



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

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 10TH OCTOBER 2023
IN UPPER HALL OF ROTHERFIELD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE AT 19:30**

PRESENT

Cllr R Harris (Chair)

Cllr J Richardson

Cllr D Hiles

Cllr B Johnstone (Vice-Chair)

Cllr J Kitchenham

Cllr A Martin

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

Cllr C Southern & Cllr J Fryatt

ALSO PRESENT

Adam Hardy (Parish Clerk) & 34 members of the public.

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Public Forum:

None.

b) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85):

Apologies had been received from Cllr L Buck, Cllr P Turner, Cllr P Kember and Cllr P Snelling.

It was **RESOLVED** that the reason for absence be accepted.

Retrospective apologies had been received from Cllr Fryatt.

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

None

2. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM ROTHERFIELD PLAYERS ON THE RAISE THE ROOF PROJECT AT ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL.

Two members of Rotherfield Players addressed the Council on this matter.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with making a planning application to the Wealden District Council on the revised 'Raise the Roof' project and that Robert Chesterton would act on behalf of the Parish Council.

Clerk: Adam J Hardy, 3 Trinity Mews, Mill Crescent, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2QU

Tel: 07969512099. **Email:** clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

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The Clerk asked Cllr D Hiles – Chair of the Planning – to Chair this part of the meeting.

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

a) WD/2023/2167/FA - Merlins, Yew Tree Lane, Rotherfield, TN6 3QP

Variation of condition 2 of WD/2023/1136/F (demolition of existing dwelling and construction of new chalet/bungalow) to amend tile hanging on front and rear elevations and dormers to be cladding.

Reconsultation requested following other Supporting Information/Plans received dated 19/09/2023

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Wealden District Council that this application be **APPROVED**. The Council had no further comments on this application.

b) WD/2023/0998/F - St Peters R C Church, St Peters Mead, Rotherfield, TN6 3TP

Erection of 8 dwellings (use Class C3), with access, parking, informal open space, landscaping and other associated works.

Two members of the public spoke against the application.

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

REASONS:

- ☐ The plans submitted to support the application are inconsistent and do not make it clear what the proposed number and size of units are. Most plans showed 9 dwellings as opposed to the 8 referenced in the application title.
- ☐ The Council would prefer affordable housing units to be fully or part of any application on this site, similar to those in the adjacent St Peter's Meade.
- ☐ The proposed parking is inadequate for the number of units proposed. The adjacent street has no capacity to accommodate overflow vehicles.

c) WD/2023/0880/PO - Land At Court Farm, Rotherfield Road, Rotherfield TN6 3HH

Modification of section 106 agreement dated 20 April 2001 attached to planning permission WD/1989/3225/O (new farmstead with access onto Rotherfield road) to remove the land proposed for residential development and to include other land in its place. ***Additional information received in connection with the proposal, as detailed in the Environmental Statement Addendum Volume 1 dated August 2023.***

Four members of the public spoke against the application.

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

REASON:

The Council feel that the Environmental Statement Addendum Volume 1 dated August 2023 does not address the Council's original reasons for recommending refusal on this application:

1. The Section 106 Agreement dated 20th April 2001 does not permit the severance of legal ownership of the land defined by the agreement plan and this applies to the land which is the subject of the proposed development. The alternative land which is offered is not considered to represent suitable agricultural land for farming in conjunction with the remaining development authorised in 2001.
2. The refusal of planning permission for the proposed development of 75 houses under application WD/2023/0893/MEA means that the new Section 106 obligation cannot be entertained.
3. The land to be offered as a substitute for the land to develop 75 houses does not represent a suitable alternative as it is, in part, low grade woodland steeply sloping in many places.

- d) **WD/2023/0893/MEA** - Land At Court Farm, Rotherfield Road, Rotherfield TN6 3HH
Outline planning application for the erection of up to 75 dwellings (including 40% affordable), provision of vehicular and pedestrian access, public right of way improvements, green infrastructure (including biodiversity net gain and landscaping) and other associated infrastructure provision. All matters reserved except access. ***Additional information received in connection with the proposal, as detailed in the Environmental Statement Addendum Volume 1 dated August 2023 (received 21 September 2023), and amended plans dated 21 September 2023 showing revised access arrangements to Longcroft Cottage, affecting layout.***

Six members of the public spoke against the application.

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

REASONS:

The Council feel that the Environmental Statement Addendum Volume 1 dated August 2023 and amended access plans dated 21st September 2023 do not address the Council's original reasons for recommending refusal. The Council would add additional reasons for refusal:

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1. The revised access was not discussed with the owner of Longcroft Cottage.
2. The revised proposal is inadequate for safe vehicle access to Longcroft Cottage and provides no provision for parking.
3. Longcroft Cottage is not connected to mains drainage and requires regular emptying of the cesspit system, under the new scheme the vehicles undertaking this would not be able to access the site.
4. The laybys on either side of the B2100 are a local amenity that are regularly used by residents and local businesses. The proposal results in the loss of this amenity.

The Council would also like to reiterate their original reasons for recommending refusal on this application:

1. The site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the proposed development would neither 'conserve nor enhance' the character of the AONB. As such the development would be contrary to national and local planning policy.
2. The site occupies prominent high ground adjacent to Rotherfield's historic village centre and its significant group of listed buildings including the Grade 1 listed St Denys' Church and its conservation area. The proposed development would permanently and irreparably damage the character and setting of the village contrary to local planning policy.
3. The highway infrastructure proposed to serve the development, the B2100 and adjacent roads and footways, are frequently congested to the point of village centre gridlock and are totally inadequate in their present form to cope with the additional pedestrian and vehicular traffic from the development in the scale proposed.
4. Other local infrastructure, including medical services, schools and the Victorian era foul water drainage and fresh water service system are totally inadequate to serve the proposed development.
5. The development proposes a permanent pumped drainage system which is inconsistent with the objectives of the COP26 worldwide agreement on climate change and subsequent national and local environmental policies
6. The developers reference to. "an inadequate housing land supply in Wealden District" is a facile statement which does not justify the setting aside of well established national and local development policy.

- e) **WD/2022/2946/F** - Highwell House, Steep Road, Crowborough, TN6 3RX
Proposed solar panel array and replacement plant room.
Replacement of the plant room rather than the original scheme to extend existing.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Wealden District Council that this application be **APPROVED**. The Council had no further comments on the application.

Cllr Harris returned as Chair of the meeting.

4. CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO THE HIGH WEALD AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024-2029

Supporting Documentation and reports had been circulated to the Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Harris would review the document and report back to Council with a proposed response. **Clerk** to add an item to the 31st October Planning & Building Committee agenda.

5. TO RECEIVE NOTICE OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Thursday 26th October at 7:30pm in the Parish Council Room at Rotherfield Village Hall.

6. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF ANY URGENT ISSUES FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS.

None.

Chair declared the formal business of the meeting closed at: **20:44**

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