

Minutes of the Meeting of Beech Parish Council

Monday 20th July 2020

(Due to Coronavirus and Government social distancing advice this meeting was virtual)

PARTICIPANTS : Councillor Graham Webb (Chairman)
Councillor Ruth Duffin
Councillor Alana Coombes
Councillor Tony Ransley
Councillor Daniel Gordon
Mrs Louisa Thomson – Clerk to the Council

Members of the public

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – NONE AGENDA ITEMS

A member of the public raised concerns about clay pigeon shooting at land by Brant Storage on the A339. Council advised them to contact East Hampshire District Council to find out what regulations were necessary and if the appropriate licences were in place.

There was also a query about the Parish Council's response to a planning application at the same location, they were directed to the Beech Parish Council website where they can see the minutes of all the meetings and the Parish Councils comments which are also available on East Hampshire District Council website. Council also confirmed that the Parish Council only make comment on planning applications and the decision is made by East Hampshire District Council. A member of the public also advised Council that the builders at 41 Medstead Road had commenced work at 6.30am and they had also lit a bonfire without advising the neighbours both of which are against EHDC recommendations / advice.

20.90 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - **RESOLVED**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22nd June 2020, copies previously circulated,
Proposed as a true record by Ruth Duffin, Seconded by Tony Ransley and RESOLVED

20.91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Ruth Duffin declared an interest in planning application 41 Medstead Road.

20.92 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A neighbour of 61 Medstead Road spoke detailing their objections to the planning appeal.

20.93 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Proposed Daniel Gordon, Seconded Alana Coombes and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders so David Woodroffe could report on requirements.

Following this report Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Ruth Duffin and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

Proposed Ruth Duffin, Seconded Alana Coombes and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that David Woodroffe of Create design studio carry out the necessary work for £75.

20.94 ROAD SAFETY WORKING GROUP

- a) The speed posters design has been agreed, Hampshire County Council need to know where they will be positioned before final approval is given.
- b) No further update from the Working Group following the minutes of their last meeting which can be found on Beech Parish Council website.
- c) Tony Ransley has been in touch with the Forestry Commission regarding the route of the proposed footpath and how it would be funded.

20.95 PLANNING

Council considered planning items, their comments to be forwarded to The Planning Inspectorate and East Hampshire District Council, comments to include reference to the draft Beech Neighbourhood Plan where applicable.

- a) Notification of Planning Appeal Reference: APP/M1710/W/20/3250198 **OBJECT**
55816/002 The White Cottage, 35 Wellhouse Road, Beech, Alton, GU34 4AQ
Two detached dwellings with associated access and parking following demolition of existing dwelling (as amended by revised plans and further Arboricultural assessment received 1 July 2019)
Comments to be lodged on the Planning Portal at <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>.

Proposed Daniel Gordon, Seconded Alana Coombes and RESOLVED (Ruth Duffin abstained as she felt the comments had been predetermined.)

Beech Parish Council objected to this planning application (EHDC Ref. 55816/002) on the following grounds: "The proposed development does not conform to the H10 policy, each plot size should be a minimum of 0.2 hectare." The 'H10 policy' refers to Saved Policy H10 which forms part of the current EHDC Local Plan, which states that, in the Beech Special Housing Area, new development should not result in a plot size of less than 0.2 hectare in order to preserve the character of the area.

Beech Parish Council stands by this objection and adds to it as follows.

Since the refusal of this planning application, and clearly since the appeal statement was written, the Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has completed its independent examination. In early May 2020 the Independent Examiner recommended a number of changes to the Beech NDP that would ensure that it is fully compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the current Local Plan. EHDC, supported by Beech Parish Council, accepted all of the Examiner's recommendations and issued its Decision Statement. The resulting Final Version of the NDP was published by EHDC in late May 2020 and awaits a referendum. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, current Government legislation does not permit referenda to be held until May 2021, but ministerial instructions are that a neighbourhood plan merely awaiting a delayed referendum should be given significant weight in planning decision making. See PPG paragraph 107, updated 13 May 2020.

This application breaches Beech NDP Policy BPC06: Development Setting and Scale. Paragraph (d) of that policy states: "Within the Special Housing Area (shown on Map 6) any subdivision of plots should not result in a plot area of less than 0.2 hectare unless it can be demonstrated that this would conserve the character of the area." When formally adopted this 2020 policy will supersede the maximum density requirement set out in the 2006 Saved Policy H10 in EHDC's Local Plan, and as noted above should now be given significant weight in planning decision making.

The application site remains in the Special Housing Area, and would result in new plots of less than 0.2 hectare. Also, the application is for a pair of houses fronting Wellhouse Road that, although not identical, are clearly of similar design elements and materials. Further, each house would practically fill the full width of each subdivided plot. Both of these factors are in conflict with the character of the housing in this part of the Special Housing Area, fronting Wellhouse Road, which is of independently designed detached houses, well-spaced in large plots. The proposal therefore does not conserve the character of the housing in the immediate area and so conflicts with Beech NDP Policy BPC09.

