

HORSHAM FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF MEETING 19th OCTOBER 2020 7:30PM
(VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING HOSTED BY CLERK)

Present: Messrs. A. Beale, N. Friswell, M. Grubb, J. Milne, J. Olson, G. Sitton,
G. Stanley and B. Travers
Mrs. D. Sumpter (Chairman)

District Councillors: Mr. P. Burgess, Mrs. R. Fletcher and Dr. D. Skipp
(Mr. Burgess left the meeting at 8.30 p.m.)

County Councillors: Mrs. M. Millson and Dr. N. Dennis (joined at 8.30 p.m.)

Public: 2 (Horsham Denne NC Chairman Mrs. Mitchell joined the Meeting for
the Planning Presentation only, Horsham Trafalgar NC Chairman, Mr.
M. Boffey stayed for the duration)

Apologies CC Mr. A. Baldwin

Planning Matters

Mrs. Sumpter introduced HDC Planning's Emma Parkes and Guy Everest to this virtual meeting explaining that there had been, and are likely to be more, significant changes to the planning system.

Emma Parkes explained that HDC is responding to two Government Consultation Papers, the first of which (Paper 1) has now passed the date for comments.

Consultation Paper 1 looks to change the way the target is set for housebuilding in Horsham (what's known as the 'standard methodology'). This uses a nationally set mathematical formula or 'algorithm'. In the case of Horsham District this formula results in a new target of 1,715 new homes every year. This is more than double HDC's current target of 800 homes and is generally believed to be impossible to meet.

Emma explained that HDC has strongly challenged this new target. It's very high even in comparison to similar districts in West Sussex and the South East which have similar problems of affordability.

Neighbourhood Councillors reiterated the need to challenge the figures. The matter of developers "holding on" to building land was also raised. The explanation is that, whilst developers hold a considerable acreage of land for development, they will not build unless it is economically valuable and the potential numbers of housing on these sites cannot be included in the housing numbers (i.e. cannot be deducted from the new standard of 1,700 homes per year).

Consultation Paper 2 "Planning for the Future" (6th August) is a government White Paper, which means it contains initial proposals for a change in law. The Paper looks to fundamentally change the planning system in what would be the biggest reform since the system was first created, back in the 1940s.

Emma explained that the key proposal is to categorise all Horsham District land into one of three zones:

- 'Protected' – e.g. green belt, areas with national designation such as AONB, flood risk areas, conservation zones

- ‘Renewal’ – mainly land in existing build up areas or industrial zones, including brownfield sites such as Novartis
- ‘Growth’ – all other areas including agricultural land

This zoning process is envisaged to take a year or two. The White Paper places great emphasis on improving design standards. Digital access and clarity will be improved, while traditional paper-based consultation will be downgraded. Once the zoning process is complete then all land within the Growth and to a lesser extent Renewal area will be deemed to have been granted planning permission in principle for development. From this point local authorities and residents will retain control over design standards, but not the principle of whether building should take place.

In a mostly agricultural area such as Horsham, the largest category by far would be Growth. Potentially, between 80-90% of all the land in the district would therefore be categorised in the Growth zone.

Reference was made to the 5-year housing land supply, the importance of putting pressure on Central Government and seeking clarification as to what is a protected area. Councillors are concerned that it could lead to extensive building in the countryside and the uncontrolled spread of settlements outside present boundaries.

Permitted Development (presented by HDC Guy Everest)

Under Permitted Development (PD) legislation, certain types of development are granted planning permission automatically without the need to submit a planning application (e.g. an office can be converted into flats, or a barn into a house). Recent changes have considerably extended PD rights. For commercial buildings, it is now much easier to change use between retail, hospitality, and housing without the need for planning consent. For both commercial and residential, owners have gained automatic rights for building extra storeys and other features, within certain conditions. Building regulations regarding safety remain unchanged. This gives a degree of control, but the development principle itself cannot be challenged. In the case of new buildings and permitted extensions on existing buildings, examples that can be looked at under “Prior Approval” are the effect on neighbouring properties, the quality of work including lighting within the building, and Highways matters (parking, traffic etc). There will be no change to the right of appeal process.

The change in law is very recent so HDC will be keenly assessing the first cases and appeals under the new PD regulations, to see how the law is interpreted. At this point it’s not clear how much control HDC will retain over development under this legislation.

Guy’s Powerpoint presentation illustrated the case of a two storey addition to a current building under PD rights. One plan (Sussex House) is already in the system. At this time, the office block is being converted into apartments. Using the broader PD rights the Developer’s latest plan adds two storeys to the building. HDC is looking at the effect on the neighbouring Capital Theatre complex as this apartment block will be significantly higher. There are issues and anomalies, e.g. in the case of Sussex House, the current windows on the existing floors must be retained unless they apply for standard planning approval, yet the new two storeys will be covered under PD rights so they could have a different look. Half the building is under old regulations, half under the new.

The second Powerpoint screen relates to changes in the **use classing of buildings**. Class A1/2/3 (shops, financial and professional services and restaurants and cafes) are effectively replaced with the new Class E (a,b,c). A4 and A5 (drinking establishments and hot food takeaways) are defined as “Sui Generis” (“of its/his/her/their own kind, in a class by itself”)

Class E was introduced from 1st September 2020 revoking Class A1/2/3, B1, D1(a-b) and “indoor sport” from D2(e).

