



Buriton Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Buriton Parish Council Planning Committee held in Buriton Village Hall at 6pm on Friday 7th January 2022.

Present: Cllr Johnston (Chair), Cllr Ashcroft, Cllr Jones, Cllr Stevens.

1. Cllr Johnston opened the meeting. Apologies had been received from Cllr Wheeler.

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. Updates on current planning matters

SDNP/21/00956/FUL: Construction and part retention of farm track access from Horsechestnut Farm onto the Causeway (B2070), Petersfield. Application in Progress.

SDNP/21/02014/FUL: 10 residential houses at Greenway lane. It was noted that the status of this application had recently changed to "Pending Decision" and it was felt that the Council should check that the decision will be taken by the National Park's Planning Committee and that members of the public would be able to speak at the meeting. The further information promised by HCC Highways (supporting the community's wish for the provision of the new pathway along Greenway Lane which had been sought in the Local Plan) had not yet appeared on the SDNPA website and it was not yet clear whether the developers would be providing this path or not.

SDNP/21/03220/DCOND: Discharge of Conditions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24 and 27 of Planning Approval SDNP/20/01535/FUL at Butser Hill Lime Works, Buriton, GU31 5BQ. Application still in progress. It was noted that Condition 28 of this permission was due to have been fulfilled within 9 months of the Decision Letter issued on 11th March 2021. In the light of ongoing work and activities in the quarry site it was felt that the Council should check with SDNPA about progress on this important Condition which required the developers to provide details of a scheme to retain, protect, enhance and provide interpretation boards for the Lime Kilns. There had been no further update about the establishment of the Local Liaison Group since messages in October 2021 and this would also be checked.

SDNP/21/04851/HOUS and SDNP/21/04852/LIS: replacement of one roof light with a dormer window and installation of a new dormer windows at 8 the High Street. Application Approved

SDNP/21/05482/PA16: proposed Telecommunications Structure near to Kiln Lane. Permission required and application refused. It was noted that there had been many objections from the community (including a long petition) and that applicants could appeal this decision, submit a third application or decide to manage without a mast to cover this short section of the railway line.

New fence in Petersfield Road: Cllr Mocatta had reported that the residents have to move some of the fence (four panels) closer to the house, that they have been given until the end of January to do this, planting undertaken some time ago will be removed and that the planning team may also have an issue needing attention. It was agreed that an update be requested later in the month.

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Village Inn: the change in ownership was noted and was presumed to bring an end to the notion of a change of use and to the enforcement action which EHDC had been pursuing in relation to a breach of planning control by the previous owners. The hard work and commitment of the new owners, the Bird family, was noted and welcomed.

Re-Charge One: it was noted that a planning application (SDNP/21/06431/FUL) had recently been submitted to develop a greenfield site alongside the A3 to provide up to 60 eco-lodges, a re-charge centre for electrically powered vehicles and an earth sheltered block for a flexible mix of uses (with access and perimeter vehicular roads and hard-standing to provide up to 127 parking spaces). There were over 140 documents submitted as part of the application. These proposals were too late for consideration at this meeting as the formal agenda had already been published and it was agreed that the matter should be considered by the whole Parish Council.

Affordable housing: it was noted that it had not been possible to adequately consider the letter from Mags Wiley (Action Hampshire) at the last meeting of the Parish Council as it had been a particularly busy meeting with a number of important matters (including the budget and precept for 2022/23, issues relating to the village hall and a deputation from a number of parishioners about the new fence in Petersfield Road). It had been agreed that the idea of an affordable housing scheme at Greenway Lane/Kiln Lane merited a more substantive discussion than was possible and that it should be considered more properly at the next meeting.

