

## **WESTHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

### **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF**

16<sup>th</sup> November 2015

held at The Amenity Hall, Stone Cross

188 Present

Councillors K Stevens, G Garner, T Comerford, N Beaney, F Durling, A Lovell, P Marshall, J McClarty, K Saxby, J Blaker and G Parsons.

County Councillor M Pursglove, District Councillor D Dear, A Stevens (Clerk) and six members of the public were also in attendance.

189 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Perrin and T Bruce were accepted by those present.

Apologies were also received from District Councillor L Clark.

190 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Councillor Durling asked for it to be noted that minute 164 and the preceding agenda item were wrong in that Councillor McClarty was asking for a small area – approximately 100 yards of Peelings Lane immediately behind Romans Way – to be considered not all of Peelings Lane.

The Minutes of the Full Council Meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015 were read, confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

191 Clerk's Report

All matters' arising were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

192 Disclosures of Interests

There were no disclosures of interests declared nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

The meeting was then suspended.

193 Speakers Ann Newton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development and Marina Brigginsaw, Strategic Planning Manager from Wealden District Council

Introduction

Ms Brigginsaw introduced the new Wealden Local Plan (WLP). The WLP will:

- supercede all Core Strategy and the 1998 adopted WLP
- exclude the South Downs National Park
- identify the objectively assessed needs of the district, including housing need
- provide a strategy which seeks to meet this need where possible.

It must also meet the legal requirements and meet the tests of soundness.

### Content

The WLP contains strategic priorities for the area. This includes;

- the homes and jobs needed in the area
- retail, leisure and other commercial development
- infrastructure
- climate change mitigation.

### Stages of Production

The WLP is out for consultation from 19<sup>th</sup> October to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015. It will be submitted in April/May 2016 for determination by the Planning Inspectorate where it will be tested for legal compliance, soundness and modifications will be proposed.

A final report will then be put to the District Council for adoption in 2017.

### Vision

The Plan aims to;

- establish Wealden District as an attractive and prosperous part of the South East with significant housing and employment growth around the existing urban areas of South Wealden
- to increase employment opportunities
- improve infrastructure
- improve shops, leisure facilities and green spaces
- make Wealden the place to live.

### Overall Growth

The WLP proposes 19,950 dwellings from 2013 to 2037 which means 832 dwellings per annum will be built. This figure includes 7200 already approved and allocated under the current plan and 2300 dwellings on behalf of neighbouring District and Borough Councils. Failure to include the needs of our neighbours will mean the Plan will be rejected by the Inspectorate.

### Testing

When tested, it may be that the Plan is not acceptable in terms of its impact upon the Ashdown Forest, High Wealden Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs National Park. It may be that there is not enough land available or that this proposal is undeliverable.

It may also be that infrastructure is not in place, which will mean the strategy will need to be delayed.

#### Preferred Options Here

- 550 more homes in Stone Cross. This figure takes into account issues such as access, landscape, protection and the avoidance of flood risk areas.
- 350 more homes within and around Westham.
- 10 in Hankham to result from incremental growth over years.

#### Infrastructure

Improvements to the A27 are part of the strategy.

The release of land is conditional upon there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the requirements generated by the proposed development.

Where development would create the need to provide additional infrastructure, a programme of delivery must be agreed with the relevant providers.

#### Questions

In answer to residents' and councillors' questions Mrs Briginshaw and Mrs Newton confirmed;

- if the target numbers of housing are not met applications from developers, even in sensitive areas, will go ahead because growth is the priority. This is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- the Plan for Hankham includes one and two bedroom housing because lots of Parish Councils want smaller housing so that older people can downsize and stay in the village and younger people can also afford to stay too.
- planners have looked at the sustainability of Hankham. It was noted there is no mains drainage for example although this is not unusual in small villages.
- the figures are not guesswork. Wealden can justify growing three times more than Hastings and twice more than Eastbourne. Hastings cannot grow at the rate it needs to so people and businesses are moving here. The County Council and Locate South East get enquiries and businesses all the time and pass them on to Wealden, past historic growth is also taken into account and internationally renowned consultants are used. If anything it is a conservative estimate because Wealden is a very large area with lots of hidden growth.

