

Minutes of a meeting of the **PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT**
Committee held in the Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough
on Monday 8th August 2022 at 7.30pm

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| Present | Councillors | Martyn Garrett Richard Jury George Moss* David Neeves Alan Penney Ron Reed | Chairman Vice – Chairman |
| Also present | | Tracie White | Minute Taking Administrator |
| | | 18 members of the public in the chamber 1 member of public online | |

*Denotes non-attendance

APOLOGIES

Cllr. George Moss

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Richard Jury declared a personal interest in Item 4.5 as the neighbor and principal objector, to the application is known to him

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th July 2022

It was agreed that the wording under the Urgent Matters section of the minutes be amended to state:

‘A member notified that WDALC had agreed to host a reformed Overdevelopment Working Group with a revised constitution.’

9851 **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2022 as confirmed be ratified by the Chairman with the amendments noted above.

The chairman moved to hear Item 4.3 first due to members of the public present with an interest in these items.

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 9852** **RESOLVED** that the observations on planning and licencing issues below be submitted to the Planning & Licensing Authority for consideration.

Application No. WD/2022/1639/F Application Type: Full

Location: LAND WEST OF ALICE BRIGHT LANE AND SOUTH OF HURTIS HILL, CROWBOROUGH

Description: ERECTION OF 4 DWELLINGS, NEW ACCESS AND LANDSCAPING

A member of public spoke in objection to this application. He believes that the proposal is outside the town's development boundary, adjoining the AONB and an area of designated ancient woodland which is a unique environment. He stated that the area has a long-established policy of not allowing building developments in this area with planning permission being refused as recently as 2012. He noted that WDC have recently issued an Article 4 directive on land in this location as they identified the location as a rural area with development predicted to have a detrimental impact to woodland and inhabitants. He stated that there are currently eleven properties on Alice Bright Lane, and whilst this application for four properties might appear innocuous, there is a recent application for another thirty-three dwellings in the same location which together will have a significant impact on the area which will be out of keeping with the current character.

A second member of public spoke in objection to the proposal. He stated that the five-way junction connecting Alice Bright Lane with High Broom Road is already dangerous and an increase in traffic will exacerbate these conditions. He believes the development is out of character with the area and feels that there will be a string of further planning applications in this location should the development be approved, which will be damaging to the natural landscape of the area. He further stated that Alice Bright Lane already has issues with localised flooding and surface water and there is no clear reference within the proposal to mitigate this other than the use of a soakaway which appears insufficient. Finally, he believes the application will have a detrimental effect on the ancient woodland and wishes to see the green space protected.

A third member of public spoke in objection to the application. She expressed concerns with regards to the road safety of pedestrians in Alice Bright Lane. She stated that her own children are currently provided a local taxi to school by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) since Section 1.2 their 'Home to Transport Policy' makes provision for route safety where walking routes present specific road safety hazards. If ESCC are currently deeming the route as unsafe, the addition of more properties will only exacerbate the safety issues. She further stated that she has personal experience of a car accident in this location which supports her belief that the location is dangerous.

A fourth member of public spoke in objection to the application. He stated that the proposal is outside of the development boundary and close to the AONB. He feels that the application is out of keeping with both the rural nature of the are and the character of existing properties. He expressed concerns about safety due to the narrowness of the road and the fact that there are no pathways for pedestrians. He believes that the impact to the ecology of the ancient woodland will be substantial as the proposal amounts to a 9.29% loss of vegetation. He stated that the forestry management plan does not provide

sufficient information regarding mitigation matters. Finally, he stated that he has concerns about drainage to the area as he feels a soakaway is insufficient in an area already prone to localised flooding.

A member of public spoke in support of the application. He stated that early conversations with WDC had suggested that the site may be favourable as it adjoins the development boundary. He stated that the proposal is outside of the AONB, and that an arboriculture study and ecological appraisal have taken place with no trees having been removed to date. The layout of the proposal is semi-rural in nature with as many of the trees and hedgerows being retained as possible and the application follows the topography of the site. He stated that the correct transport statements and ecological assessments have been submitted with the application.

Observations: Recommends Refusal

Town Council Comments: Crowborough Town Council recommends that Planning Permission be Refused on the following grounds:

Firstly, the proposal is on a Green Field site outside of the town's development boundary, in a predominantly rural location. Whilst the site appears to be outside the High Weald AONB, it is situated extremely close to it, and could therefore have a detrimental impact upon it. To the committee's knowledge, the location has never been earmarked for development suggesting that it is not suitable for such.

The densely packed close of four houses is substantially out of keeping with the rest of Alice Bright Lane and contrary to the prevailing scheme of development in the area which currently has just eleven properties, all which range significantly in individual style and age.

The committee has concerns based on the proposed layout, that this is a gateway development. Access has been left to the west of the site which could alternatively have been used to increase the plot sizes of the four houses, making them more in-keeping with the existing plots on the lane.

The second major area of concern is Alice Bright Lane itself. The road is narrow and has seen a sizable increase in traffic usage over recent years. Significantly, it lacks any pedestrian pavements, making it unsafe for those on foot to access the site, especially given traffic levels. These two elements serve to make the development car dependent. The NPPF states, and this committee agrees, that this is not desirable in any form, and further demonstrates this site's unsuitability for development.

