

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES 132

Minutes of the meeting held in the Memorial Hall Annexe, Woodchurch, on Friday 24 February 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Mr J West (Chair), Mrs G Davies, Mr A Faiers, Mr N Jones,
Mr P Spice, Mr P Wood and Mr R Woods

PARISH CLERK: Mrs J Batt

BOROUGH COUNCILLOR: Mrs A Hicks and Mr G Bradford

COUNTY COUNCILLOR:

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were 14 Members of the Public present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An Apology for Absence was received from Mr A Hukins (prior commitment).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.

Declarations of Significant Interest

Mr Woods Declared a Significant Interest in Planning Application No 16/01836/AS, as he is a near neighbour.

Updating of Declarations of Interest for the Code of Conduct

Councillors are reminded that they should update their Declarations of Interest with the Monitoring Officer if necessary.

To note the granting of any requests for Dispensations and the decision

No such requests received.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The last minutes were of the meeting held on 16 December 2016 not 2017.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2017 were accepted and it was unanimously agreed that Mr West should sign them as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed Mr Faiers Seconded Mr Jones

4. MEETING ADJOURNED FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND RECOVERED

The meeting was opened to the Members of the Public present for questions and comments from 7.04 – 7.31 pm during which time Mrs Hicks and Mr Bradford discussed a contentious planning application with those present and Mr Bradford informed the meeting that a new

shop, One U had opened in Park Mall. This shop which is staffed by the NHS has been set up to provide health help and advice to members of the public, to enable them to take control over their own health. It is being financed by ABC, Public Health England and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

5. PLANNING

Please see attached.

Local Plan Omission Sites

Nothing to report. Remove from future agendas.

6. VILLAGE MATTERS

Extension of Village Green

The additional documents will be sent to ABC to complete the application for work to the trees.

Memorial Hall Car Park – Content of letter to be sent to residents to be agreed

Councillors unanimously agreed the content of the letter to be sent to residents.

7. MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising not covered on the agenda.

8. ACCOUNTS AND OTHER GENERAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

Earmarked Funds

	Balance 16.12.16	+/- Jan	Balance 27.01.17
Election/Standards Committee	5000.00		5000.00
Wildflower Meadow Rolling ground	9435.00	-30.00	9405.00
Maintenance on War Memorial	233.02		233.02
Play Area/CEE	1634.31		1634.31
Village Trees	810.00		810.00
General Reserves	7325.74		7325.74
	24438.07	-30.00	24408.07

Bank Reconciliation

Account Balance		Balance at Bank	
Opening Balance	42304.11	Money Manager Account	49243.27
		Plus uncleared receipts	000.00
			49243.27
Plus Receipts	26335.33	Less uncleared cheques	3602.37
	68639.44		45640.90
Less Payments	22948.54	Plus Community Account	50.00
	45690.90		45690.90
Less Earmarked Funds	24408.07	Less Earmarked Funds	24408.07
AVAILABLE FUNDS	21282.83	AVAILABLE FUNDS	21282.83

Accounts to be Paid

PAYEE	CHQ NO	NET £	VAT £	GROSS £	DETAILS
Mrs J Batt	1039	538.67 8.46 12.00		559.13	Salary Expenses General Admin
Mr R Harris	1040	277.33		277.33	Litter Picking
Mr J West	1041	23.00		23.00	Christmas Dinner
Woodchurch Memorial Hall	1042	16.00		16.00	Rent – Public Meeting
Mr D Grabham	1043	230.00		230.00	Green Maintenance

Proposed: Mr Faiers Seconded: Mr Spice

Bank Mandate

Mr Jones, Mrs Davies and the Clerk will go to HSBC in Ashford to amend the mandate during the week of 6 March.

Newsletter

Nothing to report.

Risk Assessment

Mr Faiers will complete in time for the next meeting.

Transparency

Councillors were asked to monitor the website to ensure that it is up to date.