- whilst there is only one field that has not been earmarked for development between Westham and Stone Cross, keeping that field free from development to avoid coalescence would not be a planning issue.
- some infrastructure will be put in place before the building starts but it depends on the type of infrastructure. Schools, for example, will not be built first because they will fill up with children from other areas, Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces and a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy to protect the Ashdown Forest will have to be
- the Issues, Options and Recommendation document is as easy to read as it can be in order to meet the requirements of the Inspectorate. It is quite repetitive but not all of it applies to each settlement. Leaflets are available from Wealden which are easier to read and are available upon request.
- Wealden District Council is working with all agencies involved in the infrastructure.
- The Plan is relying on improvements to the A27 to keep traffic away from the Ashdown Forest. The Local Transport Information Plan has earmarked £75m for improvements to the A27 by 2021 but is still looking for a bigger solution.
- The waste water works will also need upgrading for most of the development to take place.

The Parish Council thanked Ms Brigginsshaw and Mrs Newton for coming and they then left the meeting.

194 Report from PCSO Wendy Wyatt

PCSO Wyatt was unable to attend on this occasion.

195 Reports from County/District Councillors

County Councillor Pursglove reported the following;

- eight streetlights in the Mills Estate are to be left on overnight.
- he is applying to have a disabled parking bay in Rattle Road.
- he is taking up a complaint against the DGH on behalf of a resident in Bartley Mill Close.

District Councillor Dear said;

- she had planned to give a brief report on the Local Plan but this has now been covered. She did add that the Plan deals with Gypsy and Traveller Sites of which fifty are needed throughout Wealden. Wealden District Council has recently rejected such a site at Laughton.
- Huw Merriman MP is to visit the Parish on 4<sup>th</sup> December between 3.30pm and 5pm. The venue has yet to be confirmed.

196 Questions from Members of the Public

Mr Haffner asked the Parish Council to take the wellbeing of Parishioners into account when commenting on the Local Plan. He feels the Plan is a smoke and mirrors document which if adopted will greatly impact on the NHS. He said it contains no plan to upgrade the infrastructure and noticed that works to the junction at Stone Cross which were rejected by the District Council in 2011 are now being re-introduced.

Mr Daines said;

- the further consultation mentioned will only be on the legality and soundness of the Plan
- the Government has not provided the figures
- there is no mention of the effect on the Pevensey Levels.

Councillor Stevens explained the Government provided the formula used to provide the figures.

The meeting was then re-opened.

197 Reports on Committee Meetings held

Councillors **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and accept the recommendations made.

Councillors **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and accept the recommendations made. As a result Councillors **resolved** the precept for 2016-2017, subject to any late government legislation, will be £146160.00.

Councillors also considered a grant application from Westham Village Hall and **resolved** to award the hall a grant of £850.

198 Reports from Outside Meetings

Councillors Garner attended the Pevensey Villages Partnership Workshop held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November. Members are looking at providing social care within the community.

199 Local Plan Issues, Options and Recommendations

Councillor McClarty;

- said 350 homes for the village of Westham is disproportionate to the increase in the growth of the village since the sixties
- said this number will destroy the rural nature, walks, countryside and the community all of which draw people here and contradict one of the Government's reasons for the increase.
- feels it is unrealistic to expect some housing but this is too much
- criticised the format of the report.

Councillor Comerford said Councillors need to take into account there is a national housing shortage and preserving areas is not necessarily an option.

Councillor Blaker agreed and added that the development will take place over a long period of time.

Councillor Parsons said the numbers are fine and agreed with Councillor Blaker.

Councillor Durling feels;

- there are lots of inconsistencies in the report
- will be a loss of biodiversity/views and countryside
- local businesses rely on tourism and tourism will be lost if the building goes ahead.

