

EAST WOODHAY PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

WOOLTON HILL CHURCH HALL

5.30 p.m. MONDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2022

MINUTES

1. **Attendance:** Cllr. Simon Bowden, Cllr. Susan Cooper, Cllr. Martin Hainge, Cllr. Karen Titcomb (Chair), Cllr. Andrew Watson.

2. **Apologies:** None.

3. **Minutes of last meeting:** Agreed.

4. **Matters arising from Minutes of last meeting:** None.

5. **21/03269/HSE - 1 Wellington Cottages, Heath End Road, Ball Hill, RG20 0NS.**
Demolition of garage and conservatory and erection of part two storey, part single storey side and rear extension and outbuilding.

It was noted that would be helpful if it changes made to development plans were obvious. Previous plans should available on the B&D website for the purpose of comparison.

Repeat the comments made in response to the two previous (apparently almost identical) application plans. Suggest that in this instance a site visit would appear to be essential, in order that the issues raised by the Committee and neighbours be properly evaluated.

6. **T/00022/22/TCA - Cottage Farm House, North End Road, North End, RG20 0AY.** T1 - Ageing Oak - Veteran Oak Tree on edge of driveway Remove all major deadwood, selectively reduce/prune any rogue branches by no more than 1.5 metres to maintain shape and prevent failure in future. T2 - Pine - remove dead wood and selectively prune to maintain shape and prevent failure in the future. T3 - Ageing Cherry - reduce and shape by 1.5-2 metres all over to maintain shape and prevent failure in future. This tree dropped a limb last Autumn approx 5m long and has 'Chicken in the wood' fungus throughout the main stem. Chip and remove all brushwood.

Decision left to the expertise of the Tree Officer.

7. **22/00183/PIP - Land adjacent to Woolton Hill Sports Club, Woolton Hill.**
Permission in Principle for residential development up to 3 dwellings

Object (see Appendix).

8. Items for next Agenda: None at present.

9. Date of next meeting: 5.30 p.m., Monday, 28th February.

APPENDIX

22/00183/PIP - Land adjacent to Woolton Hill Sports Club, Woolton Hill

Dear Sir or Madam,

As a preliminary point, the land to which this application relates is, as far as the Committee is aware, designated as agricultural land and would therefore require a change of use application, as a minimum, before considering an application to develop it for housing.

The Planning Committee of East Woodhay Parish Council object to the above application for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed development site is outside the Woolton Hill settlement policy boundary. This means that this application does not meet the provisions of Local Plan Policy SS6 - New Housing in the Countryside, as there is currently no locally agreed need.
2. Furthermore, the proposed development would constitute continued development in the countryside, well outside the agreed SPB. The Parish Council and BDBC agreed the Woolton Hill SPB in the Local Plan to focus development within the SPB and thereby protect the countryside, especially as it is in the AONB. This type of proposed development would seriously undermine the very purpose of the SPB, and effectively contravene the agreement reached in good faith between the Parish Council and BDBC.
3. There has been no locally agreed need for this proposed development. Quite apart from anything else, the Parish has an insufficient supporting infrastructure. For example, local public transport is extremely limited; the GP Practices locally are at full capacity; and the provision of/for clean and dirty water is also an issue in this Parish – especially the latter, where we have seen huge sewage problems in the National Trust owned land known as The Chase.
4. Emerging East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan: The application states: “The draft Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Version did not allocate any new housing sites.” This is because BDBC has recognised and accepted that the Parish has already delivered some 65 new houses against a previous target of 10. Accordingly, having exceeded its housing target more than six times over, recent revisions to the Local Plan confirm a proposed zero allocation for new housing within the Parish.
5. East Woodhay Parish Council is trying to prevent further urbanisation of the countryside within our Parish – development proposals of this type neither adhere to the Local Plan nor to the Neighbourhood Plan (which is about to be submitted to BDBC for Regulation 15 Consultation); nor do they conform with the requirements of the East Woodhay Village Design Statement.

6. Furthermore, this kind of 'ribbon development' envisages a joining up of houses at the top of the hill with the tennis club and housing along the road; this is specifically something which the draft Neighbourhood Plan seeks to avoid in order to give the greatest protection to the countryside.
7. The amenity of neighbouring properties will be harmed by development of the site. There are highly likely to be adverse effects on neighbouring properties by reason of overlooking and loss of privacy.