4. Planning applications for consideration at this meeting:

SDNP/21/05279/FUL: *New Centre for Creative Arts at Ditcham Park School.*

It was noted that there had been no Pre-App discussions with the Planning Authority about this significant proposal which was disappointing as it could have drawn attention to a number of important issues. Issues raised (for inclusion in Parish Council response) included:

- The application represents another large change to the school site and should form part of an overall Masterplan so that the proposals could be considered in the context of an overall plan
- The lack of a Masterplan means that opportunities to develop the site in a way to enhance opportunities for the wider landscape and for wildlife and biodiversity were missing and proposals could inadvertently destroy what already exists
- The National Park Authority encourages 'Whole Estate Plans' for sites such as this, which other schools have embraced, enabling a holistic (rather than a piecemeal) approach which helps to make the most of Ecosystem Services. The analysis of Ecosystem Services in this application was felt to be rather thin and may not be adequate for Local Plan Core Policy SD2
- It was felt that as this is an educational establishment, all the development proposals should aim to teach or inform the pupils on ways to construct and grow/plant the buildings and land for a sustainable future
- The Village Design Statement does not appear to have been referenced in this application.
- It is unclear which buildings would be demolished; would the maintenance buildings need to be relocated as they presumably contain equipment that is needed?
- The application seems rather disingenuous about usage of the "dirt track" that runs to the east of the school (part of the Staunton Way) and about usage of North Drive (and part of the South Downs Way). This matter has been raised in a number of previous applications. It is felt that conditions for walkers and cyclists on these long distance routes (as well as nearby homes and businesses) must be taken into account
- There are large quantities of glass in the proposals as well as at least 3 new roof lights which will allow light to spill up into the dark night skies. The School sits within the International Dark Skies Reserve and there is already a tendency for there to be a 'glow' of light spilling into the area over the school; it would be a mistake to allow this to increase. At the very least, should this application be approved, a condition requiring low transmission glass be installed and automatic blinds fitted to any roof lights that are allowed

- It was noted that the National Park’s Dark Skies Officer raises some important issues, pointing out that the site is in a very prominent position where lighting has a great impact and so the design of any new building is important and mitigations would be essential. As part of the mitigation he recommends that the school looks to reduce the impact of all its external lighting as there are some lights that could benefit from upgrades or reassessments for dark skies. He recommends that any lights that don’t comply are made compliant. The Parish Council is aware that there have been reports of light pollution at the school in the past and that their lighting has not been well managed. As well as measures to limit light pollution from the new building, Councillors agreed with the National Park’s recommendations that mitigations should include reductions to the school’s overall impacts on dark skies
- It was unclear how the building will be heated but there ought to be low carbon heat/light sources of energy in a site of this importance
- There should also be better provision for biodiversity. The Ecological Assessment submitted with the application shows what can and should be achieved and Councillors supported the County Ecologist’s request for a ‘firm, deliverable set of ecological mitigations / compensation / enhancements’. The incorporation of bat boxes, swift bricks and other wildlife measures should be a part of the proposals
- Will the new building and the forest school be made available to the wider community?
- What will the impact on school pupil numbers be in the longer term?
- Comments and concerns of people near to the school should be taken seriously as little consideration appears to have been given so far – in particular the use of the highways and tracks, the environment and lighting
- There appears to be inadequate landscape and visual impact analyses - which links back to the lack of a masterplan.

SDNP/21/03827/HOUS: *Detached outbuilding at 3 Monks Walk, Buriton.*

It was noted that this was a re-consultation on the same application that had been considered at the Parish Council’s Planning Committee Meeting in October. The application now contained clearer diagrams and a photograph of the potential outbuilding as well as a rebuttal of points made by the Parish Council by planning consultants now employed by the applicants. It was felt that:

- the new information illustrated the very large size of the proposed outbuilding with the roof plan showing that it would be over 9 metres long and over 4 metres deep
- this building would provide a home office and gym whereas garden sheds in other nearby gardens were much smaller, were for garden storage purposes only and were much further away from public vantage points behind buildings or hedges
- the design still appears to be a very large rectangular box and this raises concerns about scale, massing and design quality in this sensitive location which is in the setting of the Conservation Area with views from wider areas including from an adjacent public footpath
- the designs (described as “simple”) and visual appearance pay no respect to the traditional buildings and appear to be a suburban garden office building parachuted into a delightful rural setting on a sensitive edge to a historic village in a National Park
- siting the verandah part of the new building closest to the public right of way may add to the feeling of inappropriate intrusion
- it was disappointing that no attempt was being made to use locally sourced materials – such as cedar which is readily available from the nearby Queen Elizabeth Country Park
- neighbours have submitted reservations and it was noted that the new building would run along the entire length of one neighbour’s garden
- it was disappointing that the applicants had chosen to employ consultants to press for their designs rather than holding discussions with the Parish Council (as many other residents choose to do) and drawing upon the contents of the Village Design Statement.

