

Burwash Parish Council Planning Committee

Minutes of the Planning Committee

Held on the 14th May 2020, at 10.30am

Due to the coronavirus crisis this meeting was held online using Zoom

Chair Cllr N Moore, Cllr Franklin, Cllr Newson, Cllr Wraight, Cllr Chapman

There were 7 members of the public present online.

Cllr Barnes and Cllr Kirby-Green were also present.

Mr Nigel Collins-Greene was present as the developer of the Ashwood site.

Presentation Regarding the Ashwood Site

Mr Nigel Collins-Greene presented the draft plans submitted to Rother County Council to attendees of the meeting. The PowerPoint presentation will be available on the Parish website. Wording should indicate that these are draft plans and final design will take into consideration the High Weald Housing Design guide.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Rees and Caulkin.

2. Disclosures of Interest

None

3. Glebe House Site

Mr Fifield from GRF Planning gave a presentation using the attached powerpoint slides (see appendix) about the proposed plans for the Glebe House site to the East of Burwash village. This presentation has been made available on the Parish website.

Following the presentation, the meeting was opened for questions from councillors and public, to enable as much information as possible to be gathered. The Parish Council intends to hold a full public consultation once the coronavirus situation has resolved and physical meetings can be held again.

Open time for Questions

Cllr Wraight On whose land will the trees be? And How would you ensure they are not cut down?

Mr Fifield A. Could be subject to landscape condition on planning approval. Mr Arthur might retain ownership of trees to ensure they don't get cut down.

Public Could Mr Fifield please repeat what he said about Highways

Mr Fifield Access would be western end of site where speed limit is 30 mph.

Highways has not yet been consulted.

Public: Is Mr Arthur intending to lodge a full planning application?

Mr Arthur: Not sure at this stage whether an application will be made. Currently consulting people and opening a dialogue on the subject before deciding whether to proceed. Advice from his planning firm was to get pre-application advice before doing anything further.

- Public: Does the planning consultant have concerns about Highway issues and safety of motorists and pedestrians? If so, what are they?
- Mr Fifield: Concern is to have a safe access which could be achieved by moving the access towards the west so within the 30 mph limit and opposite the footpath. Intention to consult with Highways and ensure safe access and address concerns raised in the SHLAA.
- Cllr N Moore As a pedestrian you would have to cross the road near the bend at beginning of 30 mph zone.
- Mr Fifield One option could be to put additional footway northern side. Could consider traffic calming and entrance.
- Public: Housing targets not a reason to destroy the countryside. Not certain current government will continue with existing targets and will be reviewing them. Not certain Burwash will still have the same targets in the future. How does the applicant respond to that?
- Mr Fifield Each local authority will address policy at a local level.
- Public: This site is currently outside the Neighbourhood Plan and if this site were to be developed might have an impact on future development boundaries and Parish Council would have to move boundary lines.
- Mr Fifield Each application to be reviewed on merit.
- Cllr N Moore Neighbourhood Development Plan decided not to move the boundary. Rother have also opposed moving the boundaries although there is pressure to produce sites and housing.
- Cllr Barnes New Rother target for housing is a 40% increase and comes out at 727 houses per year. Core strategy is being revised. Relevant fact about development is if no housing supply for 3 years then developers have to take it down to development boundaries.
- Mr Fifield Comment for Mr Fifield – you have set the figure at 22 as after Strand Meadow this is the residual figure.
Confirmed a lower number of housing on this site could be possible if another site were available for the remaining housing.
- Cllr Newson Who are these houses for? What kind of affordable housing will there be?
Are there engineering challenges with the land which might impact the final numbers of affordable housing provided?
- Mr Fifield Not aware of any building constraints. 7 affordable houses will be provided. The balance will be market housing. Layout provides a mix of 2/3 bed houses with 2 x 4 bed houses. If 1 bed properties were needed then could be accommodated.
- Cllr Newson Made the comment that in order to make the required return the developer would need market housing which would then imply people moving in from outside the village, on London, not local salaries.
- Public Has Mr Arthur met with anyone at Rother in relation to the pre-application? Have they given any indication of their views?
- Mr Fifield Rother have drawn attention to all the usual policies. No indication of their view.

