

BEECH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Louisa Thomson
Telephone: 01420 562130 E-Mail: clerk@beechpc.com

Minutes of the Meeting Monday 13th February 2023

PARTICIPANTS : Councillor Graham Webb (Chairman) Louisa Thomson - Clerk
Councillor Tony Ransley
Councillor Alana Coombes
Councillor Ingrid McCormack

23.011 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Ruth Duffin and Kim Eakers.

23.012 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - **RESOLVED**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th January 2023, copies previously circulated,

Proposed as a true record by Tony Ransley seconded by Ingrid McCormack, RESOLVED: signed Chairman Graham Webb

23.013 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Ingrid McCormack declared an interest in Planning items 59977, 59977/001 and 55816/004 for Land between 33 and 35A Wellhouse Road.

23.014 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public addressed the council regarding the planning application for Land between 33 and 35A Wellhouse Road as follows:

1. *Three applications submitted for ostensibly the same application outcome seems designed to confuse those who may want to object.*
2. *Application 55816/004 is described as "**Variation of conditions 4 and 8 of 55816 to allow substitution of arboricultural method statement** with an up to date arboricultural method statement and tree plan and substitution of approved plans to allow reduction in size of dwelling." This is misleading as only the wording in **red** is visible in the short description and many residents would not bother clicking on it. As far as I can see, S.73 applications are designed to seek minor changes to approved plans. This application seeks wholesale changes in terms of size, design and position within the plot and are designed to allow, via application 59977/001 the building of a second dwelling on this less than 0.4 hectares plot. This S.73 application cannot, therefore, be considered in isolation.*
3. *Application 59977/001 seeks approval for a second dwelling on the plot and should clearly be considered alongside application 55816/004 as, if approved, this will result in two dwellings on less than 0.4 hectare plot. Comments are no longer permitted on this application.*
4. *Application 59977 seeks, in a more straight forward way, approval for two dwellings.*
5. *These applications do not differ materially from what was proposed before, was not supported by Beech Parish Council or EHDC and was rejected on appeal by the Secretary of State.*
6. *If permitted, they will result in:*
 - a. *Two houses too close to their neighbours and to each other which will detract from the street view.*
 - b. *A resulting roadscape with excess massing and too high density for what will result, once the plot is divided, in two narrow deep plots and*
 - c. *One or two dwellings on less than .02 hectares per dwelling depending on how the plot is divided – below the minimum permitted plot size.*
7. *As such, it flies in the face of the Beech Neighbourhood Plan which is supported by the vast majority of Beech residents and has been examined and accepted by EHDC.*
8. *If permitted, there is a risk it will be precedent setting.*
9. *The application fails to properly identify, and would result in the removal, of an old Laurel with a TPO on its boundary with Wellhouse Road.*
10. *The plot has been empty for so long that protected wildlife will likely have taken up residence. As the County Ecologist says, this will require further reports and mitigation if necessary, if development goes ahead. This should also be a requirement if development takes place under the historic approval for a single dwelling. This has been missed by the County Ecologist.*

Another member of the public also addressed the Council objecting to three planning applications related to the plot known as 35 Wellhouse Road

- 1) *Submitting three different applications regarding the same property with different details appears to be an attempt to confuse those who wish to establish what the applications actually involve. This is an abuse of process. In particular, it is not reasonable nor accurate to describe the replacement of one design of house (approved previously) with a totally different design in a different position built from different materials as a minor variation on an existing permission.*
- 2) *The proposal to fell the protected Larch tree to create a new entrance, a key reason for the previous refusal to allow two houses to be built on the site, is unacceptable. The Larch is said to be over 100 years old and should not be felled.*
- 3) *The outlines for the site on numerous drawings on different applications do not accurately reflect the boundaries to the South of the plot, nor the narrowness of the plot handle.*

