



CATSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Catsfield Parish Council meeting

Held on

Wednesday 21st December 2022 at 7pm

in The Village Hall, Church Road, Catsfield TN33 9DP

Attended by: Cllr K Robertson , Cllr G Curtis, Cllr K Curtis, Cllr J Fowle,
Cllr S Jacques, Cllr M Holgate

Also in attendance: Clerk Alexandra Sharp,

Members of the Public: 16 members of the public,

Gary Brooks on behalf of Bale House CAD Ltd and Andrew, Owner of Land Behind White Hart

The Clerk:
Mrs Alexandra Sharp
The Village Hall, Church Road
Catsfield, East Sussex
TN33 9DP
Phone 07483 306519
Email clerk@catsfieldpc.co.uk
Website www.catsfieldpc.co.uk

Alexandra L Sharp

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA	
Item	Agenda Item
1.	To receive apologies for absence. No apologies were received
2.	Development proposals for Land Behind the White Hart
2.1	To receive a presentation from Bale House CAD Ltd in relation to their proposals for the land behind the White Hart. A presentation was received from Bale House CAD including drawings and plans (<i>all documents shown are available for viewing on Parish Council website</i>)
2.2	To consider a response to the proposals including public questions. The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council did not agree with the previous applications, and that the Parish Council have no involvement with the proposals at all to date. It was noted from the presentation from Bale House CAD that the proposed village green area would be managed by the Parish Council and that the Parish Council would be the keyholders to the gate entrance to the proposed green. The Chairman confirmed that this had not been previously agreed with the Parish Council and was new information given this evening. It was confirmed by Bale House CAD that the design for this development proposal has been evolving since 2021, a preapplication was undertaken some 5 months ago for 35 dwellings and this has since been reduced to 30 dwellings with a total of 62 parking spaces. Relevant surveys have been undertaken and the Wealden Design Guidance has been used. A number of design companies have been instructed for the various areas of the development, these include the following:- Lizard Landscapes – Landscaping Motion Limited – Transport Nimbus Engineering – Drainage Chris Butler Archaeology – Archaeology Skilltrans Surveys – Levels, trees, layout etc The proposal includes 40% affordable housing and a social housing company has been approached to date. Unanimous opinion from meeting attendees was that there is no necessity for a village green to be incorporated into the plans as this would not bring any real benefit to the village as Catsfield already has a recreation ground, play area etc.

The predominate concerns from the members of the public that attended were:

- Housing Design & Site options
- Traffic/Parking
- Drains/Pond/Flooding
- Affordable Housing
- Trees/ AONB/ Ecology
- Sewage
- Local facilities and Infrastructure

The chair raised that it is important to note that there is currently approx. 37 houses along The Green already, the proposals are essentially doubling the size of the centre of the village. If this is done incorrectly it could be devastating to the village.

Affordable Housing

Question: It was noted earlier that Bale House have been in contact with a housing association? Which housing association has been approached? We are concerned about the proposed affordable housing position within the development (backing on to existing properties) and also what kind of affordable housing is proposed as we already experience issues with current affordable housing within the village.

Answer: This is not something that we are prepared to disclose at this stage but the distance between the back of the proposed affordable housing and the existing properties is 32.5m this is considered acceptable in planning terms. Planning Policy requires a minimum of 40% affordable housing with a minimum 30% two bedroom properties. The position of the affordable housing is something that can be revised, there is scope to move the position of the affordable housing.

Comment: It is possible to allocate affordable housing to emergency workers with grants rather than have the stock managed by a housing association. This is preferable to the affordable housing being managed by companies such as Optivo who have a very poor record of managing their housing stock.

The design and placement of the affordable homes will not provide good housing. Access is via the sewage system and bins, not a great draw for high quality affordable housing. There is insufficient parking (to live in Catsfield with no effective public transport 1 car space per house will not suffice).

The affordable housing is squashed into one corner and directly backing onto existing properties. This looks like an afterthought to keep the affordable away from the new expensive properties (backing onto green land). We need high quality well spaced affordable housing evenly spaced.

Housing Design & Site location

Question: As part of the application you must ensure that the development fits within the village, there are no other developments with this layout in Catsfield. The proposed layout does not fit at all within the Village. This non-linear design is not acceptable and should be reworked to align and fit within the Village. You appear to have squashed as many houses into a space with the addition of large area of tarmac. You are not bound to place 30 houses and 20 would be enough.

Answer: Planning policy states that you must maximise the site value, and must put *enough* units on the land.

Comment: Planning policy also state you must take design and the environment into account.

Question: The proposed styles of house do not fit in with existing properties in Catsfield? There are several houses with 3 stories, that does not represent of fit with Catsfield. All of the houses are very high with very high roofs and do not reflect the design of other properties in Catsfield or the surrounding area.

Answer: The properties have been proposed based on Sussex Housing design but the roof height is something that we intend to try to revise.

Question: Style of houses – we live in Sussex, there is a Sussex style of house – this isn't a mountainous house! They are not at all in-keeping.

Answer: The roof pitch we will endeavour to reduce, the drawn pitch is based on guidance from RDC.

Comment: If you travel around Rother you will find very few of this design of house. The design is "Sussex " it has not translated to Rother.

Question: What is the rough guide price for the properties in the proposal? There must be some idea to be able to satisfy 'affordable housing' pricing.

Answer: Not something that we know just yet, very much depends when construction starts due to changes in building regulations. This is something the developer will decide. However anyone is welcome to take drawings to local estate agent to gauge a price.

Question: Have alternative sites been considered?

Answer: Other sites are available but the client owns the land behind the White Hart and this is therefore the area he is hoping to get planning permission for.

