



Buriton Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Buriton Parish Council Planning Committee held on Monday 12th April 2021 (6pm).

Present: Cllr Ashcroft, Cllr Johnston, Cllr Jones, Cllr Stevens, Cllr Wheeler.
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, on this occasion, 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.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** of 22nd February 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Update on current planning matters

SDNP/20/05029/FUL: Conversion of the Village Inn from Public House to Domestic Dwelling. Application still in progress. The very slow progress by EHDC on this application, which was causing some anxiety for some parishioners, was noted once again. The application had been submitted in November 2020 with a pre-Christmas deadline for comments. It had been noted that the applicant had been given until 31 March to submit any further information so as to address policy objections made by many parties. But that extension had come and gone without any further material appearing and without any decision being made by EHDC. Another enquiry would be sent to EHDC / SDNPA asking about this matter so as to seek a clear resolution for all concerned.

SDNP/20/05702/HOUS and SDNP/20/05703/LIS Rock Cottage Sussex Road Nursted Petersfield GU31 5RD. Single storey extension to two sides Application in Progress.

SDNP/20/05110/HOUS: Garden shed and screening panels around oil storage unit and hot tub (retrospective) at Old Spot Cottage, North Lane, Buriton, GU31 5RT. Application Approved

SDNP/21/01053/TCA Remove a cluster of native species trees at the Old Rectory and replant. Application Approved

SDNP/21/00931/PA16 Telecom Mast at Kiln Lane Buriton. Application in progress

New houses at Greenway Lane: The Parish Council is in the process of confirming a briefing meeting with 'BECG' so they can present and explain their revised proposals. Formal consultation on the planning application is expected soon.

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Enforcement matters: It was understood that EHDC's Enforcement Team are investigating conditions at the Greenway Lane Scrapyard (height of scrap heaps, amenity etc) but a reply from the housing association may yet be awaited about the large garden chalet / shed in Glebe Road.

5. Matters for consideration at this meeting:

SDNP/21/00956/FUL: *Construction and part retention of farm track access from Horsechestnut Farm onto The Causeway (B2070), Petersfield, GU31 4LR with SDNP/21/01232/CND (removal of condition 3 of SDNP/15/03090/FUL and removal of condition 2 of SDNP/16/05326/FUL)*

It was noted that the Parish Council had not been consulted or informed about either of these applications by EHDC even though about a third of the land involved (and the new road junction being sought onto the Causeway) lie in the parish. It was felt that the two applications were very much inter-connected and should be dealt with together. After discussion all Cllrs agreed that the Parish Council should object on a number of grounds, including:

- All the fields in question are outside the Settlement Policy Boundary for Petersfield – and would have the effect of extending this boundary into open countryside
- A Government Inspector and others in the past have felt strongly about keeping this uncluttered greenfield approach to the town – also now a gateway from the town into the wider National Park – and the Parish Council had objected strongly to previous applications in the area, including EHDC 34636/001
- The Conditions imposed when the previous permissions were granted were included for very good reasons – and there was no reason to change them now
- The owners are already apparently operating as a livery yard and so the application to remove the conditions is retrospective. If the original conditions were enforced there would be no need to add a new access route as the current access would be adequate
- EHDC's Landscape Officer had not yet commented on the implications of the removal of the two conditions (only on the visible effect of a new track), but the removal of the conditions could have a large effect on the landscape as it could lead to unrestricted amounts of paddock fencing, individual field shelters, jumps and other paraphernalia. This would change the nature, appearance and feel of this land significantly: replacing open fields with urban fringe activities. Section LS5 of the community's Village Design Statement is very clear on this matter.
- If any development is allowed (particularly with an internal road layout, underground culvert piping, access onto a main road etc) it was felt that it could then be much easier to get permission for other sorts of development (including warehousing or residential etc) once the character, quality and status of green field countryside has been lost.
- As well as being directly in view from the Bolinge Hill Lane junction (Shipwrights Way), this particular site is also at the entrance into Petersfield or, if travelling southwards, the first impression of the National Park that people would get when leaving the town.
- Considering the application for the new track alone, it was felt that it was simply not needed for the limited uses permitted by SDNP/15/03090/FUL
- As the fields lie below the level of the Causeway, there would need to be a length of ramped embankment which would have an urbanising influence in the open countryside, quite some distance from the Settlement Policy Boundary. However, no reference is made to this in the application documents.
- The 5.5m wide track would have a wider 'bell-mouth' junction onto The Causeway: another urbanising feature, detracting from the rural feel of the area which links the town with the downs. Such features are not in-line with the SDNPA Document 'Roads in the South Downs'
- The shared use cycleway is very well used and is part of National Route 222 (linking QECP and Petersfield and also with the Shipwrights Way to / from Buriton) and the District Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is aiming to increase 'active travel' (walking and cycling) in this area: to bring health benefits and reduce adverse effects of cars. The LCWIP is seeking ways of making walking and cycling easier and more attractive: not introducing problems which might deter nervous marginal users (people of all ages and abilities; families with young children; families with buggies etc).