Litter Bin Review

Councillors agreed the content of the letter to be sent to ABC with the review.

Electoral Review of Ashford Consultation – Draft Recommendations

No comment.

Update on KALC Meeting

Nothing to report.

9. CORRESPONDENCE/EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

KCC – Great British Spring Clean
Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance
HSBC
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

10. HIGHWAY ISSUES/PROW ISSUES**Highways**

Potholes outside of Bachelors Hall
Ask Councillor Angell for an update on the subsidence along Shadoxhurst Road

Public Rights of Way

KCC Notification of Public Path Order – The Kent County Council (Public Footpaths AT221 (Part) and AT224 (Part) Woodchurch) Public Path Diversion and Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order 2017 – Councillors had no comment to make on this order.

11. ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AGENDA

Councillors did not ask for any specific items to be included.

12. FORUM FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN COUNCILLORS

Councillors agreed to hold a Windmill Trust Meeting prior to the meeting on 27 April.

From March, Parish Council meetings will be held on the 4th Thursday of each month.

The Morris Men are holding a Litter Pick on 12th March. The Chairman will arrange for Sandwiches to be available at the finish.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.17 pm.

Signed..... Dated
Chairman

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATION RECORD

2017

FEBRUARY 2017

- 16/01836/AS Land between 82-120 Front Road, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent
Erection of 8 no. two storey dwellings together with access, garages parking, landscaping and ancillary works
Parish Council: Strongly Object – see attached.
- 17/00073/AS Farm View, Highlands Farm, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent TN26 3RJ
Proposed single storey residential care accommodation (4 units)
Parish Council: Support
- 17/00088/AS The Barn, Seven Saints Rare Breeds Centre, Redbrook Street, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3QR
Lawful Development Certificate - Existing - The conversion, use and occupation of a former agricultural building, to single storey residential accommodation, with associated parking and amenity garden
Parish Council: No Comment
- 17/00132/AS Cob Tree Meadows, Brook Street, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3SZ
Variation of condition 1 to remove personal reference to Ms S Bristow and Mr C Turner and replace with gypsy/traveller family and removal of reference of temporary to allow for permanent occupation on Planning Permission Reference 11/01048/AS
Parish Council: Strongly Object on the following grounds: -
Permitting this application will set a precedent
Removal of the names will allow the site to increase in size
Permitting this application will result in loss of control over the site by ABC.

Decision Notices received from ABC

- 16/01196/AS Six Bells Inn, Bethersden Road, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3QQ
Provision of patio paving and external lighting
Borough Council: Permit
- 16/01197/AS Six Bells Inn, Bethersden Road, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3QQ
Erection of a smoking shelter to front elevation
WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT

16/01534/AS Bower Farm, Brook Street, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent TN26 3SY
Proposed replacement of existing asbestos clad storage building with metal clad building
Borough Council: Permit

16/01625/AS Beacon Farm, Coldblow, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent TN26 3PL
Erection of agricultural buildings comprising cattle shed, slurry pit and replacement silage clamps
Borough Council: Permit

17/00045/AS Odden Farm, Appledore Road, Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent TN26 3QT
Proposed new general purpose farm building
Borough Council: Permit

Woodchurch Parish Council –Response to Application 16/01836/AS – 82-120 Front Road, Woodchurch

Opening remarks and Recommendation

Woodchurch Parish Council objects strongly to this development. The poor quality of the planning application and its supporting papers, which contain inaccuracies, errors and inconsistencies, mirror the poor quality of the proposed development in terms of its impact on the fabric and feel of the village, its lack of clarity on key matters such as drainage and its disregard for the content of both existing Policy WOOD1 and the emerging policy for this site (S40).

The Parish Council notes that the developers claimed in a recent press article (Kentish Express w/e 10th February) that they have consulted “on local housing needs”. The Parish Council can confirm it has not been consulted by any person or agent involved with this application.

