

## Chiddingly Parish Council

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### Chairman

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Minutes of the **Planning Meeting** held on **24th July 2019** in **Chiddingly Church, Chiddingly**.

Present: Cllr Tolhurst (Chairman), Cllr Allan, Cllr Goss, Cllr Mikelis, Cllr Richards and Cllr Welsh. Nineteen members of the public and Alison Stevens Locum Clerk) were also present.

### Minutes

1. Apologies and reasons for absence – Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Best, Marchant and Newham and the reasons for their apologies were accepted by those present.
2. Approve the Minutes of both the Planning Committee Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman.
3. Planning Application Planning Application WD/2019/0306/MAO Land Adjoining Nash Street - Construction of business development of up to 9068sqm falling within Class B1 and Class B8 uses. Improvement to existing access to Nash Street, footpath and cycle ways, parking and wider landscape and SUDS Strategy. Additional reports on highways, noise, drainage and associated amendments to indicative details;

Chiddingly Parish Councils appreciated that some the previous concerns have been addressed but still voted by five votes to one to object to this application because it still considers this to be an inappropriate use of the site, especially when there are residential properties in the close vicinity and it does not feel that there is a sufficient buffer between the rear of the site and Marigolds Farm. It also still considers it to be an overdevelopment of the site – going from Greenfield to 16 industrial units. The Parish Council has recently been told that WDC would not allow a small number (8) of affordable housing within the parish because of the Ashdown Forest restrictions so questions how such a huge development even be considered when it would result in hundreds of daily traffic movements.

Chiddingly Parish Council also like to make the following observations:

## **Justification**

Whilst the Parish Council appreciates that the lack of a business plan is not a valid planning criteria, it cannot understand the business justification for having 16 units on this site when there are industrial sites with empty units and enough capacity nearby, namely Swallow Business Park, Phase II Swallow Business Park and Hackhurst Lane West Unit, European House. There are also closed industrial units nearby too, eg: Shep Plastics, that in our opinion could be renovated and put back into use.

This application will industrialise a rural parish and in our opinion it would be better to put it nearer the new housing developments in towns like Hailsham and Uckfield where the work force is.

## **Traffic/Highways**

The Parish Council also still has concerns that;

- the size of the A22 carriage way would be too narrow for large vehicles exiting Nash Street and onto the A22.
- satellite navigation systems would give routes through Nash Street towards Horam. There are serious concerns about the volume and speed of vehicles on Nash Street, especially now the new Wealden Crematorium in Horam is open.

Councillors also agreed that introducing traffic lights will have an adverse effect on the traffic at peak times. The A22 in the late afternoon and early evening regularly fills with slow or stationary traffic, causing many vehicles to leave the A22 and travel through Chiddingly and neighbouring villages. To add a further source of delay on the A22 will cause even longer tailbacks and increase the already intolerable load on the narrow country lanes especially at Chiddingly. If the development has to go ahead, Chiddingly Parish Council suggests the entrance is directly off the A22 instead.

## **Speed of vehicles:**

The speed limit is 60mph however, the traffic report shows 30-40 mph – The Parish Council still queries if this is correct.

## **Volume of vehicles:**

The transport report (Table 2) shows that the proposed development will generate approximately 79 vehicular trips in the am. peak and 54 vehicular trips in the pm. peak. How does this tally with the expected number of parking spaces and employees detailed in the application form? In addition to this, the vehicular trips of lorries visiting the units would need to be considered – as the application says 'storage and distribution use at the site'.

Chiddingly Parish Council queries these statistics and asks when the last time ESCC carried out a traffic survey here was.

### **Size of vehicles:**

Nash Street is not wide enough for two large lorries to pass each other even if it is widened. A large lorry exiting the site towards the A22 would effectively block Nash Street for large vehicles trying to leave the A22 to enter the site. This in turn would cause traffic to back up on to A22 with the associated dangers and it will also cause problems for our residents.

### **Another planning application in the close vicinity:**

A recent planning application requested a new vehicular access from Nash Farm Cottage onto Nash Street and was refused by WDC (WD/2017/1590/F). The decision notice commented on it being in the Low Weald landscape, how it did not fit with the surrounding rural character – where the prime aim is to conserve and enhance the landscape quality. On this decision notice the proposed access point from Nash Street did not make provision for adequate visibility in both directions at the junction of the access with the public highway. It has not been adequately demonstrated that a reduced visibility would not be severely detrimental to highway safety. The new proposed access road leading from Nash Street will lead to an increased urbanisation of the landscape character. The following policies were quoted on that decision notice:

‘The proposal is therefore contrary to Saved Policies GD2, EN8, EN14, EN27, and DC19 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998, SPO1, SPO13, WCS13 and WCS14 of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 7, 17, 109 and 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, and Section 2 (Part 3) of the Wealden Design Guide 2008. 2. The proposal is therefore contrary to Saved Policies GD2, EN8, EN14, EN27, and DC19 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998, SPO1, SPO13, WCS13 and WCS14 of the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 7, 17, 109, 117 and 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, and Section 2 (Part 3) and Section 3, (Parts 6 and 8).of the Wealden Design Guide 2008’.

Chiddingly Parish Councillors also stated that they only had two weeks’ to do their homework and set up a meeting and they said that it was not enough time for them to give a considered response to the changes. They agreed they would like to set up a meeting with the Planning Officer and District Councillor before they submit the above or if not set up a meeting with them before the next Planning Committee South Meeting. If a meeting is not possible by the consultation deadline the Parish Council will submit the comments above. If a meeting is possible in time Councillors will make any alterations by email before the Clerk submits the final draft to Wealden.

Either way, Chiddingly Parish Council **resolved** that Cllr Goss will speak on behalf of the Parish Council at the Planning Committee South Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

- *The next Parish Council meeting will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 7.30 p.m. in Chiddingly Village Hall.*
- *The next Planning Committee meeting will take place on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 7:30pm in a venue to be arranged (subject to applications received).*