Question: This proposal is within AONB, to get this you need to be demonstrating that you have done more than you would for a proposal outside of the AONB, and is well thought out. Have you done this?

Answer: We have done a Visual Landscape Assessment and have instructed various surveyors to ensure what we are doing is well thought-out and that everything has been considered.

Comment: We do not accept that you have demonstrated that the building on AONB land is justified. The inclusion of the AONB land as part of the development boundary in the current RDC local plan was challenged by the Parish Council and will be challenged again when the new Local Plan is open for challenge.

Following a show of hands every member of the public present voted that a new village green would be unnecessary, but this does not mean we are happy for more houses to fill up the space. Use this option to take account of ecology issues and better housing design.

Traffic & Parking

The access is at a point close to the zebra crossing and the junction with Church Road. There are 9000 cars a day passing this point. More than 50% are speeding and 1200 per day in excess of 40mph. This is not a safe place for this access. Has this been assessed for safety?

Answer: When Highways look at the initial proposal, i.e. to tidy pavement and enhance the crossing, there must be some sort of minimum distance between a visibility spray and a zebra crossing and if this is the case the developer will be asked to remedy and pay for this.

Comment: Parking is not sufficient for the number of houses. It may agree to a spreadsheet tick box but the reality is that houses in Catsfield have at least 2 cars. A family with 2 working adults will need more than one car. There are issues now with affordable housing tenants not being provided with enough car spaces.

Trees / AONB /Ecology

Question: This will be a huge loss of greenspace with the centre of the village and this will have a significant adverse effect on the biodiversity?

Answer: Surveys and camera footage have been undertaken to assess the wildlife and biodiversity of the land. Wildlife do enter the land and will be able to continue to do so. There are 25 bats seen flying over the site over a period of 4 months, they will continue to be able to do this, none are roosting there. There are no slow worms seen to date. Lizard Landscapes have got an ecology enhancement plan, they intend a 15% enhancement.

Question: Are there any streetlights? There is an AONB Dark Skies Policy and we currently only have 8 streetlights in the whole village.

Answer: No, cursory low level lighting.

Question: Why has buffer zone been removed ? This is not enough of a buffer zone on on the current plans.

Answer: Buffer zone is there, but is incorporated into the gardens of the properties. We can look re-instate this.

Question: The end of gardens, have tree trunks that form part of the trees subject to the TPOs. How can the protection of the TPO trees be guaranteed when they will be within the back gardens of the properties? Children playing on them, patios etc. You are designing something incorporating the roots of these protected trees.

Answer: Lizard Landscapes have undertaken Tree Survey to look for ways to minimise the risk of this. We can incorporate into the plans a requirement for any sheds, etc require planning permission before erection. This will then alert RDC to any potential risk to the trees. We are also providing patio areas so that eradicates the need for a patio to be installed by the owners in the first place.

Question: A tree on an existing property, namely The Cottage is only half marked on the plan, the construction of the accessway to the site will be a stress on the tree has this been considered. Additionally, the access is dangerous and deceiving!

Answer: This was only half marked because it didn't come up on the site survey. The road was placed here so as not to split the village green. We will look into placing a verge alongside the road to give a bit more room. Highways ensure that the developer incorporated any traffic safety measures that are required. We can alert them to the speeding/traffic safety issues ourselves too.

Question: Are you removing the vegetation along the front of the site?

Answer: This has grown because it has never been maintained or cut back. If the new green isn't required then it would be possible to retain it.

Question: Will you be doing an Environmental Impact Assessment?

Answer: Yes this will be done.

Question: Who will have ownership/management of the proposed new Village Green area?

Answer: The Parish Council would have ownership, and the deeds will be in the name of the parish council. The residents will pay a service charge for the maintenance and management of the site.

Comments: Allow a larger buffer zone around the outside of the drawings to ensure protection of the roots of the TPO'd trees.

Local facilities and Infrastructure

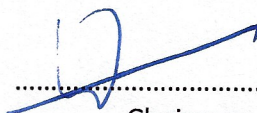
Question: What consideration has been given to the current infrastructure i.e. GP surgery capacity, school etc? The current infrastructure is insufficient, 30 more dwellings will add additional excessive pressure

Answer: This is something RDC consider when deciding a planning application. As is usual, if the school is over subscribed then another school in the catchment area would be the next port of call.

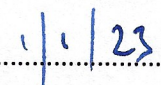
	Question: The sewer that runs along the back of the gardens of the existing properties along the green. What will happen with this? Answer: I was not aware of this? Not sure of the ownership. This will be dealt with by Southern Water and picked up once we have liaised with them. Sewage/ Ponds/ Flooding Question: Flood plans in winter time, flooding on the land. Answer: Drainage engineers Nimbus, are looking into this, it isn't actually a flood plane but the soil is clay and holds onto water. Nimbus Engineering are aware of this and are working with the issues. Nimbus have actually worked around land that is an actual flood plane and made it work. Question: How will the drains empty? Answer: into the sewage systems. The pond and into holding tanks. Question: Sewage plants on the site – can we have more detail on this? Where does the outflow go? Answer: it is a Klargestor – sewage goes in one end, though various chambers and comes out the other end as water - crystal clear. Goes into the surface water storage. Comments: There is smell surrounding this sewage equipment. How will that be managed? Will this equipment be maintenance be financed by the site residents? We hope to receive revised proposals following the feedback this evening.	
	Items for referral to next agenda / reports / future agenda items / correspondence.	

Next Parish Council meeting to be held at
7pm on Wednesday 11th January 2023

Signed:


.....
Chairman

Dated:


.....