



Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross,  
Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL.  
TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2021  
AT ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL AT 19:30**

**PRESENT**

Cllr R Harris (Chair)  
Cllr P Beach  
Cllr B Johnstone

Cllr D Hiles  
Cllr P Kember  
Cllr N Wickenden

Cllr A Martin  
Cllr J. Kitchenham  
Cllr G Watson-Smith

**COUNCILLORS ABSENT**

None.

**ALSO PRESENT**

Adam Hardy (Deputy Clerk), Trevor Thorpe (Parish Clerk) & 72 members of the public.

**1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -**

**a) Public forum.**

None

**b) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s 85).**

Apologies for absence had been received from: Cllr L Henrick, Cllr J Cahan, Cllr J Richardson and Cllr L Buck

It was **RESOLVED** that their reasons for absence be **APPROVED**.

**c) Declarations of personal, prejudicial, and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda, and updates to members' register of interests.**

None

**d) To resolve that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Council held on Thursday 25th November be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of this meeting be adopted as a true record, and they were signed by the Council Chairman.

**2. TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS AND OTHER PLANNING MATTERS.**

**a) WD/2021/2306/MAJ - Land at Mayfield Road, Rotherfield, TN6 3LT**

Development of 21 dwellings (including affordable housing) with associated open space, access, parking, drainage, landscaping and other associated works, including works to mayfield road.

Three members of the public representing Gillings (Planning Agents), Millwood Homes (Applicants) and Ardent (Transport Engineer). Points raised are summarised as follows:

- Millwood homes have successfully developed similar sites and this one has potential.

**Clerk:** Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

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- The key constraint in the current road layout and as a result the application includes a new design for the Mayfield Road junction. The improvements will improve the poor visibility, change the priority and provide traffic calming measures.
- The proposed site layout and road junction alternations have been drawn up following pre-application advice from East Sussex Highways.
- There are sites near to the location that have already received planning permission from Wealden District Council.
- The scheme has been designed with no or minimal harm to the AONB.
- The scheme includes protection for the adjacent ancient woodland.
- The mix of houses in the development have been designed to a high detail to reflect those in the surrounding area.
- There is no executive housing and the application contains a mix of housing unit sizes. This includes some rental and housing association housing.
- This application will help ease Wealden District Councils lack of a five year housing supply.
- The proposed application is considered to have no significant ecological issues.
- The proposed drainage and sewage system has been approved by Southern Water and is unlikely to put any additional pressure on the current sewage and water infrastructure.

Seven members of the public spoke against the application. Points raised are summarised as follows:

- The application is in the AONB and on Green Land. The application does not demonstrate the advantages of the development outweigh the disadvantages of development in the AONB.
- Paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is not an accurate justification for this development as the public interest argument for need of housing can not be proved. The footnote of this part of the policy was requested to be noted in the minutes:  
*“For the purposes of paragraphs 176 and 177, whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.”*
- The proposed development is not in keeping with the surrounding area.
- The site is outside of the development boundary and had been previously dismissed when offered as part of the 2019 Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
- Development of the site will damage the ancient hedgerows and have a significant impact on the adjacent nature reserve.
- The applications proposals for dealing with the sewage on the site are inadequate and ill-informed. As the site slopes away from the drainage on the main road, sewage will be collected in a sump at the bottom of the slope and pumped back up to the drainage under the road using electric pumps. Pumps fail often and this would create problems, as would excessively heavy rain. The local sewage system already registers regular dumping of raw sewage into the stream which runs through the village.
- The proposed road restructuring is inadequate and potentially dangerous which would result in increased congestion particularly during morning and evening rush hours.

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- Access to the site is currently 2m above road level.
- Inadequate parking on the site with underestimated provision for the affordable housing units leading to an increase in vehicles parked along Mayfield Road making it similar to the position in church road..
- Insufficient public transport links to negate the requirement for residents with vehicles. The condition of pavements into the village would make it dangerous for pedestrians.
- Road congestion and conditions would make it dangerous for cyclists.
- Village amenities (Doctors Surgery and Schools) are already oversubscribed and cannot cope with an increase in residents.
- The development site is of Historical Interest reportedly being a route for English Archers heading for the Battle of Hastings.
- The developers are felt to be taking advantage of the fact that Wealden District Council does not have a five year plan for housing.
- Concerns about the definition of the term “affordable” and how this can meet the need of those on the housing register.
- Concerns about the effect such a development would have on the mental health of those in the Parish who clearly do not want this site developed.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Wealden District Council that this application be **REFUSED**.

#### **Reasons:**

- The argument for development protecting and enhancing the Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) has not been made and does not accord with paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The site is outside of the development boundary.
- The proposed redesign of the highway at Mayfield Road junction is inadequate and potentially dangerous with no significant speed reduction measures.
- Considerable concern for the effect the development will have on the sewage and water infrastructure. The Sewage system is already dumping raw sewage into the natural watercourse and is overloaded by the current number of households in this part of the parish.
- Unacceptable increase in demand for local amenities and services, particularly the Doctors Surgery and Rotherfield Primary School.
- Inadequate parking on the site for the number of potential vehicles. This will lead to an increase in street parking causing additional traffic congestion to an already congested village centre.

#### **Voting Record:**

|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Cllr R Harris: | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |
| Cllr D Hiles   | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |
| Cllr A Martin  | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |
| Cllr P Beach   | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |
| Cllr P Kember  | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |

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|                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Cllr J Kitchenham   | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |
| Cllr B Johnstone    | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |
| Cllr N Wickenden    | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |
| Cllr G Watson-Smith | Recommend <b>REFUSAL</b> |

The **Deputy Clerk** recorded that the vote for **REFUSAL** was unanimous.

### 3. TO RECEIVE NOTICE OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 for which summons and notice has already been given.

### 4. REPORT DETAILS OF ITEMS AND ISSUES NOTIFIED TO CLERK IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING FOR INVESTIGATION, FURTHER ACTION OR FOR FUTURE AGENDA.

- Cllr Kember asked for an item regarding the continued damage to the Kings Arms be placed on the agenda of next Parish Council meeting to see what the Parish Council can do to support the landlords. **Deputy Clerk** to add item to the January Parish Council meeting agenda.

Chair declared the meeting closed at: **20:43**

.....Chair.....Date