

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING MEETING HELD IN HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL, HORSMONDEN
AT 7.30 P.M. ON 19th AUGUST 2015

Present: Cllr March (Chair), Cllrs Isaacs, Stevens, Russell, Stanton, Hughes and Cllr Davis.

In attendance: Clerk (Lucy Noakes), 21 members of the public present.

Declarations of Interest: Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited, none were recorded.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. PUBLIC SESSION

Several, members of the public had requested to speak on the planning application TW/15/505597- OS Plot 2952 Maidstone Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent.

The points made were as follows (not recorded verbatim):

Mr Wheeler's comments: the field upon which the proposal has been made is the most flood prone for miles around and has a long history of flooding. This reflects its use as a soak away which is totally unsuitable for crops or livestock. It is bordered by ditches and the road to the east, and has flooded more times than the nearby cottages because it is so low lying. Many of the nearby cottages have a long history of flooding, including most recently in the 2013 floods. Other times when they have flooded are 1962, 1976, 1987, 2000, 2001 and 2013. The ditch was enlarged and a five foot diameter culvert installed to the front of the cottages, however due to the increased floodwaters over the years, this has proven ineffective, as there is no lower lying outflow.

Scientific reports indicate an increase in flood threat in the future and this can only be made worse for local residents if the field is developed. In his opinion the site is totally inappropriate for any sort of development either now or in the future.

Mrs Pemberton's comments: the area from Churn Lane to Gafford's Bridge has seen little development for 250 years. Planning is there to control development and protect our environment. The countryside should be valued and protected by planning decisions. This area of the Maidstone Road is characterised by old homesteads, with an average age of roadside dwellings being c.1750 and the most recent c.1880, several of which are Grade II listed buildings. The element of proposed urbanisation would be a stark contrast to this.

The applicant's planned foul drainage is an issue because of the high water table, which would greatly reduce its effectiveness. Mrs Pemberton referred to a report from Campaign to Protect Rural England which reported on the loss of natural countryside. She said that she believed good planning could help to prevent this and protect the countryside and wildlife habitats.

Mr Pemberton's comments: whilst he has sympathy with the situation of the applicants, he does not believe that the field is suitable for human habitation because of its susceptibility to flooding and the fact that it acts as a soak away for the nearby dwellings to help prevent flooding to them. The Flood risk assessment was based on flawed data and assumptions and incorrectly stated that the site was located in Flood zone 2, also arguing that it should be registered as a flood zone 1. In actual fact the field would be better recorded as flood zone 3, with a 1 in a 100 or greater risk of flooding each year. There is photographic evidence of the flood in 2013 and a local resident has signed an affidavit to say that the field also flooded on many other occasions as well. Because of the flawed information, the FRA report should not be used to make an informed decision in this matter

Mrs Wood's comments: nothing has changed since the previous application for this site, and nothing should ever be built on this field for the following reasons:

- 1) The road was flooded so badly in 2000 that even ambulances and emergency services could not get through. The FRA report has been proven to be inaccurate. The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) says that when determining planning applications, local authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Any building here would increase the risk to others.
- 2) During the 2013/14 flood the water rushed in to Gafford's Cottages. The sewers also flooded. There is no certainty that a new cesspool/cesspit would be 100% safe and this could cause risk of pollution to nearby waterways and properties.
- 3) The ecological report was carried out in December which according to Flag Ecology is the worst time to find evidence of flora and fauna. It was recommended that it be repeated in spring/summer. The report's author has been informed that the field has been mown once a year over the last two years, not weekly for three years as stated in the report. This has a huge bearing on wildlife, especially the slow worm found here and protected by law.
- 4) Impact on the character and landscape of the locality – the size, car parking and tarmac needed (the application incorrectly state that there is parking for four cars there already which there is not), lighting , drainage and cesspits, vehicle movements in and out of the site for deliveries etc, the ramp needed for access which may prove dangerous.

Mrs Wood produced a number of photographs which showed the site during the flood of December 2013.

Mr Heming's comments: he has known the area since moving there in 1959 and has seen the area flood 5 times since then. In 2000 the flood water was 6 inches deep across the B2162 Maidstone Road and flooded in to his property causing much damage. The water from these floods escapes across fields beside the road, including this one, therefore any development at all at this site is likely to obstruct this water draining away. Any hard standing in the field would also stop the water being soaked up and a ramp for access would

act like a dam, trapping the water in. Mr Heming has been informed by a local naturalist that because of the field's dampness and lack of agricultural use it contains a large population of great crested newts who are protected by law. The previous inspection was not adequate to detect this.

Mr Lucas' comments: Mr Lucas wished to represent himself and his wife as well as Mrs Banks.

