

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the Plans Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Uckfield on Monday 5th December 2022 at 7.00pm

Cllr. K. Bedwell (Chair)
Cllr. B. Cox

Cllr. C. Macve (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. J. Love

Cllr. D. Bennett
Cllr. J. Beesley

IN ATTENDANCE:

5 members of the public

Linda Lewis – Administrative Assistant

Minutes taken by Linda Lewis

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to any item on the agenda.

Cllr. C. Macve declared a prejudicial interest in application WD/2022/2085/F Luxford Day Centre, Library Way, TN22 1AR as he was the applicant for the Day Centre.

Cllr. J. Love declared a personal interest in application WD/2022/2382/F 13 Michelham Road, Uckfield, TN22 1ND as she knew the owners.

2.0 STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

Two residents wished to speak in objection to planning application WD/2022/0648/MAO under item 5.0 Planning Applications.

P73.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow members of the public to speak.

Resident 1 – referred to two documents which she asked to be submitted as material planning considerations in objection to Mockbeggars Farm. These documents had been forwarded by the clerk to committee members as requested by the resident earlier in the day.

These documents, as listed below, were from other planning applications but were very relevant, as the terms and policies within these documents also applied to Mockbeggars Farm:

- Appeal decision for Mill House Farm, Maresfield (Appeal Ref:APP/C1435/W/22/3292552) and;
- Transport Report for WD/2022/2216/MAO Horstedpond Farm, Lewes Road, Little Horsted, TN22 5TR.

Resident 1 acknowledged that although the application referred to traffic, one of the appeals spoke of character and appearance. She stated that there was a need for a proper landscape assessment for North Uckfield, which was under-recorded, and stated that there were more heritage assets in this area than in the 'current' built conservation area. Mockbeggars Farm sat in a tiny hamlet of Budletts Common in a medieval well-preserved landscape and that from Ringles Cross, there was the old **turnpike** and the buildings there, the public house, and down the hill there was Spring Cottage, which was at the lowest level in the landscape.

She stated her knowledge of the drainage in this area was very good, and that the applicant had 'omitted' what happens to the water, and what happens with the heritage, and that this was where the planning appeal for Mill House Farm came into force. She stated that the ancient woodland of Paygate Wood should have a minimum buffer zone of 15m which London Road sat within. By removing the hedgerow to create access for traffic they would be removing priority habitat that supported the ancient woodland.

She called members to consider the local nature recovery strategy. The whole north corridor, which linked Buxted Park; a Grade 2 asset, and SSSI site, through Budletts, and through to Lake Wood, incorporated species that moved through this corridor that should be recorded and the heritage recorded properly. The emissions within Mockbeggars application would place the heritage of this site at risk. Assets within the site were requested to be added to the asset register.

The developer had neglected to report that the removal of the hedgerow would fragment the enhancement zone for biodiversity mapped on the Defra Magic Maps site, and had neglected to provide information regarding the impact to traffic on London Road, which was one of the main routes into and out of the town. They planned to pump sewage at a place of ground water, and she could not believe that the sewage from 60 houses could be contained, and said that this would interact with traffic on the London Road.

She stated that the application failed Wealden District Council policy in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, NPPF2.8c ecology, and the traffic 'would' affect the ecology, NPPF 15 and 16 and NPPF concerning and protecting heritage and concerning and protecting biodiversity.

Resident 1 had concerns for the cumulative impact of the traffic she called for a 'cumulative assessment of traffic'. She referred to the Highways report for Horstedpond Farm, which although was in a different part of Uckfield, related to the Mockbeggars Farm application.

She called for Wealden District Council to listen to Uckfield Town Councillors and called for a coherent strategic master plan; asking developers to stop picking the town apart. She stated that as a resident of 29 years at Budletts, she knew the area very well.

Resident 2 – stated that she was the current and recent resident of Mockbeggars Farm, which she was running to be self sufficient and sustainable for herself and her animals.

She was concerned for the water, water management, flooding and the topography of the land. Originally the Victorian property was part of the Grade 2 Buxted Estate. She explained that her property had an open well within the cellar of the farm. She called for the need for a visit to her farm to see the current water levels which were one metre up the walls from the cellar floor and saw water seeping through the walls. She spoke of the original assessment for the site which claimed the ground water was at 10 metres. This was not true for her property and she stressed that measurements needed to be taken from the lower end of the site as was concerned that the assessment had only been carried out at the top end of the site. Run-off of water severely impacted her property and also Spring Cottage. She was concerned that the removal of the grassland which currently helped to disperse the water would lead to flash flooding and that water sources for her vegetables and for her animals would be contaminated by hydro-carbons from vehicles and other pollutants.

P74.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** to re-instate Standing Orders.

