

## HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2025 AT 7:30PM AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

**PRESENT:** Cllr D Heaton in the Chair, Cllrs S Webb, T Stanbridge and I Simmons, and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** One member of the public was in attendance; he left the meeting after Item 5.3.

#### **OPEN SESSION:**

A member of the public introduced himself and asked to speak about the planning application at Item 5.3 on the agenda. He advised that it is a retrospective planning application for extension of the garden at Riverside House and the construction of a garden room in that extended garden. The garden room has already been built and is located on a bank behind a hedge, but if the hedge is removed the building would become very prominent. The planning application implies that the hedge will be removed and new trees will be planted where the existing hedge is located.

The building which has been constructed is materially different to that which is proposed in the drawings accompanying the planning application. The walls are one metre higher than the measurements given in the application. A flat roof is being constructed, which is a very substantial load-bearing concrete structure, which looks as though it will be a floor for a second storey. The member of the public does not believe that the building will be used for the purpose declared and suspects that it could end up being a separate home or an Airbnb property. The building as currently designed is such that it can be extended. It is unnecessary and intrusive, and if the hedge is removed, it will be even more intrusive and ruin a beauty spot.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr M Summersgill and Cllr A Trought.

#### **2. FILMING, RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHING**

The member of the public did not wish to film, record or photograph the meeting.

#### **3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS**

##### **3.1 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

##### **3.2 Dispensations**

There were no requests for dispensations.

#### **4. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025**

The minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and were agreed to be an accurate record. Cllr Heaton signed off the official copy of the minutes.

#### **5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 The Grange, East Street - 25/500841/FULL**

Erection of single storey side and rear extensions with part two storey rear extension and 1no. roof light.  
Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

##### **5.2 Burford Lodge, Redwall Lane, Linton - 25/500926/FULL**

Section 73 - Application for removal of condition (iv) (agricultural occupancy) pursuant to MA/77/0956 for - Erection of farm bungalow.  
Parish Council recommendation: Do not wish to object.

##### **5.3 Riverside House, West Street - 25/500708/FULL**

*(Item discussed after Item 4)*

Change of use of section of agricultural field to residential garden and erection of a single storey garden room (Retrospective).

Parish Council recommendation: Wish to see the application refused and request the application is reported to the Planning Committee for the reasons set out below:

- The retrospective planning application seeks change of use from agricultural to residential land to build a garden room, which has already been built on the agricultural land. The Parish Council's primary concern is the change of use of agricultural land; the building of a garden room is not a good enough reason to convert to residential land. The Parish Council has recommended refusal of a number of planning applications in the past, which were seeking to change from agricultural to residential use. Maidstone Borough Council has been consistent in refusing these applications.
- Despite being a retrospective application, the existing site plan does not reflect that the proposed building is already in situ.
- The building which has already been constructed does not match the design submitted; the design has not been followed in reality. The building is greater in height than the design and of a different construction.

The Parish Council has previously submitted a report to Planning Enforcement about the building.

## **6. REPORTED PLANNING DECISIONS**

The following planning decisions have been made by Maidstone Borough Council since the last Full Council meeting:

### **6.1 Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road, Marden - 20/505751/EIFUL**

Erection of a new free range egg farm consisting of 2 no. hen houses with extensive outdoor ranges and fencing, formal vehicle access from Hunton Road and associated parking, landscaping, woodland and tree planting, drainage and other associated works. The original application was for 3 no. hen houses.

Parish Council recommendation: Refuse, due to:

*Visual impact* - The visual impact on the landscape is understated in the application. A 2.5m high wire mesh fence would effectively surround the whole site, as well as around the ranges, roadways and access points. The effect of the fencing on the landscape has not been considered in the application at all. Any woodland planting would take years to mature and have any effect.