- Public How many houses have the council been told they have to build within the next 3-4 years?
- Cllr N Moore Rother housing target for our area is 52. Struggling with finding suitable sites. Rother indicating we should be accepting 30 for Strand Meadow but this has been opposed by the community and not included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Very aware we have responsibility to AONB and also to residents for correct housing.
- Public Glebe House site has better access for emergency vehicles compared to Strand Meadow. Is this correct?
- Cllr N Moore Lots of comments and letters received with concerns about traffic and access to Glebe site and also a lot of concern on traffic for Strand Meadow. Both have traffic issues.
- Public Does Mr Arthur agree that with the discovery of an early bronze age axe and what are thought to be Saxon fortifications it makes this site perhaps one of the greatest known heritage issues in the area? An early bronze age axe was found on the property. HER village records apparently have recorded this.
- Mr Arthur Not aware of an archaeological dig on the site that discovered such artefacts. He confirmed he does not know anything about an axe.
- Mr Fifield Site not on East Sussex records for any archaeological finds. Relevant Heritage Statements would be submitted as necessary and planning permission could include conditions around this.
- Note: Copy of records to be provided by member of public so can be investigated further.*
- Public Is Mr Arthur going to get planning permission then sell parcels of land?
- Mr Arthur Confirmed he is not property developer and not sure yet – at beginning of process. Hasn't looked into the scheme as a business interest as yet.
- Public Comment on recent vehicle accident at East end of the village and concern. Concern on developing village and ruining its charm.
- Cllr Newson Comment to public question about emergency traffic access to Strand Meadow. Rother raised no objections to this on Strand Meadow. Glebe site not necessarily a safer access with the main road.
- Public Visibility of 45m each side was mentioned but should be a longer view if approaching at 60mph. What guarantee would be given that the sight lines would be respected?
- Discussion was had about visibility lines of 115m accepted by Rother with reduced height of hedging on campsite issue.
- Cllr N Moore Confirmed traffic is an issue and pedestrian access.
- Public If permission granted for this site then housing requirement still in deficit until Strand Meadow built. Implication that Strand Meadow would then be pushed to be built.

- Cllr N Moore Confirmed that no official application lodged for Strand Meadow beyond the outline planning. The two sites are completely separate and should be treated individually on merit.
- Cllr Newson Glebe site should not be seen as a balancing item. Strand Meadow has been heavily opposed. Underlying issues still not addressed. Neighbourhood Plan at this point not based around allocating sites but focussing on brownfield sites where there has already been building and make them into useful developments rather than ploughing up fields.
If public not happy about the Glebe Site and could find other areas that don't damage the visual community. Would the developer proceed still?
- Mr Fifield Confirmed he would have to discuss with Mr Arthur in depth and couldn't comment on that at present.
- Public Highlighted the dangers of peripheral ribbon development. Reference to SHLAA and multiple sight lines. Also danger of development on other side of the road if this boundary at Glebe House is extended.
Does the landowner see the importance of the village entrances?
- Mr Arthur Yes, values the village. If the field was developed, he confirmed that further development couldn't go beyond Glebe House.
- Public If ribbon pushed towards Etchingham then there could be development the other side.
- Public If no further housing allocated what do Rother do? Is the target legally or morally binding?
- Cllr N Moore Target not legally binding. Target came out of SHLAA. Neighbourhood Plan has shown these numbers are not realistic. Sites we have put forward have been rejected by Rother.
No penalties if we don't make the targets. If we don't allocate sites, then developers can keep putting forward development ideas.
- Public Has thought been given to existing footpath? Access via churchyard is very good village access. Suggestion of moving the existing footpath.
- Cllr N Moore No footway or pavement going out. The footpath itself is one of the most brilliant views over each side of the ridge.
- Mr Arthur It would be very pleasant access for people living in the proposed development to walk out into village through the churchyard.
- Public Could existing footpath be adjusted as not very user friendly at the moment? Pavement on the road missing a section between the cottages which doesn't communicate with the driveways. Not sure who land belongs to.
- Public Footpath through Rectory Close owned by Church, other land privately owned.
- Cllr N Moore As far as can see wouldn't be a pavement running to the development.

Public The village is outstanding, but we cannot continue to live as we are. The young need places to live and we need to evolve and keep the beauty of the village. Glebe land is the perfect place, well-hidden and will not be a blot on the village. The 30 mile limit could be moved down the hill before the Glebe entrance. As much as we would like to keep our villages closeted, we will have to move on. But...is there enough infrastructure in place to support more housing?

Cllr N Moore Not certain question for Developer or owner but bigger policy.

COMMENTS

Cllr N Moore then opened the meeting for comments.

Different headings were given by Cllr N Moore for people to comment on:

AONB

Public This development will ruin the view and the AONB on that site.

Mr Arthur Land slopes to a bowl. Impact on AONB minimised. View from south would only be of the top of housing.

Sight lines

No comments

Pedestrian and Road Safety

Public 30mph not respected and does not deter people going in and out of the village. It would put pedestrians in danger entering the proposed development.

Public Resident who lives at the point on the road confirmed they have had to install cemented wooden stakes to try and deter vehicles coming up onto the verge. Resident runs a B&B and discourages guests to walk to the village.

Cllr N Moore Residents in new development would have to cross the road to walk into village.