3.0 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr. S. Mayhew.

4.0 MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2022

P75.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Plans Committee of the 14th November 2022, be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Action List

Members noted the Action List.

5.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

WD/2022/2916/F 77 TOWER RIDE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1NT

Proposed loft conversion and internal alterations.

P76.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application as there were other similar conversions in the vicinity and therefore a precedent existed. Members noted however that this dormer would be larger than the adjacent and commented that they would have liked, for aesthetic reasons, for it to be a similar size to keep to the symmetry of the building.

WD/2022/2900/LB 11 CHURCH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1BJ

Rebuild boundary wall and side wall of house on a like for like basis as far as reasonably possible.

P77.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application which was needed only as the property was a Listed Building. The boundary wall was in a dangerous state and the works were necessary. It was noted that the work would be kept like for like and would not alter the visual impact.

Members wished to point out that the 'block plan map' supplied showed below the wording 'Mermaid House', the words 'The Tab', should say 'The Tap'.

WD/2022/2948/LB RED TILES AND PEERLAND HOUSE, 125 HIGH STREET, UCKFIELD, TN22 1EH

Replace railings and handrail to front of house.

P78.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application as it was currently a potential safety risk and looked in a dishevelled state. Members noted that the application had to be made as the building was listed.

WD/2022/2085/F LUXFORD DAY CENTRE, LIBRARY WAY, TN22 1AR

Single storey addition.

Members acknowledged that their colleague Cllr. Macve was the applicant, however, as they had no personal or prejudicial interest themselves in Luxford Day Centre, they would discuss the application.

Cllr. Macve who reiterated his prejudicial interest remained at the meeting but took no part in the discussion or the vote.

P79.12.22 It was subsequently **RESOLVED** to support the application which would increase the capacity of the building and allow for an increase in users of this community asset. A member commented that the car park surface would need to be remarked for disabled/parent parking due to safety concerns.

WD/2022/2382/F 13 MICHELHAM ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 1ND

First floor rear addition and porch on front elevation.

Cllr. J. Love reiterated her personal interest in the application and did not take part in the discussion of the application or the vote.

P80.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application as there would be no adverse effect on the adjoining owners and similar extensions had been built on Manor Park Estate.

**WD/2022/0648/MAO LAND AT MOCKBEGGARS FARM, LONDON ROAD,
UCKFIELD TN22 2EA**
Re-Consultation

Outline application for the development of 60 no. dwellings, access and internal roads, parking, ancillary structures, landscaping and open space, drainage and other associated works. All matters reserved apart from access.
Additional transport information.

Members discussed the application at length, with the following points noted within their deliberations. They,

- Felt development would be detrimental to the character and environment of north of the town and lied in the buffer zone, only one mile from an area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This area needed to form a Conservation area;
- Cited strong objections on ecological grounds;
- Raised concern with the removal of parking from outside the cottages at Ringles Cross and within the lay-by at Budletts common opposite Chichester Caravans as it would cause numerous issues-
 - Lay-by: Parking from the businesses may extend onto the carriage way and or pavements in other areas. It may result in the bus stop area being misused thus restricting access for buses;
 - the removal of parking outside the cottages at Ringles Cross junction would deprive residents from parking outside their own properties, where many do not have property frontages;
 - Parking could not be forced into the pub car park – the landlord had already advised of restrictions to protect their business;
 - Vehicles could not park in Snatts Road as the London Road/Snatts Road junction was already dangerous. With Parking right up to the junction, this would cause access issues for the private road just beyond the junction on Snatts Road;
- Raised concerns with the proposed addition of more bus stops questioning how the proposed bus stop could affect the agreed visibility splays for the recently approved access point and dropped kerb for Spring Cottage. It was thought doubtful that any bus company would find more stops viable so close together and bearing in mind that the bus service; 729/29 services were lauded as a limited stop service. It was also questioned where the money would come from for the bus service, with subsidies for bus services being withdrawn;
- Raised concerns that the reduction to 40 MPH, 150metres beyond the proposed entrance was not far enough and felt that it should be increased up to the roundabout;
- Raised concerns for the safety of road users and pedestrians in London Road where dangerous overtaking at high speed and speeding already occurred. Members would call for the introduction of no overtaking in this major road from the Ringles Cross pub to Budletts roundabout;
- Would like to see correspondence between Highways and DHA regarding this matter regarding safety and legality;
- Raised concerns that the visibility splays relied on the boundary lines of the private property at Ringles Cross. The visibility splays for the new access point relied on what was assumed to be the boundary lines of the properties further south of the access point being kept clear. This might need to be considered when confirming calculations;
- Requested the need for a response from Highways regarding the geological aspect and surface water run off of the site;