In a public meeting held on 16th February 2017, residents not only offered their views on the development but also expressed two key concerns:

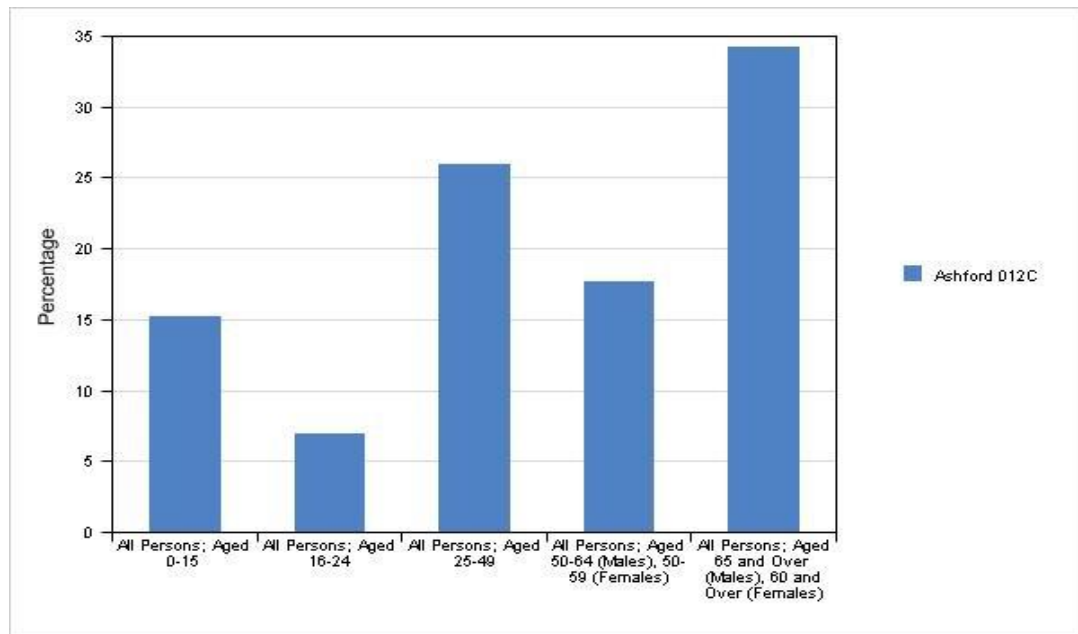
1. That Kent County Council has not commented on the high risk of road traffic accidents given the potential for so many traffic movements from the site on a narrow and difficult bend. The 30mph speed limit there is consistently exceeded and the increasing number of vehicles that park on Front Road make the road difficult to negotiate, especially that part of it near to where the developers have proposed the Northern Access/Egress point. There have been several collisions on Front Road over the last two years resulting in Emergency Service call-outs but that data appears either not to have reached the Highways Authority or is seen as irrelevant. The Parish Council thinks it is highly relevant and shares the residents’ concerns. The Parish Council has been concerned about the potential for a severe road traffic collision on this part of Front Road for some considerable time, such that it recently agreed with Kent Police that this section of road would be the priority for speed check interventions.

2. That the flooding problems in the lower, Stonebridge area of the village, which have brought misery to the residents there, will not be addressed before a decision is reached. In an attempt to understand this problem, the Parish Council is currently in discussion with Southern Water which admits to having sketchy information about the sewerage network and cannot confirm at this stage that there is sufficient capacity in the Front Road sewer to cope with the additional flows.

Unfortunately the developer has not taken the same responsible line and cannot offer any convincing evidence that this development will not exacerbate the problem. The Parish Council agrees with the residents and feels this is of such material relevance that it would be irresponsible for the Planning Authority to consider, let alone approve, this application without assurances, both to the wider village and specifically the long-suffering residents, that the necessary infrastructure can be delivered before the main development is commenced.

