

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Councils
Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 24th April 2019
At Brabourne Baptist Church

1. Present

Cllr Herrick (Chairman, Smeech Parish Council), Cllr Hickmott (Chairman, Brabourne Parish Council), Cllr Mrs Alford, Cllr Mrs Morey, Cllr Mrs Pereboom, Cllr Mrs Tanner, Cllrs Thorpe, Joules, MacPhee, and Mrs Wood (Clerk). Nineteen members of the public attended.

Cllr Herrick took the Chair.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Young, Cllrs Mayland and Spokes (prior commitments).

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr MacPhee: Voluntary Declaration as shareholder of the Sandpit Preservation Company.

4. Planning applications

4.1 18/01454/AS Andrews Garage, Plain Road, Smeech

Demolition of Andrews Garage and the construction of 5 houses with associated parking, revised vehicular access and car barn

Cllr Herrick noted that the original application had been amended and a revised application submitted; conversion of the piggeries at the rear of the site had been removed. The current application is for a housing development of 5 properties. Cllr Herrick noted that there are a number of objections on the website: are the amendments sufficient to remove/modify the Parish Councils' previous objection comments?

Cllr Mrs Morey stated that the amended application addresses many of the objections. Cllr Mrs Peereboom agreed, but commented that parking provision is inadequate.

Cllr Thorpe opined that the original proposals should have been in 2 separate planning applications; his earlier objection had been addressed by removal of the piggeries and there are no technical reasons to object to the application.

Cllr Mrs Alford agreed with councillors' comments.

Cllr Mrs Morey noted that the Village Protection Policy (VPP) is not anti development but seeks to encourage small-scale development of up to 10 properties; the application appears to comply. Cllr Herrick advised that the previous application did not comply with the VPP, which had been adopted by both Parish Councils.

Cllr MacPhee stated that he had not liked the proposal to develop the industrial units or the original application, which contained errors and was of poor design quality. Removal of the industrial units addressed 1 objection, but others remain, ie traffic volume and speed. Cllr MacPhee acknowledged that these pertain to all applications in the parish.

Cllr MacPhee felt that the proposed housing would not stand out because of the variety of housing styles in existing dwellings on The Plain – there is no uniformity.

Cllr Hickmott stated that Brabourne residents would be affected by traffic from the development; Brabourne Parish Council had, therefore, objected to the previous application because of the adverse impact on Brabourne residents. He noted that the development is on a brownfield site and it would be difficult to argue against the application on planning grounds.

Cllr Joules agreed with previous comments. He noted that although it could be argued that 5 houses all of the same style would be out of keeping with other properties, which are all different, a requirement that all of the houses should be different may impose an undue financial burden on a developer. Cllr Joules felt that traffic issues, particularly those for agricultural traffic, have been addressed.

The meeting was adjourned and comments from the floor invited.

It was stated that residents want the Andrews Garage site to be developed because it is currently an eyesore, but any development should fit in with the village and not have a negative impact.

The majority of buildings on The Plain are front elevation bungalows, of differing style and individual; they are ribbon development with no backland development, land to the front and rear is agricultural.

A group of 5 x 2-storey houses, all of the same style and not ribbon development would stand out; a previous application for backland development was refused.

Any development should be sympathetic to the existing.

The Parish Council submitted its village confines map, which runs along the back gardens of the properties along The Plain; the third row of bungalows is outside the confines. If permitted, the application may encourage development creep.

Removal of the piggery redevelopment was welcomed.

The VPP states that development should be permitted only subject to certain criteria, including that it should be in keeping with the style, form and visual effect. It was thought that the application is counter to this.

Concerns re traffic have been partially addressed by removal of the piggery. There is, however, insufficient parking provision.

The amenity of neighbouring properties is impacted by overlooking: an adverse effect and counter to the VPP.

There are no major changes to the plans with respect to the housing element.

The ridge height has been reduced from 2 storeys to 1.5 storeys, but this change does not address the height of windows on the upper storey.

Security concerns have not been addressed; the area to the rear would be opened up by the development.

It was suggested that the rear row of housing be removed, because it is outside the village confines.

If the second row of housing is permitted it should be bungalows, to prevent overlooking. The access road could then run between the 2 rows, which would remove security concerns.

CLlr Thorpe advised that a development within the confines would be looked on more favourably, but the confines would not preclude development outside the confines.

This was agreed, but over-development by stealth should be prevented.

CLlr Thorpe agreed, citing Nuholm: Smeeth Parish Council objected to the demolition of the bungalow and erection of a 4-bed house, but this was permitted by ABC.

It was felt that the Parish Council should continue to object, notwithstanding that planners have ignored its previous objections.

CLlr Mrs Pereboom asked for confirmation that residents were suggesting 2-storey properties in the front row and bungalows at the rear. This was given, but the overriding preference is for 1 row, which should be bungalows.