- Raised concerns that the development would merge the settlements of Maresfield with Uckfield and that this development being located in Buxted Parish would see homeowners depend on Uckfield's infrastructure, which was already close to breaking point in terms of capacity;
- Raised concerns that the development would create isolated communities due to the distance of the development from the main town, especially for those that did not drive;
- noted that ES Highways were not fully supportive of the development traffic proposals;
- Felt the parked cars at Ringles Cross provided a natural form of traffic calming;
- Felt this additional report and application sought to take too much away from existing local residents and would bring extra stress to Buxted and their railway station parking and health service(s);
- Felt that developments should enhance and enhance the existing communities, not take them away as would be seen with this proposal;
- Would request that Wealden District Council be instructed to carry out a TRO/consultation before this application were presented to Wealden District Council's Planning Committee North and that notice be given to all residents and business users of London Road, half way along Coopers Green Road, Snatts Road up to Clairemont Rise. Members rejected the idea that the residents' objections would be minimal;
- Raised concerns again for pedestrian safety as even with the hedge cut back the footpath would not be wide enough for a mobility scooter. It was believed that the hedge was on private land and the land owner might not wish to cut the hedge back as it also offered privacy;
- Would consider the proposal against NPPF section 9/104c.
In section 1.3 of their report, it stated that the site was visited by the audit team on the 13th October between 10.45 and 11.25am. This was only 40 mins. According to Sustrans drawing number 20204 U SD MAP 00 01 dated 18/4/2018 London Road is on the 5/10 thousand car movements per day. Therefore 40 mins to access this point would have to be considered as pointless. It took 6m to walk from Chichester Caravans to the Ringles Cross pub and would also question at what points they visited to write this report and have time to gain sufficient data;
Item 3.1 raised concern regarding the site being two metres higher than London Road and they would like to see the Highways response regarding their proposals, along with how this would affect the geological aspects of this site and surface water run off.

P81.12.22 It was **RESOLVED to STRONGLY OBJECT** to the application on the following grounds, as given in our Minutes of the 30th May 2022, RESOLUTION 06.05.22 as this development would:

- fall outside of the Uckfield development boundary;
- double the number of properties in this northern triangle between the hamlets and villages of Maresfield, Five Ash Down, Buxted and Uckfield;
- fail to satisfy Wealden District Council's Environment Policy EN17 Chapter 4 and risk the protection of countryside gaps between existing settlements; creating a continuation of urban creep between Uckfield into Five Ash Down;
- fail to provide safe vehicular access onto London Road - a road with an accident record, fast-moving traffic at the national speed limit and concerns raised by ES Highways in response to application WD/2021/2976/F in respect of visibility;
- fail to provide safe pedestrian access to nearby amenities and schools;
- fail to satisfy the housing need requirements identified for this area, and requirement by Wealden DC to provide 1 bed housing units;

- be contrary to the NPPF Section 2's ecological, social and environmental objectives;
- Severely impact an important green corridor linking Buxted Park SSSI, Budletts Common, Paygate Wood, Downlands, Lake Wood, Butchers Wood and West Park Local Nature Reserve – therefore contrary to NPPF 180;
- Severely impact the local ecology which incorporated habitats of county importance, critical natural capital, and BAP Priority, therefore conflicting with NPPF 15, Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Wealden DC's Adopted Local Plan 1998 EN15 and 16. Further detailed assessments and mapping would be required to understand the potential harm to the various species of wildlife including bat species, rare acid grassland, Sussex rare wet grassland, and ancient wet woodland in this area;
- Risk the biodiversity of the Ashdown Forest, due to its close proximity and potential increased use by householders and High Weald Characteristics (NCA 122), as referenced in Wealden DC's Adopted Local Plan 1998 EN6 and EN15 and Core Strategy 2013 Policy WCS12 Biodiversity;
- Pose a risk to the local watercourses, and in particular the Water Framework Directive attached to Shortbridge Stream as considered in Wealden DC's Adopted Local Plan 1998 EN1;
- Pose a risk to surface water drainage and flood risk to nearby properties and London Road;

Additionally to those reasons given for objection above, members would add that: -

- The additional transport information provided for discussion raised more problems than it would solve for the application;
- Wealden DC be requested to take into account as a material planning consideration in objection to this application the two documents below, particularly noting in regard to the Appeal decision for Mill House Farm point no. 27, point no. 52 and point no. 68 which applied to this application;
 - (1) Appeal decision for Mill House Farm, Maresfield (Appeal Ref:APP/C1435/W/22/3292552) and;
 - (2) Transport Report for WD/2022/2216/MAO HORSTEDPOND FARM, LEWES ROAD, LITTLE HORSTED, TN22 5TR.

Appeal Decision for Mill House Farm Maresfield
Point no.27.

