

Burwash Parish Council

Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Council

Held on the 6th August 2018, at 7.00pm in Burwash Village Hall

Present

Chair – Cllr McBride, Vice-Chair – Cllr Moore, Cllr Caulkin, Cllr Dixon
Cllr Elmslie, Cllr Jenner, Cllr Kenny, Cllr Mann, Cllr Pope and Cllr Vereker

Public Time – This session was extended to allow enough time for all the public present to have their say on the planning application discussed by Councillors in the close session of the meeting. Below is a summary of the comments received from the public. Due to the number of people present (over 60 members of the public) the Chair extended the public time for one hour. No individual has been accredited for the comments made:

- a. It was urged that everyone gave a comment to object to the planning application on the portal as Rother District Council (RDC) will monitor the level of objections.
- b. A short paragraph had been submitted with the planning stating that based on a viability report it was no longer viable to include the affordable houses. Rother had confirmed they have written to the applicant stating that they would be making the viability report public but is waiting to hear back from the applicant what ‘sensitive data’ they ask to be removed.
- c. The houses look like they should be affordable but how much will they cost? They should be in keeping with Strand Meadow.
- d. If the roofline is accurate it seems incredibly high and sheer and the slope of the hill doesn’t seem to be accurate.
- e. There are no affordable houses because the site is not suitable for houses to be built on in the first place therefore they will be expensive to build.
- f. Accessibility to the site is poor. It seems a dereliction of the LPAs duty to allow such a site to be granted planning permission.
- g. It was asked if the houses were built to be affordable would they be made available to local people? - Cllr Moore confirmed that if local people are on Rother’s list they would be [able to bid for these units but priority will be given to households from the wider catchment which includes Burwash but also Ticehurst and Etchingham](#). If any affordable rented accommodation/shared ownership were built on this site they would be held in perpetuity.
- h. The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has indicated the village needs smaller housing such as bungalows for older people. The village also needs genuinely affordable 2/3 bedrooms houses for younger families. This development does not meet either of those needs. There was a concern about the level of harm [caused on the community by](#) not providing the correct housing for people. Older people will not be able to move out and free up their larger properties and younger people/families will not be able to move into or stay in the village due to the lack of housing available.
- i. It was asked who adjudicates if the site is genuinely not affordable. The Clerk confirmed that it is an outside Evaluations Officer who does an independent assessment on the site.
- j. It was asked what the Parish Council objected to with the outlining planning back in 2017. It was confirmed that the full objection letter was on the website for people to view.
- k. It was highlighted that there is no local employment for new people moving into the Parish.
- l. Will developers alert potential buyers to the fact their properties are being built on wetlands.
- m. The development went from 17-30 houses because it wasn’t viable. Now with 30 houses it’s still not viable? How does that change in a year? Is the site viable at all?
- n. The Parish Land has been reduced. Cllr Jenner said that this part of the land could never be built on because it is essentially a filled in pond.
- o. The pathway into the playing fields has been put into the plans but no one has cleared this with the Burwash Playing Field Association. Cllrs confirmed they have received a letter on

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this matter and that confirmed they are aware of the situation and noted this was part of their objection in their 2017 letter.

- p. The large white part of the plan behind where the housing is going is even steeper so hopefully in the future will not be further housing.
- q. A discussion opened on the number of houses Burwash is expected to build and why this is not being fought. It was outlined that a lot of representation has been made to Central Government. It was also highlighted that officers at RDC should be strong and reject unsuitable houses/planning which do not meet their core policies. If developments cannot make the 40% affordable housing then developers should not be given planning permission. Otherwise this leads to expensive and low density housing being built which is not needed either locally or nationally. It was suggested that people should write to Huw Merriman MP outlining the issues that there isn't the space to build the allocated number of 52 houses in Burwash let alone have an increase in numbers as indicated will be the case.
- r. It was commented that if RDC are not strong in their position on planning they will be seen as a weak target and developers will pile on pressure to get their houses built as they want them. More leadership/direction is required so RDC is leading developers in what they can build rather than be constantly chased and pressured by developers for what they want which is usually high profit low density housing. A discussion followed around the link road in Bexhill where housing applications haven't come forward quickly enough for RDC to demonstrate they have a 5 year housing supply.
- s. It was asked why smaller sites are not counted towards Burwash's housing numbers. It was explained by Cllr Kirby-Green that RDC had already accounted a figure for 'windfall sites' in their core strategy. If this was removed all villages would gain a further 20% in their housing numbers which would take Burwash's figure closer to 62.
- t. A local resident says she lives very near the site. Her back wall has to be replaced every two years due to slippage from the bank. She is concerned about the harm the new development will have on her existing home and the others in Strand Meadow.
- u. Thanks were made to the District Cllrs, Cllr Kirby-Green and Cllr John Barnes for their constant support during this and previous planning applications.
- v. Thanks were made to the Parish Cllrs for the evening which people said was useful and supportive.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and noted by Cllr Crabtree. Cllrs left the meeting at the noted times:

- a. Cllr Vereker at 8pm
- b. Cllr Elmslie at 8.30pm
- c. Cllr Kenny at 8.40pm
- d. Cllr Beaston at 8.45pm

2. Disclosures of Interest

No declarations made.

