigger development at Heartenoak Road/Ockley Road (APP/M2270/W/20/3247397) the Inspector concluded that the benefits arising from increasing the housing land supply and relatively minor economic benefits amongst other things would not outweigh the harm to the AONB and the surrounding countryside. This application would provide even less in terms of housing numbers and economic benefits.

This proposal neither complies with HD2 nor addresses the housing need in Hawkhurst, which is for small, affordable properties. There is an expectation in the NDP that any development should encourage water and energy conservation, use locally sourced and recycled materials (HD3 & HD4). It is not evident that this has been considered in this application.

The paperwork indicates that these properties would be marketed as self-build. Consequently, it seems likely that the proposed designs could well change significantly.

This application also conflicts with policy LP1 of the NDP which requires developers to demonstrate that their proposals will not have an unacceptable adverse visual impact on the landscape setting of the village. The application does not include any considered assessment of the impact on the landscape, instead focusing on boundary planting which will block the views of the wider countryside.

Policy LP2 of the NDP relates to the AONB. Development in the High Weald AONB should conform with the High Weald AONB Management Plan. This proposal fails to do so. Objective S2 of the AONB Management Plan seeks to protect the historic pattern and character of settlement. As outlined above, this is not the case for this application. The AONB Management Plan identifies the loss of green fields to development as one of the top five issues facing the field and heath component of the AONB. Objective FH1 seeks to secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald. The application paperwork refers to the site as being an "established residential context". This is quite clearly not the case. It is a field in the AONB, which has a recent history of agricultural use. No reason is given why this use should not continue. This application conflicts with FH1 of the AONB Management Plan as well as the NDP which requires any development of agricultural land to be restricted to land graded as a 4 or 5.

It also conflicts with objective OQ4 of the AONB Management Plan - to protect and promote the perceptual qualities that people value. The rationale being to "ensure that the special qualities people value, such as tranquillity, dark skies, sense of naturalness and clean air, are taken into account in AONB management." Actions relating to this objective include "identify and protect valued views and act to reduce scenic impact of intrusive developments." This application has attracted a huge number of objections from residents of Hawkhurst and beyond. Surely, this alone indicates just how precious this site is and the importance of protecting it.

As with all development in Hawkhurst, we are concerned by the introduction of further traffic and the impact that this will have not only on the congestion at the Highgate Hill junction, which is already overcapacity, but also on Stream Lane itself. Stream Lane has seen a significant increase in traffic over recent years, in part due to its use as a rat run to avoid the congestion at the Hawkhurst crossroads. This, together with the ongoing works at the sewage treatment plant, have resulted in considerable damage to the verges, something which would only be exacerbated if this development were to be approved.

This field and those around it are home to a host of wildlife, and we are concerned by the lack of information relating to biodiversity and ecology. If TWBC were minded to approve this application, we feel strongly that the additional surveys should be undertaken and that the biodiversity net gain should be calculated before permission is granted.

We are extremely concerned about the implications for drainage - both foul drainage and surface run-off. Stream Lane is already prone to flooding and careful consideration would be needed to ensure that this application did not exacerbate this. This does not appear to have been done to date. Hawkhurst already has significant issues with sewage, particularly in terms of blockages and insufficient capacity. We are not reassured by the fact that no decision has been made as to how this will be dealt with at this stage.

We are hard-pressed to see the benefits of this site, let alone any that would outweigh the impact on the AONB.

We request that this is considered a category Y application as defined in the Tunbridge Wells Agreement.

## **7. Matters for discussion**

- i) **TWBC decisions since the last meeting** – Discuss  
21/03683/OUT - Boxhurst Farm - refused  
21/03564/FULL – Glenacres - permitted

21/03881/EIASCO - Netters Farm  
21/03875/EIASCO - Lower Ellenden Farm  
21/03068/FULL - Mulberry House - permitted  
21/03519/FULL - Delden Horns Hill – refused  
21/03473/FULL - Frith Lea, Talbot Road, Hawkhurst – permitted  
21/02476/FULL - Methodist Church - permitted

**ii) Review of Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan**

The Committee discussed formation of NDP Steering Group, discussion concluded Reach out to previous members and seek new members from social media etc Also seek local representatives from AONB etc

**8. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:**

Cllr Hunt raised the point that the work on the trees at the back of KGV / Scout Hut is not required. Following a discussion, it was agreed to put work on hold and review after Tree Survey.

**CLOSURE:** 8:45

Signed .....

Date.....