

The Protocol Meeting had been called by Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council (PC) to discuss Wealden District Council's (WDC) policy towards 'The Coach House' site, also known locally as Jerry Light's field. It was expected that the meeting would be wide ranging, discussing not only WDC's policy towards this particular site but all other potential sites in the locality as well as the current sale of The Lamb Inn

The meeting commenced early, prior to District Councillor Ede joining the meeting. An opportunity was taken to discuss the sale of The Lamb Inn and the reaction of the villagers to the sale and the potential loss of amenity. Kelvin Williams (Head of Planning, WDC) commented that he had received upwards of 30-40 letters and emails in the past few weeks commenting on the sale and its possible change of use to a residential site. He expressed some sympathy with the emotions being expressed but reaffirmed that it was impossible for either himself or WDC to comment until a planning application for change of use had been made. It was also noted that some villagers were concerned that if change of use is not granted then either Shepherd Neame may keep the pub mothballed to the detriment of the centre of the village or that it may be sold as a pub and subsequently fail only to be developed as housing in a few years time.

Philip Ede joined the meeting during this discussion and leant his support to the villagers' comments.

The conversation then turned to the main reason for the meeting, the expected planning application being submitted by Delavals Architects (DA), acting as agent to Mr Jerry Light, owner of The Coach House and the field within which it sits. Kelvin Williams advised the meeting that that WDC had previously received an application from Delavals Architects seeking consent to demolish The Coach House and construct 2 three bedroomed houses on the site. In pre-application discussions with Delevais Architects, WDC suggested that the site might accommodate more than two houses and encouraged Delavals Architects to prepare a plan that allowed for a greater density of housing. A coloured hand drawn plan was tabled by Stacey Robbins (Senior Planning Officer, WDC) showing a 'block plan' indicating those areas that might accommodate a new build, and certain sight-lines preserving some of the views presently enjoyed by those houses adjacent to the site.

Delavals Architects had referred to this site plan and had produced drawings showing 1 semi-detached block of a single storey design, incorporating two bedrooms in the roof-space, 2 detached three bedroom houses, and a conversion and extension to The Coach House to provide 1 one bedroom dwellings. It was anticipated that a planning application would be submitted imminently. Clive Stillman stated that his client was a long term resident in the village and had sought to restrict the number of houses on the site but that he was not averse from taking profit from these circumstances. He was however concerned that the trees planted for The Queens's Silver Jubilee should be preserved, with the access road to the site passing between two of these trees and that the architecture of each property should be varied and have sympathy with surrounding properties. Stacey Robbins commented that WDC would have a preference for the properties to be sited as close to Church Lane as possible, but the Architects design had sited the proposed properties as far back from the road as was practically possible.

The Councillors present made it clear that they regarded the proposal to be an over-development of the site and that the original planning application would be more in keeping with the character of the village. Stacey Robbins commented that it was clear the village needed more smaller housing as the stock was extremely limited, and that it was preferable for this housing to be sited as close to the centre of the village and its amenities as possible. Councillor English made the comment that the centre of the village was under threat from the possible change of use to The Lamb Inn but again WDC could not comment without an application. The Councillors said that other parcels of land would be submitted for development to meet the SHEELA but Stacey Robbins said that this would not alter their view of The Old Coach House site but rather they would be included within the five year land supply.

Mr Robbins went on to comment that WDC would find it difficult to resist an application for housing on previously undeveloped land unless there was a clear problem with such a development. They were under pressure to identify a five year land supply at all times and there would need to be a pressing reason not to allow development on certain key sites. Indeed refusal would only be contemplated if the granting of consent would result in "demonstrable harm". Mr Robbins also commented that conversions of existing buildings such as agricultural barns to residential do not count towards the allocation of new housing to Ripe. He would not be limited to the original ten houses proposed for Ripe and was of the view that up to 20 might ultimately be built in and around the village, but always having regard for their positioning within the village.

Mr Robbins was however prepared to confirm that no development of housing would be contemplated along Church Lane on the north side of this thoroughfare, on that piece of land known as Follinger's Field, as they were keen to ensure that the two perceived centres of the village, being the Lamb Inn and the shop, and the church, are not connected by additional development. The present boundaries to The Conservation Area are under review and will absorb all those properties presently sited to the south of Church Lane as well as some others to the west of the village. (the proposed new conservation area does not include the houses to the south of Church Lane ie; the old council houses but it does include John and Kath's.)

The Councillors added that the villagers would prefer a lower density development and asked Mr Stillman to convey this to Jerry Light. The Councillors made it clear to Mr Williams and Mr Robbins that the village reluctantly accepted that 10 homes had to be built but their preference was for these to be spread on several sites around the village.