*Impact on the River Beult SSSI* - The River Beult is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the northern boundary of the application site. The ADAS report considers the expected nitrogen and phosphorus leaching potential of the land when used for free-range chickens, and therefore the effect on the nitrogen and phosphate levels in the nearby River Beult and resulting impact on water quality. However, ADAS have only undertaken a desktop modelling exercise, extrapolating figures and making assumptions based on other non-poultry livestock, not free-range chickens. There is not enough detail in the application to conclude that the only water entering the run-off will be from the range roofs, rather than foul water. There is no evidence to ensure that chicken waste will not enter the River Beult in certain conditions (for example, if a downpour occurs after a dry period) or how the applicant intends to mitigate it. The ADAS report does not consider that the site regularly floods, which would surely change the assumptions made. The National Planning Policy Framework Para 175b) states that: 'development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest'. The benefits of the development do not outweigh the potential harm to the River Beult SSSI and the information provided by the applicant has not detailed a robust case for prevention of run-off, as a desktop exercise has been undertaken in the place of actual testing. The Environmental Statement (Ch. 2) states that: 'the proposed surface water drainage strategy (clean water from building roofs etc) will be designed to mimic the natural drainage catchment of the Site and will incorporate a range of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) techniques including attenuation basins before ultimately discharging into the River Beult.' The SuDS are to be determined in more detail when the development takes place. The use of SuDS may hold back contaminants but will not remove them as they will find their way into the watercourse. It should be noted that Fridays Ltd decided to withdraw a planning application for a development at Horsmonden after Tunbridge Wells Borough Council asked for further technical information. The applicant must be asked to provide all the information required to avoid the River Beult SSSI being polluted as a result of the development. A peer review case study could be undertaken at the Fridays Ltd chicken farm at Combwell in Goudhurst parish (also situated near a river), which would provide more pertinent, robust data.

*Ecology* - The ecology reports are not fully complete, for example on Great crested newts, which need be handled carefully. Run-off would affect ponds and, again, a peer review case study could be completed on

the ponds at the Combwell site. The breeding birds survey is inadequate as it was carried out over a short period of time and is not complete.

*Over-exploitation of the site* - The applicant is planning to keep the absolute maximum number of chickens allowed under grazing standards for the 98 hectares of the site, which is why the fencing is around the extreme edge of the site. This results in over-exploitation of the site and no opportunity for environmental protection.

*Highways* - The proposed access to the site is via Hunton Road, to be accessed from the A229. Personal Injury Accident (PIA) data has been obtained from KCC for the road near the site, which shows no accidents/fatalities. However, only a small section of road close to the site has been considered. Data for the A229 has not been included, which is an accident hotspot, thereby underestimating potential highways safety issues. According to the Swept Path Analysis in the Transport Statement, HGVs can access/egress the site from/to Hunton. If all HGVs are to access the site from the A229 via Underlyn Lane/Hunton Road it is unclear why the entrance to the site is not being adapted to prevent access/egress through Hunton. Otherwise, what is prevent HGVs from travelling to/from the site through Hunton? Redwall Lane, George Street and East Street are totally unsuitable roads for HGVs. It should be noted that Hunton Road is susceptible to flooding - both on the Marden side at the Mill Farm/Green Lane junction and the Hunton side at Clapper Bridge. It was flooded in December 2019, March 2020 and December 2020, blocking the road and cutting the site off.

*Footpaths* - Public footpaths KM229 and KM144 extend across the site. The applicant wishes to divert the footpaths around two of the ranges, to follow the outside of the range fencing. This will result in a 2.5m high wire mesh fence on either side of the footpaths which completely destroys the point of a walk in the countryside. From discussion with KCC PROW, the Parish Council understands that the applicant has not submitted any applications to divert the footpaths. The applicant cannot undertake any work on a Public Right of Way without an approved order being in place.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Refused.

