

# Berwick Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council held at the Berwick Village Hall, on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at 7.00pm

**Present:** Cllrs B. Smith (Chairman), K Winter, S Carnie and C Bird. Councillor Burrough joined part way through the public consultation.

District Councillor Philip Ede, Alastair Deighton (Firle Estates), Jim Richardson (Richardson Architecture), Alison Stevens (Clerk) and 40 members of the public were also present.

## Minutes

**BP.01.08.16 Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor N Bennett.

**BP.02.08.16 Declarations of Interest and changes to the Register of Interest:** No declarations of interest were declared nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

**BP.03.08.16 County Councillor Report:** There was no report from the County Councillor on this occasion.

**BP.04.08.16 District Councillor Report:** District Councillor Ede answered questions during the public question time about application WD2016/1659MAJ.

**BP.05.08.16 Public Question Time:** Mr Deighton and Mr Richardson (the applicant and architect) described the background to Planning Application WD2016/1659/MAJ.

Following discussions with Wealden District Council they feel they have submitted a design which fits in with the locality and creates a centre for the village.

In answer to residents' questions they;

- confirmed Wealden is encouraging the development because there is currently a housing shortage. Residents asked why the development is for 33 houses when the Local Plan identifies a need for 20 here of which 11 have already been built.
- are submitting this application even though their previous application failed because the planning laws have changed. Wealden does not have a five year supply of land and needs one. Berwick is regarded as a prime location.
- the new Community Infrastructure Levy will provide funds to improve the existing infrastructure.
- road safety is a major concern because access is onto an already busy road. Traffic surveys have been commissioned and discussions with Highways have taken place to make sure the application complies with all the regulations.
- noted that in 2010 the then Parish Council applied to English Heritage to protect the site.
- have noted the concerns the police have raised about the site but these are not valid planning reasons for refusal.
- agreed the affordable housing element can be dispersed throughout the site.

Councillor Burroughs apologised for being late and joined the meeting at this point.

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The applicants also confirmed;

- the site was chosen even though it has problems with flooding, archaeology and access because no site is without its problems. This is the second application for this site but they are confident that any issues can be overcome.
- Mr Deighton denied Firle Estates is leaving the site to deteriorate. The hedge cutting is the responsibility of the farmer.
- there is a need for four and five bedroom properties on the site.
- the new development will not have any street lighting.
- Wealden is no longer considering 7500+ more homes for Berwick.
- The previous application failed mainly because it was out of keeping and detrimental to the character of the locality but they feel this application is better.
- Berwick can cope with the speed of change and has done so in the past.
- Firle Estates has not submitted plans for 106 new homes in the past. The numbers were submissions for the Local Plan.
- the solar panels are only included as a nice feature. They were not intended to be a leverage to get the Plan through and can be removed if residents do not want them.
- Southern Water is also a consultee. The result of their report is not yet known.
- The plans do not contain a greywater recycling system.

In answer to residents questions District Councillor Ede confirmed;

- Wealden has a wider responsibility to provide 14,000 more properties in the District.
- Building is restricted in other areas by the South Downs National Park and Ashdown Forest so the majority of the building will take place around Hailsham and Polegate.
- This site is adjacent to an area of special scientific interest but being adjacent to an area is not enough to get it stopped.
- If Wealden submit a Plan for less housing the Inspector will uphold the Appeal and could insist on more. Wealden would therefore lose control over what happens in the District.
- Brownfield sites are considered but there are not enough to meet demand.

The Chairman thanked the applicants, the public and District Councillor Ede for attending. They all then left the meeting.

## **BP.06.08.16 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016:**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016 were read, approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting by the Chairman.

Any matters' arising were deferred to the next meeting.

## **BP.07.08.16 Planning Application: WD2016/1659/MAJ – Land at Station Farm, Berwick – 33 new dwellings, 3 new shops, and 2 new offices plus associated works. To include community photovoltaic panel system.**

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After much discussion Berwick Parish Council **resolved** that, whilst Councillors agree they like the design and materials used in this Planning Application, they **object** to this planning application on the following grounds;

- 1: Whilst they accept the need for more housing in the Parish this application is for 33 houses, far more than they accepted in the consultation for the new Local Plan.
- 2: Units 14 to 21 are affordable housing and are not spread within the rest of the housing. They will have a significant impact on the existing houses near them – they will overlook the back of the houses and gardens and there may be disruption from cars using the parking spaces (particularly at night). Unit 33 is the house at the far north of the development is unnecessary and will have a significant impact on the existing house at 14 Downsway (overlooking the garden and blocking the existing view).
- 3: The solar farm is of little benefit to the community. Alternative uses of this land might more directly benefit the community (eg. allotments, community garden, wildlife area).
- 4: Whilst they accept there may be a need for shops, new build offices would not be needed as almost all the surrounding farms have offices in converted farm buildings.
- 5: Traffic is also a concern. Access is onto a busy road and is therefore potentially dangerous. Councillors would like to have seen the report from Highways before the meeting.
- 6: Security. Whilst accepting that security is not a valid planning criteria, Councillors agree that gates from the new properties to the path will be a security risk for new residents. There should not be any entrances from the gardens onto farmland at the rear of the site, as this is a potential hazard for the farmer fencing to keep animals on the land in the future.
- 7: Sewerage – Berwick Parish Council understands the existing system is already at full capacity and cannot cope with any more development. Councillors would like to have seen the report from Southern Water before this meeting.

**BP.08.08.16 Questions from Members:** There were no questions from members on this occasion.

**BP.09.08.16 Close of Meeting;** The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: **31st August 2016**