Many residents commented on the type and size of the proposed homes. Whilst their comments may not have addressed the planning detail, they do express the concern that the growing tenure imbalance in the village will be distorted further and that this development, if approved, could set an unhealthy precedent for other sites in the village. The Parish Council supports the majority view that if developers are allowed to continue to exploit the village’s limited land supply to deliver large, 2-storey market homes, its’ ageing population’s demand for smaller, more manageable accommodation in the future will not be met.

The 2011 census demographic statistics for Woodchurch (below) indicated that the over 65 age group represented over a third of the village's population (34%). This is predicted to rise to a minimum of 40% by 2030. By contrast, those aged 16-24 represented just 7%. The Parish Council will support high quality housing of up to two bedrooms to satisfy the expected future demand from its local ageing population and/or to address the imbalance for its young and its key workers. It does not support the piecemeal growth of large 4/5 bedroom market homes which put disproportionately greater strain on the local infrastructure and the rural sense of place.



Woodchurch Parish Council feels the Planning Committee should give a nod to the future, acknowledge its responsibility for the village's longer term sustainability and begin the process of redressing the growing imbalance by refusing this application.

Recommendation

The Parish Council recommends refusal of the current application for the 15 reasons stated in Annexe A.

It would support a high quality development of up to six smaller homes on the site to attend to the needs of the village, but only provided the long standing flooding problems in the Stonebridge area of the village are acknowledged and resolved before any further development commences.

Annexe A -

Reasons why application 16/01836/AS should be refused

1. Whilst the Parish Council is generally supportive of development on this site, it was never its intention (nor we believe the intention of Ashford Borough Council) to allow it to be populated by large market homes. The Parish Council is eager to point out that the Planning Inspector previously recommended to ABC that it should be clearer when defining what should be built despite Policy 6.151 for the WOOD1 site clearly saying *“A mix of terraced and semi-detached properties here would create an interesting contrast with the frontage development to the south of the site but would mark the change of prevailing dwelling type seen further north along both sides of Front Road, within the Conservation Area.”*
2. The Parish Council assumes that when the Borough Council recommended a maximum of eight homes for the site in the draft policy S40, it expected the site footprint would remain at .61ha. That is no longer the case. The footprint has been reduced by around 20% to .46 ha, such that the planned eight homes will now be crammed into two blocks of four homes separated by an agricultural access to the land at the rear. The Parish Council believes the intention of S40 was to ensure that the scale, mass and bulk of any future development is consistent with the built form of the surrounding area and to preserve the sight lines to the open countryside at the rear.
3. Despite the developer’s claims to the contrary, the current proposal results in a poor quality layout of crammed, overbearing and tall buildings that are out of character with the area around it and significantly block the vistas to the rear. Out of character particularly is dwelling Type C which is a 3 storey design in defiance of emerging policy S40 which would limit development to 2 storeys.
4. The emerging Policy S40 recommended a low density development of >14dph. To achieve that on the revised, smaller footprint, the number of homes of the type proposed by the developer would need to reduce commensurately to six.
5. The height of the proposed dwellings is particularly important. This is an elevated, sloping site. Even at the lowest part of the slope the dwellings will stand at around nine metres above Front Road and be significantly taller than adjacent buildings. This is also in contravention of the emerging Policy S40. Worse; those at the Northern tip of the site will, according to the plans, stand around eleven metres above Front Road which is visually unacceptable, out character with the area (including the Conservation Area) and significantly reduces the amenity of neighbouring residents.