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- 4) *Trees referred to in tree plan documents as being 'off site', or 'possibly offsite', are in fact within the boundary of the plot to the South. Similarly, the laurel hedge lies within the bounds of the plot to the South.*
- 5) *Two houses should not be built on the site, as has been established by EHDC's officers, supported by the planning inspectorate on appeal, on the basis that they breach the H10 restrictions in the Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan, which calls for a minimum of 0.2 hectares (0.5 of an acre) per new house. The 35 Wellhouse Road plot is well short of the required size to provide two houses.*
- 6) *The point of the H10 restrictions was to maintain the look and feel of the centre of the village. It doesn't matter how you dress up the position of the two houses, on such a narrow plot you cannot escape the massing effect that two houses would bring and the deleterious impact this would have on the Wellhouse Road street scene.*

23.015 PLANNING

Council considered four planning applications, their comments to be forwarded to East Hampshire District Council.

Councillor Ingrid McCormack declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or decision for items i), ii) and iii).

- i) 59977 Land between 33 & 35A Wellhouse Road **OBJECT**
Two detached dwellings with associated garaging and driveway access.
Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Alana Coombes, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

Beech Parish Council OBJECTS to this planning application ref. 59977.

We strongly OBJECT on the grounds that the proposed two house development contravenes policies of the Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) as follows:-

- The application site is in the Special Housing Area, and would result in one or more new plots of less than 0.2 hectare. Also, the application is for a prominent pair of houses (sharing a single driveway) fronting Wellhouse Road that, although not identical, are clearly of very similar design elements and materials. Further, the two houses would together practically fill the full width of the existing plot. All of these factors are in conflict with the character of the housing in this part of the Special Housing Area, fronting upper Wellhouse Road, which is of individually 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 paragraphs (b) and (d) of Beech NDP Policy BPC06: Development Setting and Scale.
- Not being reflective of the predominant form of development in the immediate vicinity, the proposal for a similarly-designed pair of houses also contravenes paragraph (a) of Beech NDP Policy BPC07: Building Design and Character.

An earlier application (55816/002) to build two houses on this plot was refused and went to appeal (APP/M1710/W/20/3250198). The inspector dismissed the appeal on the grounds that the two houses 'would appear squeezed within the plot', amounting 'to a cramped form of development out of character with the general pattern of development in the immediate vicinity of the site, which has a greater sense of spaciousness'. So 'the development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area'. Now compare (on page 26 of the Planning Statement for 59977) the street scene of this application, viewed from Wellhouse Road, to that of the refused application 55816/002. We contend that the development in this application appears at least as squeezed/cramped in the plot as that in refused application 55816/002 – if not more so! Permitting this development would be utterly inconsistent with the decision in the previous appeal.

- ii) 59977/001 Land between 33 & 35A Wellhouse Road **OBJECT**
Detached infill dwelling with associated garaging and driveway access.
Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Alana Coombes, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

Beech Parish Council OBJECTS to this planning application ref. 59977/001.

The application is to build one house on the site of 35 Wellhouse Road. But the application is explicitly linked to another application to build (at the same time) a second house on the split plot of 35 Wellhouse Road, application 55816/004, a Section 73 application to vary the design of the single house approved for building on the entire plot under past permitted application 55816. There is, in fact, proposed a single development of two houses on the site of 35 Wellhouse Road, artificially split between two planning applications. We OBJECT to this convoluted attempt to distort the planning process, and ask EHDC to reject the two applications 55816/004 and 59977/001 and concentrate on the same applicant's more straightforward and transparent application (59977) to build two houses on the plot.

Because we are talking about a single development here, our further comments must logically therefore encompass both of the linked applications 55816/004 and 59977/001.