Councillor White added that he was dismayed to learn that farmyards are not included as brownfield sites. There was also some confusion as to whether barn conversions are included in the Local Plans. Councillor White will seek clarification at a forthcoming Wealden Planning Panel Meeting.

Ms Bartter in her role as Community Champion working with EE has had five offers of sites for EE cabinets and is arranging site visits with the Company to assess their suitability.

The meeting then opened.

121. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Parish Councillors English and Brass.

122. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS – Councillor Dunbar Dempsey made the following statement;

‘Councillor Dunbar Dempsey had declared a disclosable pecuniary interest because she had been advised to. After receiving the draft minutes Councillor Dunbar Dempsey took further advice from Wealden District Council Member Services and that advice indicated that it was not necessary for Councillor Dunbar Dempsey to have declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this situation as there was only discussion of an issue with no planning application nor decisions to be made by councillors’.

The Clerk made a statement in which she said;

‘The advice given by Wealden was incorrect as they were not fully aware of all the facts. Any advice given was given to protect the integrity of the Councillor and the Parish Council as a whole. Advice was also given by Member Services and the Chief Executive Officer at the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils who supported the advice I gave. Action was taken as a result of emails sent by the Councillor and would never had got this far if an interest had been declared at the start when this issue was first discussed’.

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 1st February 2016 were then approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

123. CLERK’S REPORT ON MATTERS ARISING – It was noted that the Parish Council has received £770 from NALC towards the costs of implementing the requirements of the Transparency Code.

124. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST: Councillor Dunbar Dempsey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the applications for Chipps Cottage and left the room whilst the application was considered.

125. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE MEETINGS – There were no reports from outside meetings on this occasion.

126. PLANNING APPLICATIONS –

WD2016/0040F and WD2016/0041LB Chipps Cottage, Single storey side extensions and alterations to existing cottage – Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council has no objections on any planning grounds to these applications. The applicant was advised to check whether a separate application is required to remove the tree because it is in a conservation area.

WD2016/0076F – Chalvington Sandpit – Erection of a detached dwelling in lieu of GDPO 2015 Part 3 Class Q. Conversion of redundant agricultural building. Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds as described in Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/W/15/3028000 for application WD2014/2013F because they also apply to this site which is in the same vicinity. In the report the Inspector said he saw no evidence of any other local facilities in the village that would support everyday family life such as a school or shop. Policy SP03 of the Adopted Core Strategy Wealden District Local Plan (2013) (the CSLP) indicates that housing development will

be accommodated within, or as extensions to, existing towns while allowing for limited growth within villages capable of accommodating development in a sustainable fashion. The site does not lie within the range of settlements which are considered by the Council to provide sustainable locations for new housing. He did not identify any special circumstances that would justify the development of houses in this unsustainable location. He concluded that the proposed developments would not satisfy the location criteria for housing indicated in CSLP Policy SPO3 or the criteria specifically identified for small scale affordable housing set out in Policy WDS9 and that this site is not in a sustainable location for housing.

In conclusion he stated that the appeal site was not in a sustainable location and that the proposal would unacceptably detract from the character and appearance of the area. The Council (WDC) has an up to date Plan which identifies housing land in excess of the requirements indicated in the Framework.

Councillors also objected on the grounds of over development.

127. QUEEN'S 90th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS – Councillors heard that a cream tea is possibly being organised in the Parish to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and Councillors agreed to earmark £90 towards the costs of running the event. It was also noted that the Litter Pickers also carried out a 'Clean for the Queen' exercise.

128. UK POWER NETWORKS – Members considered attending stakeholder workshops organised by UK Power Networks but **resolved** to decline the invitation because they would be of little benefit to the Parish.

129. TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS – Councillors **resolved** to accept the recommendations made in the report detailed in minute 120.

130. CHEQUES FOR PAYMENT – The following cheques were approved for payment;

A Stevens - Salary

Cheque number 100925

131. QUESTIONS FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS – Councillor Shonfeld asked how the Parish Council feels about the request from Minster Parish Council to sign its petition. The petition asks Parish Councils to support its request that Parish Councils have appeal rights against planning decisions. Councillor **resolved** not to sign the petition as they felt it would be more beneficial if they looked at applications where they disagreed with Wealden and learnt from them instead.

Councillor White asked why the sign was not replaced after the Christmas tree was taken down. Councillor Dunbar Dempsey will take this up with the resident concerned.

Councillor White also complained about the large amount of rubbish on the A27 from the Southerham roundabout to Polegate. The Clerk will write and complain to ESCC Highways.

There being no further questions from Parish Councillors, the meeting closed at 8.35pm.