6. The Parish Council disagrees with the developer's claim in Planning Statement para.15.5 that the development would safeguard the amenities of those near the site.
7. The Woodchurch Village Association has already commented fully on the detailed design of the 3 styles of proposed dwellings. The Parish Council feels it cannot add any value to those comments which it wholeheartedly supports.
8. The car parking arrangements are also unsatisfactory. The three open parking spaces allocated at the front of each property will give the appearance of a suburban car park, especially if the entire ancient hawthorn hedge is torn out to leave an unobstructed view of the development from Front Road. The hedge, and the habitat it provides for wildlife, is a symbol of the rural sense of place. The combined effect of the hedge's destruction and construction of twenty-four parking spaces will not only result in a poor quality street scene that is out of character with the immediate area and approach to the village (from the South) but also become a catalyst for further "suburbanisation" of the village. The potential for an additional 100 traffic movements per day from that site alone will contribute significantly to that feel as well as adding to the risk of road traffic accidents.
9. Given the increase in rural crime and the reduction in Police funding, the lack of secure garage space in 75% of the proposed properties leaves them vulnerable to theft of property. E.g. valuable garden machinery. The Parish Council questions the value of the developer's Planning Statement 15.5 relating to the "good level of amenity for future residents" It is irresponsible, in the Council's view, not to include means of secure storage of both vehicles and machinery for all the properties on the site.
10. The removal of the ancient hawthorn hedge is contrary to the guidance in draft Policy S40. The Parish Council is surprised that if pre application advice has been sought, as the developer claims, that Ashford Borough Council's Planning team has not made it aware of this guidance.
11. The proposal to landscape the narrow strip of land between Front Road and the current hedgerow is a matter of concern for the Parish Council.
 - a) it appears to be outside the application curtilage which suggests it is not in the developer's ownership. Kent County Council maintains the strip but appears not to have made any comment.

b) if any damage occurs to the planting or landscaping by passing vehicles, which is highly likely on that part of Front Road, Woodchurch Parish Council will not accept any responsibility for it or make any additional precept request to cover the cost of its ongoing maintenance.

c) a footpath would seem to be a more effective and safer option

12. Kent County Council, similarly, has not laid down any conditions for the revised access arrangements to the land at the rear which runs through the centre of the site and is very close to the two new site access/egress points. The Woodchurch Village Association has already commented on the requirement for a maximum 4% gradient over the first 10m and the high likelihood that, if those works are required by the Highways Authority, cars will park in the space leading to the increased risk of danger on a tricky bend in the road.

13. The Parish Council agrees with and supports the WVA's comments on this and additionally, those relating to the gradients on the Northern Access Road (Para10 of the WVA's submission) but would add that a) it does not understand why the revised access proposal does not form part of the planning application, especially as it involves significant amendment to the existing arrangement and takes in the narrow strip of land mentioned in 11 above which we believe to be in KCC's ownership and b) if vehicles do park opportunistically in the space then the whole of the 147m site frontage will become a car park, adding to the suburban feel.

14. Given omissions, assumptions, conflicting and possibly misleading information in the planning documents, the Parish Council finds it difficult to understand the means and effectiveness of the applicant's proposals for both surface and foul water drainage. Flooding has occurred frequently in the southernmost part of Woodchurch and residents are naturally concerned that this development will exacerbate these problems. We would strongly urge the Planning Committee not to make any decision without first assessing several crucial points, specifically:

a. The degree to which the Front Road sewer has sufficient capacity to cope with the foul water flows from the site. The applicants claim there is sufficient capacity in the sewer. The Parish Council disagrees. In 2012 Southern Water stated that although there may be capacity at the village's treatment works, there is insufficient capacity in the actual Front Road sewer. Nothing has changed in the village since then, ergo we would challenge the developer's assertions.

b. Given that SUDS facilities are not adoptable by sewerage authorities, how will the developers ensure that the proposed drainage boreholes will be maintained in the

longer term? The management plan for the scheme places the responsibility on the householders to maintain the boreholes. Given the flooding problems experienced in the village, the Parish Council cannot agree that the responsibility should be left 100% with the householders.

- c. The Parish Council notes the expert's opinion that rainfall of over 5mm, which is a regular occurrence, could produce run off on to Front Road. (ref: Storm Water Drainage Strategy) This could be particularly hazardous when temperatures fall below zero and when the KCC has admitted it has not had the capacity to grit any of Woodchurch's roads during the current winter period.

15. Woodchurch is located within a "Dark Skies" area. The emerging S40 policy recognises this and will require applicants to submit lighting schemes. No Full Lighting Scheme has been submitted with the application.