Councillor Lovell;

- said the properties need to be built and the Parish Council needs to work with Wealden rather than against it.
- questioned the need to take on the shortfall of Eastbourne. He said Eastbourne Borough Council should develop sites at the former Belmont Homes, opposite the Crematorium and by ESK instead.

Councillor Beaney proposed the Parish Council sets up a Working Party to draft a formal response to the Issues, Options and Recommendations documents. Councillor MClarty seconded the proposal and said the Working Party needs to draw out all the issues and put in a more meaningful response. He said the Working Party could consist of some Parish Councillors and some members of the public and added Councillors have a duty to take on board the views of its residents.

Councillor Saxby felt Councillors had already had enough time to do this. He has consulted residents of Hankham and had circulated their response before the meeting.

Councillor Blaker said all residents, businesses and groups in the Parish need to write in as a response from the Parish Council would only count as one response.

Councillors **resolved** not appoint a Working Party but to draft a letter to Wealden with the Parish Council's views instead. Councillors agreed to submit their comments to the Chairman within the next week. The Clerk and Chairman will draft the letter based on the majority of the Parish Councillor's views, a copy of the letter will be sent to all Parish Councillors prior to its submission to the District Council.

## 200 Memorial for Bev Garner

Councillors **resolved** to plant a silver birch on the far side of the cannon on Canon Green.

Neighbouring residents and East Sussex County Council have been consulted and have no objections. The Clerk will check with the County Archaeologist before planting goes ahead. Chaffins Tree Surgeons will provide and plant the tree at no cost to the Parish Council, the Parish Council will provide a plaque in memorial to Mrs Garner.

201 Westham Pond

The Parish Council received some complaints about the amount of dog mess around the Pond in Westham. The residents concerned asked the Parish Council to consider having larger signage and more dog bins more.

The Parish Council has since received correspondence from more residents asking the Parish Council not to. This motion was therefore dropped.

The Clerk has asked the Street Scene Officer to monitor the situation and report back if need be.

202 Foxes Hollow Entrance Wall

Contractors are due to visit the site on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and are expected to submit a price for the works required for the next Full Council Meeting.

203 Biodiversity Policy

There was nothing new to report on this occasion. Councillor Durling will let the Clerk know when she wants this item back on the agenda.

204 Committee Structure and Membership

Members **resolved** that the Finance and General Purposes Committee will now consist of eight members, namely Councillors Comerford, Bruce, Stevens, Garner, Parsons, Beaney, McClarty and Saxby. The Chairman of the Committee will have the casting vote in the event of a tie and meetings will start at 7pm.

Members **resolved** the Parks and Open Spaces Committee will consist of eight members, namely Councillors Garner, Blaker, Stevens, Perrin, Parsons, Marshall, Durling and Lovell. The Chairman of the Committee will have the casting vote in the event of a tie and meetings will start at 7.30pm.

205 Adur Park

Councillors **resolved** to remove the old infant play area at Adur Park because they agreed it is no longer needed and needs repairing.

206 Questions from Parish Councillors

Councillor Stevens said he has been asked to give a brief report on what Parish Councils do at the Foxes Hollow Annual General Meeting. There were no objections.

Councillor Saxby reminded Councillors to state whether they are giving their own views or the Parish Council's views when talking to residents.

207 Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered;

WD/2015/2345/F – Dormer Cottage, Peelings Lane – Proposed internal alterations and extension – Westham Parish Council has no objections to this application on any planning grounds.

WD2015/2389F – Red Lion Public House – Revision of planning approval  
WD2015/0478F – Reconfiguration of existing parking and construction of additional car parking to rear, patio and landscaping.

Councillors also discussed the Bellway Homes application for the land at Rattle Road and **resolved** not to accept the offer of a Community Hall on the understanding the land gets laid out as extension of the open space/ecological area instead. The Parish Council will then claim any S106 money.

There being no further business, the meeting finished at 9.25pm.