It was also felt that the new ‘Planning Statement’ appears to contain some misleading, selective and inaccurate information and thus raises more questions than answers for the Planning Authority. It was agreed that the Parish Council’s objection should also include the following:

- The Planning Statement claims that the site is “within the established Settlement Policy Boundary of Buriton” but it is very clear from the Local Plan Policy Maps for SD25 that the

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site of the proposed outbuilding is outside the boundary: only the Monks Walk building is inside the boundary; the gardens are excluded

- The Local Plan is a relatively new plan and had included detailed studies of Settlement Policy Boundaries. Many boundaries, including Buriton, were ‘tightened’ (by excluding garden areas on the edges of settlements) to avoid adverse development at the margins / edges with the countryside. These recently re-drawn and adopted Settlement Policy Boundaries have been produced for sound planning reasons and should not be ignored
- Part 2 of Local Plan Policy SD25 relates to development on land outside settlement boundaries and is therefore relevant to this application
- Section 4 of the Planning Statement (which lists planning policy documents that are relevant to this application) makes no reference in paragraph 4.2 to the Village Design Statement which is a Supplementary Planning Document adopted by SDNPA as recently as 2019
- Where the Planning Statement does refer to the VDS (in point 7 of paragraph 4.21) it claims that the only relevant guidelines are SP5 and SP8 (settlement pattern guidelines)
- The Parish Council is not convinced that that application adequately meets guideline SP8
- The consultant’s Planning Statement makes no mention of other VDS guidelines which are felt to be relevant to this application: SP7, LS1, LS5, LS7, LS11, OS2, T4, B1, B2 and B3
- The consultant’s Planning Statement refers to Policy SD31 of the South Downs Local Plan but this policy makes clear that “proposals will be expected to be of a high standard of design”, that “proposals should respect local character and complement the scale, massing, appearance and character ...” and that proposals should not “be detrimental to the amenity of nearby residents.” The Parish Council is not convinced that the proposals for this very large outbuilding meet all these tests and comments from neighbours are noted
- The consultant’s Planning Statement refers to Policy SD5 of the South Downs Local Plan requires a “landscape led” approach “to enhance local character and distinctiveness of the area ...” There is no evidence of a landscape-led approach in this application and the consultant’s Planning Statement provides only 22 words (paragraph 4.20) to claim, without any evidence or analysis, that the scheme is acceptable. The Parish Council is not convinced

It was recognised that the Parish Council would not normally respond in so much detail to this sort of application but it was felt that some of the selective and misleading points in the new Planning Statement could not be left unchallenged.

It was also felt that all the Council’s previous comments (October 2020) should still be taken into account as this is a very sensitive, edge of settlement setting where a new building of this design, character, scale and massing would be very visible from public vantage points, including the setting of the Conservation Area.

If permission were granted for this outbuilding, it would be important for low transmission glass and / or obscured glass to be used throughout.

Also, it was felt any new planting to soften its appearance must be of suitable native species and should not replicate the out-of-character hedge of tall-growing, non-native evergreen species that has been planted to the south of the dwelling (contrary to the landscape plan that had been approved for Monks Walk in SDNP/18/02405/FUL which resulted from many months of detailed discussions and revisions because of the sensitive location of the site). It had been agreed that an open aspect (solely with post and rail fencing) was to be maintained in this sensitive location to help avoid a sub-urbanised domestic appearance and the landscape plan had specified the appropriate species as well as the locations – but parishioners have pointed out that the new planting does not seem to conform with either. Perhaps this could be rectified as part of any mitigation and biodiversity measures should approval be granted.

5. Public comments on the above applications: there were none.

6. The Committee’s decisions on the above matters: as above.

7. Date of next meeting: as required

Meeting finished at 7.05pm

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