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Planning guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/flexible-options-for-planning-permissions states that a Section 73 application is for use to make a 'minor material amendment' to a planning permission, that is an 'amendment.....where its scale and/or nature results in a development which is not substantially different from the one which has been approved'. In this case, the Section 73 application 55816/004 seeks to reduce substantially the size of the single house permitted under application 55816, to change its design and materials completely, and to move it to one side of the plot to explicitly facilitate the building of a second house alongside, thus splitting the plot in half. The result is clearly a very different development from that approved in application 55816, and not a minor material amendment, and so this is a totally inappropriate use of Section 73. We OBJECT to the entire development (that is, this application 59977/001 and the linked application 55816/004) on these grounds.

We also strongly OBJECT on the grounds that the proposed two house development contravenes policies of the Beech Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) as follows:-

- The application site is in the Special Housing Area, and would result in on or more new plots of less than 0.2 hectare. Also, the application is for a prominent pair of houses (sharing a single driveway) fronting Wellhouse Road that, although not identical, are clearly of very similar design elements and materials. Further, the two houses would together practically fill the full width of the existing plot. All of these factors are in conflict with the character of the housing in this part of the Special Housing Area, fronting upper Wellhouse Road, which is of individually 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 paragraphs (b) and (d) of Beech NDP Policy BPC06: Development Setting and Scale.
- Not being reflective of the predominant form of development in the immediate vicinity, the proposal for a similarly-designed pair of houses also contravenes paragraph (a) of Beech NDP Policy BPC07: Building Design and Character.

An earlier application (55816/002) to build two houses on this plot was refused and went to appeal (APP/M1710/W/20/3250198). The inspector dismissed the appeal on the grounds that the two houses 'would appear squeezed within the plot', amounting 'to a cramped form of development out of character with the general pattern of development in the immediate vicinity of the site, which has a greater sense of spaciousness'. So 'the development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area'. Now compare (on pages 26 and 27 of the Planning Statement for 59977/001) the street scene of this application, viewed from Wellhouse Road, to that of the refused application 55816/002. We contend that the development in this application appears at least as squeezed/cramped in the plot as that in refused application 55816/002 – if not more so! Permitting this development (this application 59977/001 and the linked application 55816/004) would be utterly inconsistent with the decision in the previous appeal.

- iii) 55816/004 Land between 33 & 35A Wellhouse Road **OBJECT**
Variation of condition 4 and 8 of 55816 to allow substitution of arboricultural method statement with an up to date arboricultural method statement and tree plan and substitution of approved plans to allow reduction in size of dwelling.

Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Tony Ransley, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

Beech Parish Council OBJECTS to this planning application ref. 55816/004.

The application is a Section 73 application to vary the design of the single house approved for building on the entire plot of 35 Wellhouse Road under past permitted application 55816. But the application is explicitly linked to another application to build (at the same time) a second house on the split plot of 35 Wellhouse Road, application 59977/001. There is, in fact, proposed a single development of two houses on the site of 35 Wellhouse Road, artificially split between two planning applications. We OBJECT to this convoluted attempt to distort the planning process, and ask EHDC to reject the two applications 55816/004 and 59977/001 and concentrate on the same applicant's more straightforward and transparent application (59977) to build two houses on the plot.

Because we are talking about a single development here, our further comments must logically therefore encompass both of the linked applications 55816/004 and 59977/001.

Planning guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/flexible-options-for-planning-permissions states that a Section 73 application is for use to make a 'minor material amendment' to a planning permission, that is an 'amendment.....where its scale and/or nature results in a development which is not substantially different from the one which has been approved'. In this case, the Section 73 application 55816/004 seeks to reduce substantially the size of the single house permitted under application 55816, to change its design and materials completely, and to move it to one side of the plot to explicitly facilitate the building of a second house alongside, thus splitting the plot in half. The result is clearly a very different development from that approved in application 55816, and not a minor material amendment, and so this is a totally inappropriate use of Section 73. We OBJECT to the entire development (that is, this application 55816/004 and the linked application 59977/001) on these grounds.

