

Minutes of a Meeting held on 25th February 2010

Present: Mr Salisbury (Chairman), Mrs Revell, Mr Gregory, Mrs King, Mrs Burgess, Mr Blanch,
Mr Mercer
In Attendance: Mrs Jones (Clerk)

246 Public Question Time

246.1 Land North of Bylanes Close

Nigel Page, Chairman of the Cuckfield Action Group formed to fight this application, stated that the Group now had over one hundred members and about 190 objections had been sent to the District Council. Points raised by objectors reflected the widespread concern in the community. There were two parts to these objections: Strategic Objections: (1) The land is situated in the High Weald ANOB. This status is very important to Cuckfield and any development would set a precedent for future development in the ANOB. (2) There has to be a proven need to justify building in this area. The Group considers that the figure given in the documentation of 71 households in need within Cuckfield is incorrect and that MSDC would be premature in releasing this land for development. Other Objections: Although the developers have stated that Fields 3 & 4 would be given to the community, this should be seen as a commercial move and management of the area would be difficult. The development would have a significant impact on views from the north and there would also be light pollution as this is the highest point in Cuckfield. There were concerns that 40% of social housing was very high. There was no mention in the application of potential difficulties with the supply of utilities, particularly sewage. The change of use for residents in Bylanes would be dramatic with an 80% increase in traffic. The increase in traffic would also impact on Ardingly Road and on the Walk to School route, particularly with the new crossover that would be needed along the Whitemans Green Footpath. It should also be noted that Holy Trinity was at capacity with twelve refusals for admissions this year. Annette Jones commented that Rydon's had implied a transfer of Fields 3 & 4 to the community but that this was a tactic and not legally binding. The office of the ODPM had stated that such inducements did not constitute a legitimate process when considering an application.

246.2 Floodlights at Whitemans Green: Haywards Heath Rugby Football Club

Alan Jenkins, Chairman of the HHRFC, gave a report regarding the application for new floodlighting. The current lighting, now over 15 years old, was inadequate. The new lights would relieve the pressure on the existing pitch and would improve and extend the floodlit area to an additional pitch. There would be very little light spill from the new lights. The lights would be insufficient for match play and would only be used for training. This would enhance training for both juniors and seniors. There would be no increase in training, the lights would be used for a maximum of four nights per week from 7 - 9 pm.

247 Declarations of Interest

Mr Gregory declared a personal interest in the Application for the development at Bylanes as a member of the Action Group.

248 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2009 were taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

249 Planning Applications

09/03857/OUT

Land North Of Bylanes Close Whitemans Green Cuckfield West Sussex
Residential development of 42 dwellings, access road and childrens play area

The Chairman outlined the background for the application as this was the first application facing the Parish Council for development in the AONB. This was due to MSDC failing to achieve their 5 year housing supply (due to the inability of the utilities to provide the necessary infrastructure) and this had led to other sites in the SHLAA being brought forward. The Chairman stated that the High Weald Management Plan 2004 (amended 2008) stated that building should only be permitted in the AONB if it promotes agriculture but the Plan does not address the issue of large scale development. The West Sussex Structure Plan (now replaced by the South East Plan) states that there should be small scale, gradual growth in the countryside. The Local Plan stated that building in the countryside should only take place for essential social and economic need and that the built up boundary in Cuckfield seeks to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary development. The Committee would also need to consider that, should an application be approved by MSDC, the other issues that needed to be addressed as there would be little opportunity for future discussion.

Members considered the application with regard to the AONB. It was agreed that all the planning policy indicated that this land was unsuitable for development. Members were not satisfied that the shortfall in land supply available for housing in the District overrode the policy of building within the AONB. The development would not enhance the area and could set a precedent for further building in the AONB. There needed to be compelling reasons as to why the development was required and it was not considered that there was sufficient need within the village. It was also possible that alternative sites would come forward quite shortly within the Cuckfield area. It was agreed that this development would not make a positive contribution and that the AONB would be impaired as the development would be visible from the surrounding countryside and the light pollution would have a significant impact. The Committee then commented on other issues that would need to be considered by MSDC should an application be approved.

Layout: It was agreed that views through the site to the open countryside were very important. Some modelling would be helpful to ensure that the buildings were sited to ensure this would be achieved. It was considered that, particularly as this was a smaller development, the layout was better than on other sites and had been well thought through. In a different location, this development would have been acceptable.

Roof Height: There were concerns over the three buildings that were two and a half storeys high. These were not in keeping with the surrounding properties but it was possible that they could be sited more suitably elsewhere on the development. Regrettably, there was no single storey housing or housing for the elderly.

Playground: The playground was well located in the centre of the development.

Traffic: Additional traffic calming measures would be required, particularly where the footpath crossed the new access. Bylanes might also need some traffic calming measures and a new pedestrian crossing at Ardingly Road would need to be considered.

Design: This would need to be addressed at a later stage but the development would need to take into account the local vernacular.

Lighting: Light pollution was an issue of real concern and measures would need to be in place to ensure mitigation of any impact from the lights.

Social Housing: At present this was located in one half of the site and was not sufficiently 'pepper-potted' around the development. More work would need to be undertaken to ensure this was given a better distribution. The recent decision of the Planning Inspector at Chatfield Road would give additional weight to this matter.

It was unanimously agreed that the Committee would object to this application on the grounds that the development was within the AONB but that the comments raised above would be included in the response.

09/03493/FUL: Haywards Heath Rugby Football Club

Installation of a four mast floodlighting system at 15 metres in height to provide 100 lux average light level to the training pitch.

The Committee supported this application which would be of benefit to many young people in the area.

10/00120/FUL: Copyhold Lodge Copyhold Lane

Two storey side extension and demolition of conservatory

Object. The extension was an overdevelopment in the countryside. This dwelling was already a significant enlargement of the original building.

10/00257/TCA: Quietways Courtmead Road

Willow- Reduce canopy by approximately 30%

No objections

10/00268/FUL: 2 Churchyard Cottages

Replace existing garden shed

No objections

10/00359/TCA: Land At High Street

Re-pollard three Lime trees to previous cut points

No objections

250 Planning and Appeal Decisions Received From Mid Sussex District Council

10/00008/WSCC: Warden Park School

Continued siting and use of a temporary classroom unit

Permission

10/00088/TCA: Land At Cherry Trees Whitemans Green

Ash and Sycamore - reduce crowns by 30%. Holly - reduce to hedge height

Permission

10/00157/EOT: Bramham Moor, Tylers Green

Extend time limit for implementation of 06/02774/FUL

Permission

10/00166/TREE: 3 Mantell Drive

Two ash trees

Permission

09/03722/FUL: Holy Trinity C Of E Primary School

To extend car parking by four spaces.

Permission

09/03916/FUL: Blakeney House Whitemans Green

Erection of single storey sun room with photovoltaic solar panels

Permission

END