Additionally, whilst designed as a car-dependant site, there appears to be a serious lack of car parking provision to allow for the size of houses and to cater for visitors. This is concerning as on street parking on the lane is not an option for the reasons already outlined.

Levels of danger to pedestrians on the road are most clearly illustrated by the fact that East Sussex County Council currently provides home to school transport for children residing along the road despite the short distance to the schools in question. If it is acknowledged that pedestrian access is unsafe, then some of the claims made about public transport provision at the Rose Court Bus stop can also be discounted, leaving the site isolated from public transport. Further, the claims made in the transport statement regarding cycling as an alternative do not appear to consider the adverse topography of Crowborough, rendering the quoted traveling times unrealistic in at least one direction of each journey.

The third area of concern relates to the environment, principally localised flooding. There is already a pre-existing problem, caused in part by the topography and by poor drainage provision due to the rural location. The proposed development does nothing to address these concerns and the increase in impermeable ground cover will exacerbate them.

Furthermore, from the evidence provided, the committee can see nothing to substantiate claims made in the application's ecological report which suggests that biodiversity would be enhanced by developing a green field site currently covered in rough woodland. The development may potentially sever wildlife corridors leading to a further detrimental impact upon biodiversity. Finally, the ecological report supplied by the applicant states that priority should be given to woodland habitats. This statement appears to advocate refusal for any development on this site as it would remove the existing woodland habitats.

In conclusion, the committee also notes the strength of local feeling against developing this site, and of Alice Bright Lane more generally, with sixty-eight objections registered as at the date of the committee's meeting, and with fifteen people in attendance at the planning meeting itself. This is far in excess of the numbers the council ordinarily experiences for a development of this size in Crowborough.

One member of public online left the meeting at 19:58hrs.

Fifteen members of public left the chamber at 20:01hrs.

Application No. WD/2022/1713/F Application Type: Full

Location: 17 KINGFISHER DRIVE, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 3FQ

Description: INSERTION OF 2No. FRONT AND REAR ROOFLIGHTS.

Observations: Recommends Approval

Town Council Comments: The Town Council has no comment.

Application No. WD/2022/1493/LDP Application Type: Lawful Development - Proposed Use

Location: WEALDENS, CROWBOROUGH HILL, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 2JX

Description: CONSTRUCT DORMER WINDOWS ON CATSLIDE ROOF.

Observations: No action

Town Council Comments: WDC had already reached a decision on this Application prior to the meeting.

Application No. WD/2022/1587/F Application Type: Full

Location: WARREN OAK, WARREN ROAD, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1QN

Description: SINGLE STOREY FRONT ANNEX

Observations: Recommends Refusal

Town Council Comments: Refusal recommended on the basis that the proposal out of keeping with the area, the neighbouring property will be subject to overlooking due to the location of the windows and the application is overdevelopment of the plot. The council also have concerns that the roots of the neighbouring tree may be affected detrimentally.

Application No. WD/2021/3065/F Application Type: Full

Location: LAND ADJACENT TO WINGDALE, FIELDEN ROAD, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1TP

Description: NEW RESIDENTIAL DWELLING

Observations: Recommends Refusal

Town Council Comments: Refusal recommended due to the lack of amenity space, the property being sited close to the road which has a negative impact on the street scene, the poor access issues due to the siting of the property so close to the shared drive which does not appear to be part of the curtilage. This reduces the plot size by approximately one hundred and forty square metres, reinforcing the view that the plot is overdeveloped.

Application No. WD/2022/1708/F Application Type: Full

Location: HECTORS HOUSE, CROFT ROAD, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1HA

Description: PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION, INTERNAL ALTERATIONS

Observations: Recommends Approval

Town Council Comments: The Town Council has no comment.

Application No. WD/2022/1805/F Application Type: Full

Location: THE OLD CARRIAGE HOUSE, FIELDEN LANE, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1TL

Description: TWO STOREY FRONT AND REAR EXTENSION AND PORCH

Observations: Recommends Approval

Town Council Comments: The committee have some concerns about access for construction traffic due to the narrowness of the lane and therefore feel mitigation for this needs to be considered.

Application No. WD/2022/1327/F Application Type: Full

Location: CINDERWOOD, RANNOCH ROAD, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 1RB

Description: CONSTRUCTION OF A GARDEN ROOM

Observations: Recommends Approval

Town Council Comments: The Town Council has no comment.

Application No. WD/2022/1308/F Application Type: Full

Location: LAINSTON, POUNDFIELD ROAD, CROWBOROUGH, TN6 2BQ

Description: WOODEN DECKING SUSPENDED ON STEEL BEAMS AND SCREW PILINGS.

Observations: Recommends Approval

Town Council Comments: The Town Council has no comment.

One member of public left the chamber at 20:18hrs.

DECISION NOTICES (attached to agenda)

Noted.

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING

Members discussed the possibility of obtaining greater clarity from WDC with regards to how planning policy is applied, particularly considering recent decision notices received. It was agreed that this be added as an Agenda item for the next meeting.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The date of the next meeting is Monday 5th September 2022 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 20:24hrs.