Not being reflective of the predominant form of development in the immediate vicinity, the proposal for a similarly-designed pair of houses also contravene paragraph (a) of Beech NDP Policy BPC07: Building Design and Character.

*The Beech NDP completed its independent examination and gained significant weight only **after** planning permission was granted to develop two houses on the 0.3 hectare site of 59 Wellhouse Road (ref. 54047/014) which is frequently referenced in the appeal statement. Beech Parish Council had objected strongly to that planning application (on the basis of breach of Saved Policy H10, among other things) but unfortunately the Beech NDP was not at a sufficiently advanced stage at the time to be afforded much weight in the planning decision. Also note that the 59 Wellhouse Road site does not front onto Wellhouse Road (it is set back behind other houses), unlike the plot of No.35, and so contributes less than the plot of No.35 to the observed character of the area.*

We also note that, although in the case of 59 Wellhouse Road (ref. 54047/014) EHDC asserted that the minimum plot size element of Saved Policy H10 was in conflict with Paragraphs 123 and 127 of the NPPF, the recent independent examination concluded that the Beech NDP, as now published, is fully compliant with the NPPF.

[Attached: Beech NDP Final Version, May 2020]

- b) Notification of Variation of Condition application. **NO COMMENTS**
 30021/070 Land at Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital Site, Chawton Park Road, Alton.
 Variation of conditions of 30021/066 - condition 1 - to be reworded, condition 4 & 5 – change drawing number to 17.2046/SL-041Rev.AC1, condition 11 & 15 to be reworded and condition 16 - substitution of approved plans.

Proposed Daniel Gordon, Seconded Tony Ransley and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Council had no comment to make.

- c) Notification of Planning Appeal Reference: APP/M1710/W/20/3250413 **OBJECT**
 25172/006 Hill Brow, 61 Medstead Road, Beech, Alton, GU34 4AE
 Two storey detached dwelling with associated access, amenity and parking (Red line application site plan amended, notice served on HCC Highways) 19/12/2018 (amended drawings received 7/6/2019) (Drawings reference 3827/003 and 3827/001A added to application drawings)

Comments to be lodged on the Planning Portal at <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>.

Proposed Daniel Gordon, Seconded Tony Ransley and RESOLVED (Ruth Duffin abstained because Tony Ransley told Council he had lodged a personal objection which she felt was predetermination).

Beech Parish Council raised no objections to this planning application (EHDC Ref. 25172/014) when previously consulted in November 2018 and June 2019. Although we deferred to Hampshire County Council regarding the adequacy of the design of the highway access.

Now, however, Beech Parish Council objects to this application on several grounds of non-compliance with the Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), which has progressed significantly since this planning application was last considered by the parish council.

Since the refusal of this planning application, and clearly since the appeal statement was written, the Beech NDP has completed its independent examination. In early May 2020 the Independent Examiner recommended a number of changes to the Beech NDP that would ensure that it is fully compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the current Local Plan. EHDC, supported by Beech Parish Council, accepted all of the Examiner's recommendations and issued its Decision Statement. The resulting Final Version of the NDP was published by EHDC in late May 2020 and awaits a referendum. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, current Government legislation does not permit referenda to be held until May 2021, but ministerial instructions are that a neighbourhood plan merely awaiting a delayed referendum should be given significant weight in planning decision making. See PPG paragraph 107, updated 13 May 2020.

The application breaches Beech NDP Policy BPC06: Development Setting and Scale. The setting of the proposed dwelling is not in keeping with the immediate surrounding area, being both close to, and unscreened from, the road (see para (a)). It is in a plot size that is small compared to that prevailing in the surrounding and nearby dwellings (see para (b)), and so does not conserve the current density of settlement in this part of the village (see note 2).

The application breaches Beech NDP Policy BPC07: Building Design and Character. The proposed dwelling adversely affects the living conditions of the properties on either side, in respect of privacy and outlook (see para (b)). There is insufficient proposed enclosure of the plot by hedges, with many of the existing hedges on the site being removed (see para (c)).

The application breaches Beech NDP Policy BPC12: Planning for Parking, which states:

“Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking should provide adequate and suitable off-street parking. All new homes should usually include, within the development site, a minimum of one parking space per bedroom for each of the home's first three bedrooms.” The proposed new three-bedroomed house has only two off-road car parking spaces, whereas Beech NDP Policy BPC12 stipulates that it should have a minimum of three such spaces. (The reason for increased off-road parking provision in Beech is that the village's roads are narrow with steep banks and no pull-in spaces. The policy is required in order to minimise obstruction of these roads, in the interests of the safety of all road users. The proposed house fronts onto the principal road through the village, with the most traffic, and so there is no case for deviation from this requirement.) [Attached: Beech NDP Final Version, May 2020]

- d) 33619/007 Veolia **OBJECT**
 Development of an Energy Recovery Facility and Associated Infrastructure
 Alton Materials Recovery Facility, Farnham Road, Froyle, Alton

Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Tony Ransley and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED.