3. Correspondence to the Clerk

The Clerk had received a letter outlining the concerns that a pathway was on the planning application for Strand Meadow leading into Swan Meadow. It highlighted that no one on the Burwash Playing Fields Association had been consulted on this. The BPC confirmed they are aware of this and it was part of their letter of objection in 2017 that this had not been agreed or consulted on and if Cllrs resolve tonight to object to the full planning application it will form part of that objection.

4. Strand Meadow Planning Application RR/2018/1787/P

Cllrs discussed at length the application considering the wide range of comments given by the public.

RESOLVED – To object to the planning application based on the following headlines:

a. The position, size and scale of the development

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In RDCs Local Plan the site is cited in Policy VL1. It states that proposals will be permitted no more than 17 dwellings of which 40% are affordable – this application is 30 houses none affordable.

b. The design, size and scale of the houses

Both are poor and harm the overall impact of the area. Houses are unsightly at three stories high with incredibly sheer roofs.

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c. The proposed development is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The intensifying of this site from 17 to 30 houses poses an unsuitable impact and effect on this AONB and harms the landscape character of this area. BPC cannot support such a high level of housing on the site considering the damage this AONB will incur.

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d. The impact on the infrastructure is too significant

The main concern is the impact the extra pressure on the sewerage system.

e. The access to the proposed site

In particular but not limited to

- i. Access for cars is very narrow
- ii. Poor footpath infrastructure for pedestrians
- iii. Poor accessibility for refuse trucks already a current problem in Strand Meadow

f. The impact from the traffic will have a severely adverse effect on the area and village

In particular but not limited to:

- i. Lack of parking for residents living on the High Street and those visiting the village
- ii. The submitted plan has the entrance coming onto Shrub Lane. This has poor access and visibility coming in and out of the site.
- iii. The bus service of the 31 is no longer available to the village and has been replaced with the number 231 and is only available Mon-Fri not Saturday

g. There has been a total removal of all affordable housing

This contravenes RDCs own policy for the need of 40%. No viability documents have been made available to date. Concerns were raised that this site has become 'unviable' within a year of the approved outline planning.

h. Understanding the Housing Need for the village

Through the Parish Council's own surveys and public engagement, the proposed houses do not meet local need.

i. No plans for access on site for construction vehicles and materials

Concerns that the plans provide no real evidence of how this will be achieved. There is also great concern over the potential to try and use Ham Lane entrance which would be totally unsuitable.

j. Geographical site constraints

There are numerous issues with the site itself and the suitability for building on it. Residents of existing buildings down in Strand Meadow talk of back walls needing to be replaced bi-annually due to the slippage in the area near where the new buildings are going. The site itself is also full of natural underground springs requiring a lot of pile driving and under pinning for any building to take place. This brings into questions the feasibility of having any suitable housing on the site at all.

k. Environmental impact on the area

In particular but not limited to

- i. The impact on the trees protected under the TPOs
- ii. Dark skies
- iii. The local and wildlife and fauna
- iv. The overall impact on the ANOB

Action: The Clerk to do an initial outline which will be commented and added onto by Cllrs Moore, Jenner and Vereker to be sent out to all Cllrs as soon as possible. It is noted that the Parish Council

have until the end of August to give in their comments but would like to resolve a draft copy by the next full council meeting 14/08/18.

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RESOLVED – To issue a press release outlining how unhappy the Parish Council is at the submission of this planning application in particular the total removal of affordable housing. Letter will be sent once the situation about the potential felling of trees on the site is confirmed.

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Action: Cllr McBride

RESOLVED – Write to Huw Merriman MP and Secretary of State on the issue of the number of houses needed to be built in Burwash. The increase from 35 to 52 seems unfeasible due to the lack of potentially unviable sites within the development boundary.

Action: Cllr McBride and Cllr Moore.

RESOLVED – To write back to Rother in reply to their letter regard the BPCs concern about the number of houses needed to be built in Burwash. This is not to happen until a meeting with District Cllrs Kirby - Green and Barnes.

5. Strand Meadow Planning Application Petition

Cllrs to agree the 'Head Petitioner' who will speak on behalf of the Parish Council at the Planning Committee and gained ten signatories for the petition.

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RESOLVED – Cllr Moore will be the 'Head Petitioner'

Action: Clerk to organise and hand deliver the petition to Rother on the 07/08/18.

Close of meeting 9pm