He was against the application for the following reasons: increased flooding risk, increased and dangerous traffic entrance and exit to the site, misleading errors in the application. Mr Lucas had concerns regarding the 'new' application by the current owner of the field, Mrs Hickmott, as it still used the Cooper family's status and pursued a minor gypsy and traveller site on their behalf. All the documentation in this 'new application' was the same as the last application. Mr Lucas submitted an affidavit from Mr King, which outlined the flooding of this field over the last 50 years. In summary he did not feel that the land should be developed at all.

Mr Lucas commented on the very short time allowed for comments to TWBC regarding this application and asked if the PC could request an extension to this.

Cllr March explained that an extension could not be given on the timeframe for TWBC to gather comments and make a decision as this is set out in planning legislation and if TWBC do not adhere to this, then they lose the right to make a decision.

3. PLANNING

3.1 Applications/Submissions:

Following a full discussion of the points raised above by parishioners as well as additional points raised by members of the council, the following decision was made:

Planning Application No:	TW/15/505597/FULL
Proposal:	Change of use of land for stationing of one mobile home, one touring caravan, one utility building and formation of a car park for one gypsy family.
Location:	OS Plot 2952 Maidstone Road Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent
Recommendation:	Refusal
Proposal:	Cllr Hughes, seconded Cllr Stevens. Unanimous.
Comments:	Recommended refusal. Rejection on the grounds that the site has a proven history of flooding and is unsuitable for any type of development. The development proposed increases the risk of flooding for neighbouring residences and agriculture and also constitutes a threat to wildlife and ecology; including protected species. There is a significant risk that flood water could be polluted by sewage, from this development. Even a mechanical sewerage system would not be suitable in this area of flooding. The access to the road from the site poses a danger as the site is lower than the level of the road and any ramp to ease access could potentially act as a dam. There is no provision in the submission to mitigate this effect. Owing to the density of traffic on that road, which is a 50 mph limit, accessing the road from an upward slope would constitute a danger. The council notes there is clear misinformation in the proposal: - the proposal states there is already parking for four cars, but this is just an agricultural field, - the council notes that the flood risk report is demonstrably incorrect.

Planning Application No:	TW/15/506094/FULL
Proposal:	Erection of two storey side and rear extension, loft extension and raising of ridge height with dormer windows in roof to north and south elevation
Location:	Poplars Lodge Churn Lane Horsmonden Tonbridge Kent
Recommendation:	Approval
Proposal:	Cllr Russell, seconded Cllr Isaacs. Unanimous.
Comments:	Recommended approval. Acceptance as a reasonable extension and enhancement of the existing residential property. The Parish Council have considered the increase in roof height but find this acceptable.

Planning Application No:	TW/15/505340/OUT
Proposal:	Additional information – Access Technical Note, including road safety audit. Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and for the erection of up to 30 new dwellings (access not reserved).
Location:	Bassett's Farm, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent
Recommendation:	Refusal.
Proposal:	Cllr Davis, seconded Isaacs, unanimous.
Comments:	Recommended refusal. The Parish Council take note of the additional information which does not overcome the problem of the parking of cars by the residents of Station Cottages,

	which could cause obstruction to traffic. The Parish Council would like recorded that their previous comments on the main submission still stand.
Planning Application No:	TW/14/506572/FULL
Proposal:	Additional information– Traffic statement and Access Details Restoration and conversion of Grade 2* Listed farmhouse into two dwellings. Conversion and replacement of redundant agricultural buildings into 2 commercial units, 3 holiday lets and 9 dwellings, with a renewable heat source facility, parking lodge and stores. Resurfacing of drift way and provision of new access. Enhancement of habitats for protected species, including landscaping and ecological mitigation.
Location:	Spelmonden Farm Spelmonden Road Goudhurst Cranbrook Kent TN17 1HE
Recommendation:	Approval.
Proposal:	Cllr March, Chair. Unanimous.
Comments:	Recommended approval, subject to Kent highways Services reports and approvals for road safety, including road surface, and the approval of the landscape officer.

3.2 Applications granted and refused

Applications granted:

TW/15/502574/FULL- Post Office, The Heath, Horsmonden, Kent.
 TW/15/503506/FULL – Grovehurst Farm House, Grovehurst Lane.
 TW/15/503684/FULL – 2 Woodgate Mews, The Heath, Horsmonden.
 TW/15/504832/FULL – Dolphin House, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden
 TW/15/502803/FULL – Pond Cottage, School House Lane
 TW/15/503271/FULL – Oasthanger, Lamberhurst Road

Applications refused:

None.

3.3 Other planning matters (discussion only)

The Councillors discussed a potential enforcement issue in Grovehurst Lane, where a pond had been made much larger which was concern to local residents. Cllr March had discussed this matter with the Planning department, but it was understood that the pond could be made larger without permission. TWBC enforcement officers were looking into this matter to ensure that all planning legislation would be complied with .

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40pm.