In addition, the site is adjacent to a thriving, growing tennis club – with attendant noise and floodlights. It would therefore seem highly likely that any future residents would start complaining about what they would consider to be a nuisance, leading to unnecessary friction between members of the tennis club and those new residents, where no such friction currently exists.

The tennis club advises that it has been on the site since 1947, and that because of its position outside the SPB it does not interfere with domestic homes through its use of floodlights on a timed basis. The club also advises that almost all visits to it by its members are made by car – as it is generally considered too dangerous for pedestrians to be on this section of highway. (See point 11 below)

8. The site is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Para. 172 of the NPPF provides that, "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in....Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues." The Committee are therefore unable to support further development of this type which contributes to 'urbanisation' of the Parish.
9. Scale of Development & Design: The emerging Neighbourhood Plan identifies within this Parish a shortage of suitable and affordable housing for first time buyers as well as small family homes and retirement homes/bungalows. This proposal does not address these particular shortages.

Further, the reference to retaining a suitable access to the adjacent agricultural field raises concern regarding the possible future development of that field which is in the same ownership.

10. Drainage: Run-off water already pools on the road in heavy rain causing problems for traffic and pedestrians. Any development on the application site is therefore likely to have an adverse impact not only on the tennis club, but also on the housing at the bottom of the hill. In fact, a spring line exists at the bottom of the hill, as water runs onto the road most of the time. Further consideration should be given to this aspect of the proposal, noting that an adjacent neighbour advises that this land floods on an annual basis. (He has written to BDBC separately.)
11. Highways: The proposed site will apparently use the existing access off Woolton Hill. This is a location which is considered to be the most dangerous road within the Parish. EWPC have been undertaking much work on the safety of roads in the Parish and in this area (noting that sadly there has been

a death of a young person exiting the sports club), especially taking into account the rural nature of the area.

Of particular concern is that this access is positioned off a 'blind bend' and the evidence gathered confirms that the speed limit of 30mph is not adhered to.

An SID indicator was recently positioned opposite the Woolton Hill Sports club in the direction of the Trade street road junction. During the period of research there were 2321 vehicles which passed the unit – approximately 464 – 499 per day. The following information was recorded:

- The 85th percentile speed was 34.7 mph. This is an important figure as it is our understanding that the 85th percentile is used extensively in decision making as it is indicative of the speed that the majority of road users are travelling at. Yet some totally unacceptable speeds were recorded:

965 (34%) were over 30 mph.

339 (12%) were over 40 mph

81 (3%) were over 45 mph

18 over 50 mph

Top speed measured 60 mph.

The use of the existing or new driveway is not supported, for additional homes in such a vulnerable and dangerous part of the highway and suggest that even at 30mph, pedestrians are at high risk on this 'blind' corner.

12. As made clear by paragraph 11 of the NPPF "...where ...the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, [permission should be granted] unless: (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

We conclude that the adverse impacts of development on this site will "significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

- Further, the absence of a 5 year housing land supply does not lessen the weight to be attached to the protection of an AONB. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF gives "Great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty...." in such areas. BDBC have already made it clear that this Parish is not expected to deliver further housing contribution. As such, the 'tilted balance' in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) (ii) of the Framework does not apply to this application, i.e. the adverse impacts of granting planning permission *would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits*.

13. Furthermore, and at a time when EWPC is working hard with BDBC to produce a new Neighbourhood Plan, it is at best demoralising to know that if applications such as this are successful they would constitute 'windfall'

development, the effect of which would be twofold. First, the nascent Neighbourhood Plan would be substantially undermined: and secondly, the status of the quota, which EWPC has already satisfied, will have been rendered otiose, creating carte-blanche for similar applications in the future.

It is respectfully request that this application is declined.

However, should it be approved then the following is suggested:

- It should be subject to the Neighbourhood Plan - housing mix, design, retain hedging etc.
- Consideration should be given to the provision of a footpath / pavement from the top of the hill to the tennis courts to provide safer access to the sports club – as per Neighbourhood Plan Policy TT1 where we are seeking sustainable transport from all new development.

Please advise the Parish Clerk should the matter be referred to the Development Control Committee as the Parish Council may wish to appoint a councillor to attend.

Yours faithfully,

Planning Committee
East Woodhay Parish Council