



Buriton Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Buriton Parish Council Planning Committee held on Monday 10th August 2020 (6pm).

Present: Cllr Ashcroft, Cllr Johnston, Cllr Jones, Cllr Marriott.

Also in attendance Cllr Stevens.

Apologies: none.

1. Cllr Johnston opened the meeting and explained that, following Government restrictions prohibiting public meetings and gatherings (including those normally held by Parish Councils and other Local Authorities), Buriton Parish Council was adopting alternative ways of working in order to continue with business whilst upholding democratic principles and compliance with the public health guidance. Drawing upon opportunities provided in Government Regulations, this meeting was being held remotely and was allowing access by members of the public via the Zoom video-conferencing platform. Agendas had been posted on the community website and on the public noticeboard as normal and provided details of the contact phone number for anyone wishing to register an interest in joining the meeting. Cllr Johnston explained that no members of the public had done so.

2. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Jones declared that as a Member of the South Downs National Park Authority, the Local Planning Authority for the area, he wished to make it clear that any views which he expressed at this meeting would be based on the information before him at this meeting and might change in the light of further information and/or debate at National Park meetings; this is to make it clear that he is keeping an open mind on the issues and cannot therefore be found to have predetermined any matter if it should come before the National Park for decision. Cllr Marriott declared that as a qualified tree surgeon he wished to make it clear that any views which he expressed at this meeting would be based on information before him at this meeting. He explained that if there was ever a potential personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest he would declare it and would leave the meeting as appropriate whilst the matters were discussed. In relation to application SDNP/20/01535/FUL Cllr Johnston explained that she owned land adjoining the site but that this did not amount to a pecuniary interest.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** of 6th July 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Update on current planning matters

SDNP/20/00994/REM - New House at Cobwebs, North Lane. Decision pending

SDNP/20/02081/HOUS: Garden outbuilding at 57 North Lane. Approved, with regard given to the Council's comments about the Local Plan Biodiversity Policies and a Condition duly attached.

Assets of Community Value: with regards to the Five Bells a decision from EHDC about the Parish Council's application for re-registration was expected in the near future. With regards to the Village Inn, Cllr Mocatta was liaising with Mr Cooper and with EHDC officers. The Parish Council had written to Mr Cooper providing details of the ACV processes followed for both the Village Inn and Five Bells and had also provided information to Tracey Wood, Head of Housing and Community Engagement at EHDC.

SDNP/20/00276/FUL & SDNP/20/00277/LIS – Haven Barn, Monks Walk: It was noted that the Parish Council’s letter of 17 June had not been placed on the SDNPA planning portal website. Clerk to write to Stella New at SDNPA requesting that this be done.

5. Matters for consideration at this meeting:

SDNP/20/01535/FUL: *The extraction of 343,670 tonnes of chalk (156,214 cubic metres x 2.2 tonnes per cubic metre) and the importation of 1,149,000 tonnes (633,333 cubic metres x 1.8 tonnes per cubic metre) of clean inert waste/soils and clays and the importation of approximately 31,000 tonnes of top soil (21,000 cubic metres x 1.4 tonnes per cubic metre) with the continuation of ancillary recycling operations until 31st December 2028 at Butser Hill Lime Works, GU31 5SP.*

It was noted that very helpful replies on a large number of wide-ranging questions had been received from Sabrina Robinson (SDNPA) and circulated to all members of the Parish Council in case anyone had any further comments to be taken into account at this meeting. The information helped clarify the parts of this overarching application which already had planning permission.

It was felt that the Council’s submission should focus on: (a) potential adverse amenity effects (including suggestions to ameliorate); (b) the significant opportunities provided by the restoration phase; and (c) plans for community engagement and local benefits.

It was noted that potential adverse effects could include noise, dust, smells, air pollution, lighting, extra traffic, highways safety, mud on roads, groundwater pollution, drainage, tranquillity and landscapes. Specific points discussed included: the number of lorry movements compared with the existing situation and permitted plans (including ‘double movements’ on the slip road for all south-bound vehicles from the site); the size of lorries (14 tonnes or 20 tonnes); changes to the hours of operation; conflicts and danger on the new Greenway Lane - QECF Shared Use cycle / pedestrian route. It was felt that the local community would be relying on a wide range of specialists to assess all the application details so as to protect, conserve and enhance our local environment (an area in which our parishioners live) and that this should be emphasised in the Council’s submission.