These changes of use could have a major impact on the appearance of High Streets in the future. HDC Emma Parkes reiterated the importance of maintaining the vitality of our town.

The Powerpoint presentations will be circulated to Neighbourhood Councillors in due course.

Resolved Mr. Friswell will prepare a draft response to the White Paper, Planning for the Future before the closing date 30th October 2020.

HDC Emma Parkes and Guy Everest were thanked for their valued presentations and left the meeting.

01.10.20 Minutes of Meeting held on 21st September 2020

The Minutes were proposed by Mr. Friswell and seconded by Mr. Stanley. Item 08.06.20 was amended to show that the speed limit was exceeded in Kings Road and during the time when it was 20 mph (school opening and closing time). Mr. Olson is interested in setting up a working group relating to a potential low traffic area around Depot Road.

02.10.20 Matters Arising

02.08.20 LCWIP

The latest edition has not yet been received. This will be chased.

COVID-19 Pop Up Cycle Lane – there has been a high level of reaction on local Facebook pages and in newspaper articles, including motorists who complain about traffic hold-ups and the fact that the cycle lane is very underused.

FNC will respond by saying that the Pop-Up Cycle Lane has introduced the concept of cycling lanes to Horsham Town. It acknowledges that, at this time, it is underused and is antagonising some motorists. It is also important that a shop survey is undertaken to assess whether the problems raised has had a detrimental effect on footfall. If this cycle lane is to be a long-term plan, it is suggested the width is halved by re-configuring the road. FNC does not want to discourage cycling but would prefer that if awarded Tranche 2 money, this is solely invested in one cycle route that, in its opinion, would be well used and valued. In this Council’s opinion this is the route outlined in LCWIP response using Guildford Road.

Resolved to respond to WSCC online survey and also write directly to HDC Nigel Weston

04.03.20 The Local Plan

It is agreed that a special meeting will be arranged for Wednesday 28th October, 7.30 p.m. to discuss the latest plans for Rookwood and response to Government White Paper on Planning Matters.

Resolved a Zoom Meeting invitation will be sent to Neighbourhood Councillors. HDC will be approached regarding receiving the latest slides relating to Rookwood.

07.07.20 Bennetts Field

Mrs. Sumpter will speak to HDC regarding using Section 106 funds for additional security measures.

06.08.20 Friends of Chesworth Farm

HDC John McArthur has not responded to the request for an additional dog waste bin in vicinity of Arun Way.

Resolved DC Dr. Skipp will ask HDC Mr. McArthur to include this area when carrying out a planned site visit to this neighbourhood.

08.08.20 Pedlars Way Fencing

Southwater Parish Council has been made aware of this fencing.

04.09.20 District Councillor's Report

DC Dr. Skipp confirmed that Planning Application for 35 Brambling Road has been withdrawn.

07.09.20 Reports from Neighbourhood Councillors

NC Mr. Olson commented that followers of FNC Facebook page are now actively engaging and this was especially the case following the post about Speedwatch. Residents are keen for this initiative to be extended to their roads. Mr. Olson was again thanked for his work on increasing this Council's social media presence.

03.10.20 Public Forum

Mr. Boffey, Chairman Trafalgar NC, was welcomed to this meeting. The HDC Consultation Document, Community Asset Study that refers to The Drill Hall, will be forwarded to him.

04.10.20 District and County Councillors' Reports

Owing to time restriction, these are deferred until November Meeting.

05.10.20 Planning

Planning Applications - October 2020

20/1744	187 St Leonards Road	Erection, first floor rear extension with a pitched roof.	No objection, except that new window, if agreed, should be opaque.
20/1731	8 South Grove	Variation, previously approved application DC/20/0382 (Demolition, conservatory. Erect single storey rear extn, single storey front extension)	n/o
20/0742	Unit 1 Mulberry Estate Foundry Lane	Part change of use of existing brewery to create ancillary brewery shop & tap room / tasting area	n/o
20/1848	33 Highlands Road	Erect single storey rear extn with balcony. Loft convn to living space, install 3 rooflights	n/o
20/1952	54 Smithbarn	Erect single storey rear extn with lantern light in flat roof. Erect double storey side extn. Install a bay window	n/o
20/1884	128 Brighton Road	Erection of a single storey rear extension	n/o

20/1504	Shish Restaurant 8 Queen Street	Retrospective application - erection of 3 sided timber construction extension for use of storage. Installation of compressor air unit to roof.	n/o
20/1818	24 Dickins Way	Raised decking & installation of new exit door to rear, construction of steps from new door to deck and additional separate steps from deck to existing patio.	n/o

06.10.20 Treasurer's Report

Current Account £6,648.71, Reserve Account £1,296.14. The Clerk's honorarium and expenses have been paid for October. Mr. Travers confirmed that at last FNC has online banking.

With regard to 2021/2022 Special Charge, Mr. Travers said that our outgoings this year have been less than anticipated due to Covid-19 restrictions. Mrs. Sumpter commented that NC's will ask about 2020 Special Charge commitments, e.g. Bandstand, and whether this money is to be brought forward.

Newsletter – Councillors are asked to submit ideas for a January Newsletter.

The Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.