## **6.2 Greensand Road, Heath Road, Linton - 23/505091/HYBRID**

Hybrid Planning Application consisting of: Full Planning Application for the erection of a 73no. unit Care Home (Class C2), erection of 14no. Specialised Supported Living units for Autistic Adults (Class C3), access, drainage infrastructure and associated and ancillary works. Outline Application (Access sought, all other matters reserved) for erection of a new Hospice building ( Class C2) with associated parking, In-Patient and Out-Patient facilities and erection of up to 70no. affordable bungalows for the elderly (Class C3) and associated parking.

Parish Council recommendation: Comment on concerns about disruption to the traffic flow for the traffic lights at Linton crossroads, due to additional traffic from staff and residents turning on to Heath Road. The pedestrian access is poor as the Heath Road footpaths are narrow and residents on the south side of the road park on the footpath, forcing people to cross over to the footpath on the north side. The application is a hybrid – full planning for one part and outline planning for the other part. The positioning of the development is poor: no community; in the countryside; poor footpaths; and the traffic issue.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

## **6.3 Burford Farm, Redwall Lane, Linton - 25/500134/FULL**

Section 73 - Application for minor material amendment to approved plans condition 2 (to allow amended site layout) and variation of condition 5 (to allow 12 caravans to be stored on site) pursuant to 22/504667/FULL for – Change of use of land for the storage in situ of eight mobile homes for seasonal agricultural workers including landscaping and the engineering operations required to provide a sewage treatment unit.

Parish Council recommendation: Refuse and request that the application is reported to Planning Committee if the Case Officer's recommendation is contrary to this view. The documents supplied with the application do not provide an adequate argument as to why the number of caravans should be increased by 50%, from 8 to 12. The increase in caravans is to house another 16 people, but a considered business case has not been provided to show why the additional workers are required at this site. Due to the lack of detail, the Parish Council cannot see that there is a strong enough economic case for the extra caravans. In addition, it appears that development of the site has started already, but as there are several planning applications relating to this site, it is not clear which permission(s) the development relates to - applications 23/503752/FULL, 22/504667/FULL or this application and whether the pre-conditions of permitted applications have been met.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Application withdrawn.

Members noted that there are 12 caravans on site, rather than the 8 which have been permitted. Members **Agreed** that a report should be submitted to MBC Planning Enforcement. ACTION: CLERK

**6.4 25 Bensted Close - 25/500366/SUB**

Submission of details pursuant to condition 4 (biodiversity enhancements) subject to application 23/505149/FULL.

Parish Council recommendation: Support the proposed biodiversity enhancements.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

**7. VISUAL TREE ASSESSMENT FEE PROPOSAL**

Silva Arboriculture Ltd have provided an updated fee proposal of £685 for a Visual Tree Assessment to cover the Clapper Green land as well as the recreation ground and area around the village hall. Members **Agreed** to accept the quote. ACTION: CLERK

**8. TELEPHONE KIOSK**

The Clerk contacted the Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT) to establish whether it would be possible for the Parish Council to take ownership of the telephone kiosk, as it will not be used to house a defibrillator. CHT can arrange the transfer to the Parish Council once an online form has been completed, subject to an administration charge of £25 plus VAT. Members **Agreed** that the transfer should be made. ACTION: CLERK

**9. LITTER PICKING EQUIPMENT**

The Hunton Litter Picking Group has requested a grant of £78.99 to fund the purchase of litter pickers and rubbish sacks. Since the last grant was provided, 416 bags of rubbish have been collected. Members **Agreed** to provide the grant and expressed their thanks to the group for all their hard work in keeping Hunton free of litter. ACTION: CLERK

**10. PAYMENTS**

Members **Approved** the following payments. Cllrs Stanbridge and Heaton will authorise the payments set up in Unity Trust Bank using online banking:

Hunton Parish Hall Committee – Grant for external work (new guttering)	£1,396.00
KALC – Annual membership subscription	£396.82
Sharon Goodwin – Reimbursement for bicycle locks for notice boards	£40.00
VCS Websites Ltd – Web and email hosting / New .gov.uk domain and email set up	£257.50

**There being no further planning matters to be discussed, the meeting closed at 8:23pm.**