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- Any traffic (including vehicles with horse-box trailers etc) would inevitably block this shared use cycleway when waiting to leave the site and join traffic already on the Causeway. No attempt appears to have been made within the planning application to give (retain) priority for cyclists.
- The safety of the proposed junction arrangements are questionable as there could also be safety issues for walkers and cyclists when vehicles (from north or south) turn into the site: the vulnerable users may not be very visible.
- These risks may be being under-played / under-represented as the traffic data appears to be drawn from the period when there were severe Covid “Stay at Home” lockdown restrictions. Any conclusions drawn from that data could be very misleading – and potentially dangerous.
- The principal of permitting development outside the settlement boundary is flawed. Once a new vehicle access is allowed there will inevitably be requests for further development
- The proposals are contrary to a number of Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan Policies and so none of the conditions regarding this stable complex should be relaxed nor should the new access be allowed.

SDNP/20/05618/FUL: *Installation of a 30m lattice telecommunications tower (and compound) at Head Down Hanger, New Barn Lane, Buriton.*

It was noted that there did not appear to be any obvious notification of this proposal at or near the proposed site and this matter should be included in the Parish Council’s response to the Planning Authority as the Council would want any parishioners who might feel adversely affected by the proposals to have the full opportunity to make comments and that these should be given full weight on the planners’ deliberations. After discussion all Cllrs agreed that the Parish Council should submit a number of comments, including:

- The proposal is for a very tall and dominating feature alongside a popular footpath in the South Downs National Park: this would be very imposing for those walking past the installation.
- In spite of references in the application documents to photo-montages, no visual indications of how this will sit in the landscape had been provided.
- As with other applications for telecoms structures in nearby areas in recent months, the landscape assessments were not felt to be very thorough and appeared to be primarily desk-based rather than grounded in reality.
- There was no indication as to whether any other sites had been considered and it was felt that this should surely be required for any “landscape-led” planning application in the National Park (as stipulated in the Local Plan).
- A potential alternative location might be a Network Rail trackside site a short distance to the east where there is a cluster of railway-related paraphernalia and so the mast might be better located alongside.
- Although there were references in the documents to cumulative effects (in combination with at least one other proposed mast at Woodcroft) the Parish Council had not been provided with any details. It was, however, felt that the cumulative effects of a chain of Telecoms Masts through the National Park (primarily for the benefit of passengers on trains who are not users or residents of the National Park) must be taken into account.
- There is no indication of any benefit for local people. There are nearby dwellings that could benefit should the correct directional antennas be fitted to the structures and the Parish Council would wish such local benefits to be maximised. It could also be of potential benefit to users of the Country Park and the local Forestry Commission Land in Head Down but no information has been provided about coverage or benefits.
- The proposal to put a hedge around the fencing in the middle of the ancient native yew and beech woodland would be completely inappropriate and out of place. This adds to doubts about the reality of the applicants landscape assessments in a National Park: appearing to be simply a standard application which might be submitted anywhere in the country.
- What would be the implications on the height and appearance of the tower should other telecommunication companies attach their own systems to it?
- It was acknowledged that the proposed siting of this structure is a better approach than that being suggested in SDNP/21/00931/PA16 (adjacent to Kiln Lane, Buriton) as it would be much

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further from a sensitive settlement setting – but all the other issues already discussed require detailed scrutiny and consideration by the Planning Authority.

6. Public comments on the above: None.

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

8. Date of next meeting: as / when required – including the possibility of a special meeting of the whole Council to consider any forthcoming planning application for the new houses on Greenway Lane so as to ensure that members of the public could have adequate opportunities to comment.

Meeting finished at 7.05pm

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