Cllr Barnes It is absurd to start the 30mph limit where it is. Very dangerous entrances around the start of the limit. Should be taken out to the East. The traffic should be slowed much earlier on approaching the village.

Public To create line of sight the hedge would have to be taken down/ lower. This would mean site would be more visible and also question of whether the hedge height would be maintained as currently not being maintained and cut back enough.

Mr Arthur It does need cutting back – it's Spring and probably does need cutting.

Ribbon Development and Development Boundaries

- Public Suggestion that this is not ribbon development as one development is not correct. If this were true it would suggest a development of 1 mile long wouldn't be considered a ribbon development.
- Cllr N Moore Concern over moving boundaries as it could set a precedent and happen again. Development boundaries are there for a reason.
- Public Site has got potential for some development but not on the proposed scale. Housing is needed for local community. If something proposed that tailors to the needs of the village, is sympathetically done without negatively impacting the AONB there is opportunity.
- Cllr Newson What is the history of the bowl shape of the field?
Mr Arthur No landscaping has been done in that field as far as aware.
- Cllr Newson Questioned whether ridge was the original Roman road.
- Mr Arthur Not aware if it was the original road. It was probably still a very heavy oak forest at that time.
- Cllr Barnes Could have been initial Roman track. Not sure if any development along the ridge.
- Public Map of Roman road and mention of old Saxon roads that started off as tracks. They have always believed main part of village was along the ridge and thought
- Mr Arthur Confirmed lots of people over the years have requested permission to do metal detecting on the site which has always been permitted. Earliest coin found he believes dates back to 1600's.
- Cllr Barnes Saxon post 7th Century is when Burwash and Etchingham first was developed.

Neighbours – impact on immediate neighbours to site

- Public Resident of Brambles – development would be horrendous and impede on privacy as development would be looking up at them.

Other questions

Traffic

- Public Should the traffic issues be considered separately?
Cllr N Moore Confirmed we have a separate Traffic and Transport workstream that is working on the traffic issues in the village.

Tree preservation

- Public Residents of Brambles confirmed there were very specific tree preservation orders put on their property in relation to the trees and keeping them. Rother Council viewed that is where the village started.

Glebe House and reasons behind development

- Public Referred to Owner Mr Arthur and that impression is any money gained from sale of the land would be put to the upkeep of Glebe House and in a state of good repair.

- Mr Arthur Confirmed it is a Grade 2 listed property. Spare money would be put into maintaining it. It is not currently in a good state of repair.
- Mr Fifield Profit would go towards urgent and necessary repairs to the Grade 2 listed property. To be noted that these properties are quite rare and historical asset.
- Cllr N Moore All well and good but not necessarily reason to build 22 houses.
- Mr Fifield Will discuss the next steps with Mr Arthur. Would like to receive a formal view from the Parish Council in context of the Neighbourhood Plan when this is possible.
- Cllr N Moore Will discuss with councillors next steps.
Thanked Mr Fifield and Mr Arthur for being part of the meeting.
A proper consultation will be organised once we are out of lockdown.
- Mr Fifield Questioned whether it would help if he contacted East Sussex Highways?
- Cllr N Moore Confirmed he has already contacted an officer at East Sussex County Council and Mr Fifield does not need to do this.
- Mr Fifield Thanked everyone for taking part in the meeting.
- Cllr Barnes Confirmed Highways are prepared to do a Traffic Assessment as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process.
- Cllr N Moore Thanks to everyone involved in the meeting.
Closed public comments and meeting reverted to speaking to councillors.

Councillors still present:

*Cllr N Moore, Cllr Newson, Cllr Franklin, Cllr Wraight, Cllr Newman and Cllr Kenny.
(Please note at this stage Cllr S Moore and Cllr O'Neill seemed to no longer be in the meeting).*

- Cllr Franklin Collate comments and review meeting notes before next meeting.
Received positive comment from resident that day which has been sent to Assistant Clerk.
All comments and letters can be reviewed at the Planning Meeting.
- Cllr N Moore All reasons for why it was rejected in the SHLAA still remain.
If we are in favour of the development then the development boundary would be brought into question which would have potential knock on.
- Cllr Franklin Keeps being implied that will be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Suggested red herring as Neighbourhood Plan was completed.
- Cllr N Moore As sites have not been allocated then council need to evaluate each site on merit.
Has reviewed assessments and can't see that anything said tonight changes AONB concerns.
Neighbourhood Plan needs to be submitted.

Cllr Newman Historical nature of the site has been key in conversation. Would recommend research done so that we have that information.

Cllr N Moore Confirmed this would be discussed at the next Planning Meeting.

4. Information for noting or including on a future Agenda

Glebe House site

5. Date of next meeting and time to be agreed

28th April at 10.30am

The meeting was closed at 8.20pm