Overall, there are a combination of factors that lead me to find that the proposal would fail to relate well to its surroundings and would have a harmful impact upon the rural character and appearance of the area. It follows that it would not enhance its surroundings and would fall short of advice in the NDG. Furthermore, it would fail to be sympathetic to local character and history, Appeal Decision APP/C1435/W/22/3292552 <https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate> 6 including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting contrary to paragraph 130c) of the Framework.

Point no.52.

Recent caselaw requires the decision maker, when considering the effect that a proposal may have on European Sites, to consider mitigation within an Appropriate Assessment. In the absence of mitigation measures and using a precautionary approach, given the proximity of the appeal site to the European habitat site, it is reasonable to suppose that residents of the development would potentially visit it for recreational purposes. Intensification of such activities would be likely to cause disturbance to the bird populations and their habitats. I am required under the Regulations to consider the effect of the proposal both individually and in combination with other projects. As such, there is a risk of a significant effect on the internationally important interest features of the SPA.

Point no. 68

However, I am not persuaded that the proposal would secure good accessibility to public transport links for pedestrians, nor address inadequacies in footway and crossing provision at and near the intended access onto London Road. This would conflict with paragraph 110 of the Framework, and the consequent conflict with the development plan policy in this regard attracts full weight.

One member of the public left the meeting.

WD/2022/2995/F 73 ROCKS PARK ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 2AU

Single storey front extension and alterations to existing front extension.

P82.12.22 It was **RESOLVED** to support the application as did not affect the street view, the plot was of adequate size, and a precedent existed for similar extensions.

6.0 DECISION NOTICES

Approved:

WD/2022/1913/F

EXTENSION OF EXISTING WAREHOUSE

WESTMINSTER HOUSE, BOLTON CLOSE, BELLBROOK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1PH

WD/2022/2003/FR

RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION TO CONVERT TWO EXISTING PARKING SPACES TO RAPID ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING BAYS, ALONG WITH ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT.

BELL WALK HOUSE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5DQ

WD/2022/0606/F

FIRST FLOOR SIDE ADDITION AND SINGLE STOREY REAR ADDITION TO INCLUDE RELOCATION OF RETAINING WALL 13 ROCKS PARK ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 2AT

Response to Town Council:

WD/2022/1913/F EXTENSION OF EXISTING WAREHOUSE

WESTMINSTER HOUSE, BOLTON CLOSE, BELLBROOK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, UCKFIELD, TN22 1PH

After considering all the representations received, the Council has decided to APPROVE the above application on 21 November 2022. The Town Council's comments have been noted. Whilst it is unfortunate that the ESCC Highway Authority's response had not yet been received at the time of the Town Council's meeting, they now have no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to car parking and cycle parking requirements.

WD/2022/2003/FR RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION TO CONVERT TWO EXISTING PARKING SPACES TO RAPID ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING BAYS, ALONG WITH ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT.

BELL WALK HOUSE, UCKFIELD, TN22 5DQ

The first consultation response (received 26.09.2022) noted that the flood risk information was incorrect and this was subsequently amended. A second response (received 21.11.2022) pointed out that the charging units were already in place (or under construction) and the necessary amendments were made to the application to reflect this.

Permits The Modification

WD/2022/1077/PO MODIFICATION OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENT DATED 19 SEPTEMBER 2008 ATTACHED TO PLANNING PERMISSION WD/2006/2171/MAO (RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 146 DWELLINGS, INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, OPEN SPACE INCLUDING CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS AND AN EQUIPPED PLAY AREA, STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS, WITH ACCESS FROM MALLARD DRIVE) TO ENABLE CHANGES TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISIONS.
LAND NORTH OF MALLARD DRIVE, UCKFIELD TN22 5JQ

Members noted the decision notices, however discussed the decision for WD/2022/1077/PO for Land North of Mallard Drive, which was to enable changes to affordable housing provisions.

Members agreed that the clerk should write of behalf the Committee to Wealden District Council and to the local Member of Parliament; Nus Ghani, regarding their strong objection to the reduction in affordable housing numbers of an already agreed quota, without re-consultation. It was unclear whether this had been agreed by Wealden members or by the delegated officer and was contrary to Wealden District Council policy to provide affordable housing. This must be a failure of outsourcing Financial Viability Assessments for new developments.

7.0 TO ADVISE ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE THE USUAL CYCLE OF MEETINGS –

WD/2022/2636/F UCKFIELD RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB, NEVILL ROAD, UCKFIELD, TN22 1LX

Extension of existing clubhouse and associated extension to and re-arrangement of car park.

Uckfield Town Council support the application as there would be no detrimental impact and we would be in favour of the works to help the needs of the club.

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 7.56pm.