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An earlier application (55816/002) to build two houses on this plot was refused and went to appeal (APP/M1710/W/20/3250198). The inspector dismissed the appeal on the grounds that the two houses 'would appear squeezed within the plot', amounting 'to a cramped form of development out of character with the general pattern of development in the immediate vicinity of the site, which has a greater sense of spaciousness'. So 'the development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area'. Now compare (on pages 26 and 27 of the Planning Statement for 59977/001) the street scene of this application, viewed from Wellhouse Road, to that of the refused application 55816/002. We contend that the development in this application appears at least as squeezed/cramped in the plot as that in refused application 55816/002 – if not more so! Permitting this development (this application 55816/004 and the linked application 59977/001) would be utterly inconsistent with the decision in the previous appeal.

Councillor Ingrid McCormack rejoined the meeting.

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| iv) | 58619/005 | Burnt Grounds, 46 Wellhouse Road
Retrospective application for the retention of earthworks in rear garden & associated retaining wall. | NO OBJECTION |
|-----|-----------|---|---------------------|

Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Ingrid McCormack, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:

Beech Parish Council has no objection to this planning application, provided that the applicant takes adequate measures for disposing of the increased surface water run-off (from the new hard surfaced areas) within the site.

23.016 ROAD SAFETY WORKING GROUP

i) **Beech Road Safety Working Group - Report to Parish Council 13 February 2023**

The Working Group received HCC's proposals for on-road footways and rationalising road signage through the village. These have been passed to councillors, together with the Working Group's proposed comments back to HCC on the proposals, which we would like to agree with councillors this evening.

Many of the comments are detailed ones about precisely where the on-road footways should start and end, the precise locations of road signs, and exactly how the footways should be marked on the road. But there are also some more major comments, these being:

- The high desirability of making the on-road footways more visible using 'walking man logos' or similar painted on the surface.
- At Kings Hill, reinstating the on-road footway around the outside of the sharp bend at 1 Kings Hill (which was included in HCC's preliminary proposal in April 2022).
- Extending the on-road footway from 100 Medstead Road up to the Bushy Leaze entrance (i.e. upgrading the existing 'white lines' on the carriageway south side), and then from the Bushy Leaze entrance up to the Kings Hill bend (to provide a fully accessible pedestrian alternative to the woodland paths). The Working Group advised at the August 2022 parish council meeting that it recommended extending the on-road footways in this way.
- Painting large '30mph' markings on the road at intervals throughout the whole length of the village (not just outside the street-light area), even if we are prevented from putting in more 30mph repeater signs on posts.
- Many of the road signage 'improvement' measures are cosmetic 'nice-to-haves' and don't contribute to the footways or road safety, e.g. replacing grey posts with less obtrusive black ones. We don't want these cosmetic measures to increase the cost of the project beyond its budget, especially since we propose extending the on-road footway to run alongside the woodland.
- Also, some of the road signage 'improvement' measures are regular road maintenance items that should not be charged to the project.

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Finally, as you will hear later there is some progress on the introduction of 20mph zones in Hampshire. Councillors will recall that our 2021 consultation results supported a 20mph zone in the village centre, and we will remind HCC of this when we send back our comments.

Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Alana Coombes, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to send the Beech Road Safety Working Group comments to Hampshire County Council.

- ii) Unfortunately, HCC keeps missing its own deadlines for delivering the full draft feasibility report on potential off-road footways. Since we hope to make an application before 24 March to EHDC for Strategic CIL funding to build some off-road footway, we may need an additional council meeting (on 27 February or 6 March) to review the report and the Working Group's proposed way forward (as the next scheduled council meeting on 20 March will be too late).

Meanwhile we have had a response from Forestry England:

- i) Despite what the maps indicate, FE doesn't consider it owns any of the verge on the south side of the road between 100 Medstead Road and the Bushy Leaze entrance, and so we don't need FE's agreement to have an off-road footway constructed along there.
- ii) West of the Bushy Leaze entrance, FE doesn't support any formal footpath through its woodland near the road, even if an unsurfaced natural path. It claims it doesn't have the resources to manage any more footpaths.