Beech Parish Council objects to the proposed Advanced Energy Recovery Facility on the grounds of its unsuitable location. The plant will produce unhealthy emissions from a site that is located too close to Holybourne and Alton, and the emissions are likely to have an adverse health effect on all settlements within a 10 mile radius of the facility.

- e) 54068/001 120 Medstead Road **NO OBJECTION**
 Work to Trees Subject to a Tree Preservation Order
 No: 7 Ash Trees – to fell

Proposed Daniel Gordon, Seoded Ruth Duffin and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED.

(Ruth Duffin left the meeting for the following item.)

- f) 54482/005 Strathyre, 41 Medstead Road **OBJECT**
 Notification of Pre-Decision Amendments
 Amended plans reducing height and footprint of dwelling and changes to materials.

(During discussion Tony Ransley informed Council he had lodged a personal objection to the application with EHDC.)

Proposed Daniel Gordon, Seconded Alana Coombes and RESOLVED.

These comments follow on from our comments dated 20 May 2020.

The proposed house (as revised on 6 July 2020) has been very slightly reduced in size from the original proposal. However, Beech Parish Council still objects to this planning application on the following grounds, to which the revised proposal has made no material change:

1. *The building is still a three storey one, when viewed from the front, with car parking and utility rooms on the lowest floor. This contravenes Condition 3 of outline planning permission 54482/003.*
2. *The overall design on this hillside setting still does not comply with Policy BPC06(b) and (c) of the Beech Neighbourhood Plan. The height, massing and roofline do not reflect the vast majority of the surrounding and nearby dwellings, and the view of the front of the house (from other properties and from the village green and across the valley) is not an acceptable vista and disrupts the character of the area.*
3. *The proposed design and materials still do not reflect the predominant form of development in the immediate vicinity, so do not comply with Policy BPC07(a) of the Beech Neighbourhood Plan.*
4. *The proposal still does not comply with Policy BPC07(b) of the Beech Neighbourhood Plan in that the building overlooks, and compromises the privacy of, houses below fronting Medstead Road, in particular no.39.*

Note that the Beech Neighbourhood Plan is in final form, only awaiting a coronavirus-delayed referendum, and so now should be given significant weight when determining planning applications.

(Ruth Duffin rejoined the meeting.)

20.96 ALTON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Daniel Gordon and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Council would make a general comment on this consultation as follows and these comments should be forwarded to our MP, County Councillor and District Councillor.

Beech Parish Council feels that this consultation has not taken into account Alton and its surrounding area (part of East Hampshire District), which is served by Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. No public consultation events were originally planned for Alton. This, in our view, continues the persistent theme of the Alton area, including Alton Community Hospital, being neglected in the strategic and operational decision-making of the NHS in Hampshire.

It is vital that the services currently and historically (pre-COVID-19) provided to the local community by Alton Community Hospital are continued. In fact those services should be expanded in order to cater for the basic health needs of an expanding and ageing local population.

20.97 NEW MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT CONSULTATION

Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Daniel Gordon and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED Council have no comments to make.

20.98 SPEED LIMIT REMINDER SIGN

- a) **Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Daniel Gordon and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to accept P J Graces quotation for £180 to clear the undergrowth from the SLR position opposite 104 Medstead Road.
- b) Council to postpone decision about replacing the SLR until the Beech Road Safety Working Group report in October.

20.99 ACCOUNTS 2020/2021

- I) Summary of Receipts & Payments for 1st Quarter Ended 30th June 2020 presented to Council detailing bank reconciliation as follows:

Current Account Balance	2,781.16
Less: Cheques drawn but not debited as at 30.06.20	-1,355.83
Deposit Account Balance	8,521.36
High Interest Bonds Balance	<u>24,651.78</u>
	34,598.47

- II) **Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Ruth Duffin and RESOLVED that the following payments are approved:** (Tony Ransley voted against making the August payment in advance to the Clerk.)

a) Clerk's Salary (July 2020)	£715.04
b) Clerk's Expenses (July 2020)	£27.90
c) Hampshire Pension Fund (Clerk's pension – July 2020)	£180.75
d) Clerk's Salary (August 2020)	£715.04
e) Hampshire Pension Fund (Clerk's pension – August 2020)	£180.75
f) DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd – Monthly Payroll processing July & August	£60.70
g) PHS Group – Speed Limit Reminder sign repositioning	£78.00

20.100 MEETING DATES

Confirmed the date of the next scheduled Council meeting as Monday, 21st September 2020 at 7.30pm, with public question time at 7.15pm. This will be a virtual meeting in line with Government advice.

CLOSURE OF MEETING – Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

signed:

Chairman Beech Parish Council

date: 17th August 2020