If planning permission is given it was suggested that a condition be attached that a 1.8m close-boarded fence and a locked gate be provided for security. CLlr Hickmott replied that the developer would likely be sympathetic, citing liaison re development to the rear of The Plough Inn.

CLlr Thorpe stated that staff at Andrews Garage occupied offices on the first floor, the window affording a view over the gardens.

It was noted that there was a viewing platform in the offices, but staff rarely (if ever) used it. The major objection is to overlooking.

Continuation of ribbon development, eg with 2 executive-style houses, would be in keeping with the existing properties. This was disagreed; it was noted that of the nearby 15 properties, only 5 are houses, the remainder being bungalows. It was acknowledged that some of the latter are large.

It was suggested that on-road parking would likely increase; this would be a safety issue.

CLlr Thorpe advised that the average number of vehicles/property in Kent is 2.8, but the needed 3 parking spaces per property are not provided.

It was felt that the Parish Councils' objections had not been addressed, other than removal of the piggery.

It was thought that overlooking is not a valid objection, other properties in the village are overlooked.

The meeting was reconvened.

CLlr Herrick asked if the Parish Councils' objections remain or should be withdrawn. These related to the VPP, style, vehicle movements. Have these been addressed?

Cllr MacPhee stated that the Parish Council's task is to communicate residents' concerns to ABC, and that the village confines exercise is a 'red herring': the confines map does not necessarily permit development within the confines, or exclude development outside. He noted that the Church Road site is outside the confines, is backland development and affects the security of the existing properties.

Cllr Hickmott advised that the previous definition of the village envelope was misunderstood; the confines exercise was to plot this on a map. It was thought that there is value in the confines map; any proposed development outside the confines should be justified.

Cllr Herrick asked if the Parish Councils support the application. Cllr Mrs Alford agreed with Cllr MacPhee but noted that she wants to see the site improved. Cllr Mrs Pereboom acknowledged the changes, but concerns remain and the objection comments should be modified.

Cllr Thorpe stated that he welcomes the redevelopment but has concerns with a number of issues.

Cllr Herrick stated that the Councils' objection remains. The removal of the piggery is appreciated and the Councils will detail concerns expressed by residents.

Cllr Mrs Pereboom asked what will happen to the land if the third row of houses is removed; she was advised that it would remain as grazing.

Cllr Herrick will circulate draft comments for submission.

Cllr Herrick stepped down from the Chair, and Cllr Hickmott took the Chair.

4.2 Y19/0257/FH Otterpool Park Development, Ashford Road, Sellindge

Outline application, with all matters reserved, for a comprehensive residential led mixed use development comprising: Up to 8,500 residential homes including market and affordable homes; age restricted homes, assisted living homes, extra care facilities, care homes, sheltered housing and care villages

Cllr Hickmott advised that the proposed new garden settlement will be 10 times the size of Wye, double that of Hythe and would cover 700 hectares. ABC has identified several cross border impacts which will impact Aldington, Smeeth and Brabourne: transport, water and drainage, secondary education, retail, phasing. Of particular importance for Brabourne and Smeeth are road transport, health (in particular the GPs' surgery), drainage and flooding. Cllr Hickmott tabled comments on the application (attached to the Minutes).

Roads: Significant improvements will be needed, eg at Smeeth crossroads. Cllr Mrs Tanner noted that previous efforts to improve this junction have been unsuccessful, notwithstanding the crash data. Cllr Mrs Pereboom stated that requests for speed restrictions or a roundabout were refused. Cllr Mrs Tanner reported that the A20 through Sellindge has been narrowed to encourage traffic away from the A20.

Cllr Thorpe noted that Maidstone is at a standstill in peak hours, this will likely occur on the M20 at Otterpool.

Cllr Mrs Alford advised that Shepway will have modelled the increase in traffic; this could be used to ask for improvements at Smeeth crossroads.

Cllr Hickmott asked if the Parish Councils should object, or comment and ask for a reduction in the speed limit and traffic calming.

In answer to a question from the floor, Cllr Hickmott stated that there is no start date for the development, which is still at the application stage. The development will be phased in over a 30-year period.

Cllr Herrick felt that the Parish Councils should be specific about the areas of concern but without specifying the remedial works needed.

Cllr Mrs Pereboom stated that the increase in traffic on the A20 may encourage more risk-taking at Smeeth crossroads; Cllr Herrick agreed.

Doctors' surgeries: Will the 'replacement' health centre lead to the closure of the Sellindge Surgery? This would cause difficulties for Brabourne and Smeeth because it would be further away; it should be retained, possibly as a satellite surgery.

Drainage: Cllr Mrs Alford asked where water for Otterpool would come from. The Stone Street development of 4,000 must also be taken into account. Cllr Hickmott stated that the water companies have a statutory duty to provide water and deal with waste; he agreed that the source is unclear.