Even though we haven't received HCC's report, we have been getting a flavour of what it will contain, including sight of some drawings (but no cost information). So, bearing in mind the Forestry England response, we are likely to be faced with the following position:

- **Top of Kings Hill:** Our lowest priority section. Too many technical difficulties identified by HCC for an acceptable off-road footway to be established, including felling of mature trees, and inadequate sight lines at the needed road crossing position.
- **West of Bushy Leaze entrance:** FE currently rejects a path on their land, and a footway on the HCC land (right next to the road) is feasible but has so far been resisted by the nearby residents. More thought is needed here; in the meantime the proposed extension of the on-road 'white-line' footway along this section is a partial solution, if HCC agrees to it.
- **East of Bushy Leaze entrance:** Our highest priority section. HCC will be providing a feasible solution that also promises to improve surface water drainage from the road, but the estimated cost isn't known. It is quite likely that this is the only section that can be funded in the short term, predominantly from EHDC Strategic CIL funds.

Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Tony Ransley, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED: to suspend Standing Orders so a member of the public could address Council.

Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Alana Coombes, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED: to reinstate Standing Orders.

23.017 SPEED CAMERAS & SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES

- i) Tony Ransley reported:
There is a new Chief Constable starting so priorities may change. Hampshire CC enforcement team are meeting with EHDC enforcement team, HCC will be taking over enforcement from EHDC. The Police will run the AutoSpeedWatch trail but will need clerical support to send out enforcement letters. Currently fixed point speeding cameras are used for enforcement, it's hoped that the Average Speed Camera can be used for enforcement.
- ii) Expenditure for ASW camera batteries to be carried over to the next meeting.

23.018 20MPH FOR HAMPSHIRE

Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Ingrid McCormack, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders so a member of the public can speak.

A member of the public reported that Hampshire County Council Task and Finish Group finished their report on 20mph. It's agreed that all new and modern developments should be 20mph. So far fifty Parishes have supported the 20 is Plenty initiative.

Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Ingrid McCormack, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Ingrid McCormack, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to email Hampshire County Councillor Nick Adams-King confirming that Beech Parish Council supports a 20mph limit in Beech and has put itself forward as a pilot area.

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- 23.019 BRIDLE PATHS
Forestry England aren't inclined to create any more public rights of way in Bushy Leaze Woods.
- 23.020 CLIMATE ACTION – Update on the March agenda.
- 23.021 CITIZENS ADVICE EAST HAMPSHIRE
Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Alana Coombes, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the grant for £300.
- 23.022 HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Ingrid McCormack, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to vote in favour of the proposed new Articles of Association.
- 23.023 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Proposed Alana Coombes, Seconded Ingrid McCormack, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED refreshments will be provided at the Annual Parish Meeting which will be held prior to the March monthly Parish Council meeting.
- 23.024 ACCOUNTS 2022/2023
Proposed Tony Ransley, Seconded Ingrid McCormack, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the following payments:
- | | |
|--|---------|
| a) Clerk's Salary (February 2023) | £786.99 |
| b) Clerk's Expenses (February 2023) | £ 69.69 |
| c) Hampshire Pension Fund (Clerk's pension February 2023) | £223.46 |
| d) DCK Payroll Solutions Ltd – Monthly Payroll processing | £ 36.36 |
| e) Beech Village Hall – Parish Council meeting | £ 23.29 |
| f) Groundwork UK R/C 291558 – Neighbourhood Plan Grant repayment | £600.27 |
- 23.025 MEETING DATES
Confirmed the date of the next scheduled Council meeting as Monday, 20th March 2023 following the Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm, time will be made available for public question.
- CLOSURE OF MEETING – Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

signed:
Chairman Beech Parish Council
date: 6th March 2023