

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 12TH DECEMBER 2011
AT HUNTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr G Thomas in the Chair, Cllrs D Heaton, L Leonard, T Stanbridge and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: One parishioner was in attendance for the whole meeting. Flo Churchill of Maidstone Borough Council was in attendance until Item 5.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs R Sawtell, R Porter and M Walter.

2. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

Cllr Stanbridge declared an interest in application MA/11/1877 (Item 5.2), due to being a resident on the site.

3. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON 3RD OCTOBER 2011

The Minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and were **Agreed** to be an accurate record. The Chairman of the meeting signed off the official copy.

4. FLO CHURCHILL, INTERIM HEAD OF SPATIAL PLANNING, MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Flo Churchill was invited to the meeting to provide some guidance on Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and Neighbourhood Plans. The Chairman welcomed Ms Churchill to the meeting, who then provided the following information:

Legal framework for neighbourhood planning - the Localism Act is on the statute books, but there is no commencement date, although April 2012 is likely. Ms Churchill provided councillors with a plain English guide to the Localism Act. The consultation on the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations is open until 5th January 2012. Ms Churchill recommended that the Parish Council also responds to the Community Infrastructure Levy consultation, which has a deadline of 30th December 2011. The Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Informal Regulation 25 consultation ended on 14th October 2011. The Formal Regulation 27 consultation will be in February/March 2012. Ms Churchill said that training on the Localism Act would be provided to MBC councillors and parish councillors early in 2012.

Localism Act – this provides new responsibilities and powers for parish councils. Under the ‘community right to challenge’ parishes can consider whether they wish to take over the running of a local authority service and if the local authority accepts the challenge a procurement exercise must be undertaken for the service. ‘Community right to buy’ will mean that parish councils need to identify community assets of importance to them, put the assets on a list held by the local authority and when the asset comes up for sale, the community is given extra time to raise money and bid for the asset on the open market. Not so much is known about ‘community right to build’, but it is similar to granting a Neighbourhood Development Order. The Localism Act provides a reform to the planning system and to decisions about housing through the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – this allows MBC to produce a charging levy on certain types of development. This substitutes the Section 106 agreements, except for site specific elements and affordable housing. A percentage of the levy will be allocated to the community.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) – Ms Churchill stated that NDPs must be in conformity with national guidance. When the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is published around Easter 2012 it will be easier. If the Parish Council wishes to produce a NDP, it must inform MBC that it wishes to produce a NDP and the area it is to cover (it can be larger or smaller than the area of the Parish). There are rules and regulations as to what can be in the NDP, one rule is that it cannot say no to development. The stages to producing a NDP are:

- Community engagement;
- MBC check for legal compliance;
- Examination by an inspector;
- Report produced by the inspector;

- NDP goes to referendum, seeking to adopt the NDP. Everyone in the parish (and outside if it covers a larger area than the parish) can vote, with a simple majority required.
- The NDP then becomes part of the Planning Framework/Core Strategy.

What will the NDP look like?:

- It will not be able to say no to development;
- It can allow higher levels of development;
- It sets the vision for the area;
- Could be a single issue plan, for example, parking or design of development;
- Need to decide whether it should cover a few areas or everything.

MBC has not adopted any Parish Plans, but they can be used as a base for a NDP. MBC must provide advice and support to parishes producing NDPs and parishes are welcome to ask if help is required. NDPs must comply with a number of EU Directives, including human rights and equality. If parishes do not wish to produce a NDP they do not have to, they can have a Neighbourhood Development Order. It is an opportunity for parishes to shape how they look. Ms Churchill provided some assurance that it is unlikely that Hunton, as a rural area and not currently targeted for development, would see an increase in development.

Ms Churchill recommended that Hunton Parish Council makes representations on the Core Strategy consultation, even though it is after the deadline date. All parish councils will be invited to a post consultation conference early in 2012. The other important consultations to respond to are the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and CIL consultations. Ms Churchill recommended that the Parish Council asks her for advice when work starts on the NDP.

The Chairman thanked Ms Churchill for attending the meeting.

5. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The following applications were considered and recommendations made:

5.1 **1, The Watermill, West Street – MA/11/1924**

Erection of a chimney on the rear roof slope.

Council recommendation: Approve, but do not request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee.

5.2 **Amsbury Farm, East Street – MA/11/1877**

Installation of solar panels to existing agricultural building.

Council recommendation: Approve, but do not request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee.

5.3 **The Chances, Lughorse Lane – MA/11/1900**

Variation of condition 4 of planning permission MA/10/1336 which currently reads: 'No more than 2 caravans, as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968 (of which not more than 1 shall be a static caravan) shall be stationed on the site at any time.' To read: 'No more than 3 caravans, as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968 (of which not more than 2 shall be a static caravan) shall be stationed on the site at any time.'

Council recommendation: Refuse, and request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee. The following comments were provided to MBC Planning: "Application MA/10/1336 was for the variation of enforcement appeal ENF/8968 to allow the use of the site for the siting of a mobile home and a touring caravan on a permanent basis. On consultation, Hunton Parish Council recommended that the application be refused. The decision to approve the application by Maidstone Borough Council, albeit for a limited period of four years rather than on a permanent basis, gave considerable weight to the personal circumstances and needs of the applicants. As the approval of that application met those needs, Hunton Parish Council can see no reason why an extra caravan should be allowed on the site."

6. **REPORTED DECISIONS**

The following decisions received from MBC were **Noted**:

6.1 **Hunton Village Hall, West Street – MA/11/1708**

Installation of solar PV panels to southern roof slope.

Council recommendation: Approve, but do not request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee.

MBC: Granted Planning Permission.

- 6.2 Forsters Cottage, Water Lane - MA/11/1667**
Listed building consent for replacement of existing roof light with dormer window (retrospective).
Council recommendation: Approve, but do not request the application is reported to MBC Planning Committee.
MBC: Granted Planning Permission.

7. APPEALS

To following appeal was **Noted**:

- 7.1 The Beast House, West Street – MA/11/1110**
Change of use and conversion of former agricultural building to a live-work unit.
The Informal Hearing procedure is being used by MBC in this appeal. The start date for the appeal is 24th November 2011. Any written representations must be received by the Planning Inspectorate within six weeks of the start date.

There being no further planning matters to be discussed the meeting closed at 8:25pm.