With regard to the restoration phase it was felt that significant opportunities exist in terms of the landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage, recreation and learning. It was agreed that the Parish Council submission should press for the consideration of retaining part of the chalk quarry face (for heritage and ecological reasons) as well as for the retention and restoration of at least some parts of the old lime kilns which are a locally recognised asset, felt to merit Listing by SDNPA. Detailed aspects of the restoration phase could also be very important, including the depth of the topsoil and whether or not it will have been sterilised so as to remove any unwanted seeds, ragwort etc. Policies 7 and 9 of the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan are particularly relevant.

It was noted that, according to the Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan (Policy 14), there should have been engagement with the local community during the pre-application stage but the Parish Council had never been approached by TJ Waste Ltd at all. It was felt that it would be important for there to be adequate liaison from now on, through to the completion of the restoration and after-care phase, involving local residents and other interested parties as well as the Parish Council. Policy 14 is also very explicit about expecting an agreement between the applicants and the local community “as a source of funding for local benefits” and reference would be made to this in the submission. There was a reference amongst the hundreds of pages of, mostly technical, information to some funding having been provided for Butser Ancient Farm which, whilst being a very worthy cause, is rather remote from the quarry site and in a completely different parish.

It was concluded that, due to a number of the issues discussed (above), the Parish Council’s submission should take the form of an objection at this stage.

It was also agreed that the submission should stress that it would be very important for all the work and disturbance to parishioners to be completed by the 2028 date being specified. A number of extensions to permissions had been permitted in the past but certainty was now being sought.

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SDNP/20/03034/PA16: *Installation of a 17.5m high communications mast with three equipment cabinets and associated works at the lay-by at the junction of Bolinge Hill Lane and The Causeway*

Although on the edge of the parish it was felt that comments should be made on this application (with copies to National Park Landscape staff) because of its potential dominance and clutter and because of a potential precedent for a number of other masts in the same 'railway line' project.

It was noted that all the documentation makes it very clear that the EE project is primarily focused on the railway line: trying to provide their customers on trains with a stronger signal so that they don't experience dropped calls. The documentation explains that this is part of a nationwide project by EE to improve their signal coverage along railway routes. There appeared to be much less attention and details about benefits to residents. There will surely be some – but it's not clear where (or how significant) or whether any adjustments (eg. in the height of the mast) could bring greater improvements for residents.

It was felt that the planners should obtain more detailed evidence about benefits for local residents before approving any of the visual intrusions in the National Park.

It was also felt that some of the claims as to how this stark cluster of equipment will fit into the street scene are ridiculous. Stating that the 17.5 metre mast will "share a similar man-made characteristic with other street items" and "will be less noticeable for passing traffic" seems to be deliberately misleading, inaccurate and deceptive.

Another statement, saying that "lower sections of the equipment in particular will be completely screened from view", was also felt to be blatantly untrue.

It was pointed out that this proposed mast would sit directly on part of the popular "Shipwrights Way" – a long distance walking and cycling route in the National Park. Effects on the experiences of these users must be taken into account: the mast will be an eyesore in their direct line of sight.

It was felt that a relatively simple solution might be to move the site by about 10 metres to the east (to the other edge of the layby) so that it could be sited with a backdrop of bushes, shrubs and trees which would reduce the dominance of the cabinets and the mast. Even a slightly taller mast, to overcome any interference from the trees, would probably be acceptable in this alternative location and it was felt that this option should be considered in much more detail.

Similarly it was felt that the option of locating the mast in the Buriton Business Park had been unfairly dismissed. This would be a much less intrusive location, even if it were to be slightly more expensive for the applicants.

It was also felt that, as part of any planning permission granted, the applicant must agree to share each mast with any other current or future providers. It would not be acceptable for any of these masts to be restricted to use by EE alone as this could either lead to (i) a plethora of masts in the vicinity (in a National Park) in the future as other providers also seek to serve this area of poor / non-existent reception or (ii) to the situation where users of only one network (EE) benefit from the inevitable adverse visual effects.

In summary, it was felt that: this application should be refused and the proposal re-sited by a few yards to the east to a much more suitable location on the other edge of the layby (or elsewhere) with a Planning Condition attached to ensure that the mast would be shared with all other networks (current and future) and a map showing exactly which dwellings in the parish which will receive an improved signal to be submitted as part of the revised application.

6. Public comments on the above: There were none.

7. The Committee's decisions on the above matters: As above.

8. Date of next meeting: to be arranged as required

Meeting finished at 7.15pm

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