Flooding: Cllr Herrick noted that there is a flood alleviation scheme near Evegata, which currently operates satisfactorily. Cllr Hickmott noted that there will be increased water run-off into the River Stour from Otterpool; Cllr Thorpe thought that this would lead to flash flooding.

Secondary education: Cllr Mrs Alford stated that there is provision for 2 schools in the plan, but these will take time to build. Cllr Mrs Pereboom agreed, and noted that building the schools would not begin immediately.

Cllr Herrick asked if there were any reference to hospital provision, Cllr Hickmott replied that there is not. Cllr Mrs Alford asked if the William Harvey Hospital could cope with the additional patients. Cllr Joules surmised that they may use the health centre, but detail is lacking. Cllr Hickmott stated that the Health Service has a duty to provide sufficient capacity.

Cllr Hickmott was asked if any provision has been made for industrial sites, and any mention made of industrial/retail traffic. Cllr Hickmott replied that there are industrial units already on the site (Lympne Airport) but details are vague.

Cllr Hickmott will circulate draft comments for submission.

5. Any Other Business

There was no Other Business.

6. Dates of future meetings

Smeeth Parish Council: Wednesday 6th March 2019 at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church

Brabourne Parish Council: Monday 18th March at 7.00pm in Brabourne Village Hall

Joint Annual Parish Meeting: Wednesday 20th March at 7.00pm in Brabourne Baptist Church.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

4.2 Y19/0257/FH Otterpool Park Development, Ashford Road, Sellindge

The parish of Brabourne abuts the boundary of Folkestone and Hythe District Council and is within influencing distance of the proposed Otterpool development. Brabourne will be affected indirectly by the proposals in the following areas.

Road Transport

Transport is the most obvious area of potential impact as the traffic generated by this scheme will inevitably increase vehicle movements on the road network significantly.

The transport evidence prepared in support of the Plan indicates that the majority of traffic generated will flow onto the strategic highway network - M20 and A20. About 30% of generated traffic is modelled to be using the A20 or M20 corridors towards Ashford. This is considered to be an under-estimate. Not all vehicle movements will be via junction 11 of the M20. A significant proportion will use the existing A20 road through Sellindge, Smeeth and Mersham to gain access to those villages, junctions 10 and 10A of the M20 and Ashford.

Brabourne residents will be impacted by the additional traffic on the A20, particularly at Smeeth Cross Roads (Church Road), Brabourne Turning (The Ridgeway) and Bockham Lane junctions, all of which are used by parishioners to get to Sellindge, Mersham, junctions 10 and 10A of the M20 and Ashford.

Policy SS7 of the draft Plan states that "the capacity of M20 Junction 11 shall be upgraded and other key junctions on the road network will be redesigned and improved in partnership with Highways England and Kent County Council". Significant improvements will be required, particularly at Smeeth Cross Roads, to ensure and maintain free-flowing traffic along the A20.

Doctors' Surgeries

A significant number of Brabourne parishioners are registered at the Sellindge Surgery. The surgery is already at capacity with the new development in Sellindge filling the remaining available spaces. The Otterpool proposal suggests that a replacement health centre will be provided as part of the development. This will be further away from the Brabourne and more inconvenient for many, particularly those who rely on public transport. The Sellindge surgery should be retained as a satellite surgery to the main provision on the new development. If it is to close, then this should only happen once the new health centre is fully operational.

Drainage

Water and drainage for the site are detailed through Policies SS7 and SS8 of the draft Core Strategy Review.

The issue of wastewater infrastructure also has potential issues, ensuring sufficient and appropriate wastewater infrastructure will be necessary to ensure water quality can be maintained. The Sellindge wastewater facility (WWTW) currently serves Brabourne Lees. The development should not result in any increase in flood risk for Brabourne nor have any impact upon water quality.

Southern Water has stated that there is limited capacity at the Sellindge WWTW and that either major improvements are required at Sellindge WWTW or the development would have to provide its own on-site treatment works. There are no proposals within Southern Water's existing five year (2015-2020) Asset Management Plan to provide for the required infrastructure.

Secondary Education

Secondary education is dealt with in the Core Strategy Review through Policy SS6 and Policy SS9. This is also a potential problem given that pupils residing in F&H District attend secondary schools in Ashford Borough, and vice versa. The provision of secondary education provision in Ashford Borough is already under pressure due to development growth in Ashford.

KCC has advised that capacity does currently exist in secondary schools in both Ashford Borough and F&H District and off-site secondary school capacity will be full at the time Otterpool development is expected to commence. 500-600 places may be needed throughout the period 2024-2030. KCC has indicated that they intend to meet part of the demand through the expansion of The Harvey Grammar School for Boys and Folkestone School for Girls but these are both selective schools. Further on-site secondary schools will therefore be required.