

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**



PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Planning meeting held on Friday 23rd April 2021 at 10.00am by remote meeting

Present: Cllrs Mrs W Alexander, Mrs C Berry, Mrs M Piper, M Falkner, Mrs L Sargent

Not present: -

4 members of public present NB Cllr D Watts, Cllr A Snell, Cllr D Dunbar, Cllr D Sanders, Cllr S Shing, Cllr M Cunningham were also present

Minute No.	Subject/Resolution
12835	Suspend standing orders <i>Standing orders were suspended</i>
12836	Opportunity for public comment No comments were received prior to the meeting
12837	Apologies for absence None
12838	Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda None - Cllr S Shing was present as a non voting member (commenting only) and declared an interest as being a county councillor.
12839	Minutes of planning Committee meeting held on 3rd March 2021 The chair commented on the following application discussed at this meeting. WD/2021/0234/F – 1-21 WATER HOUSE, PORTERS WAY, POLEGATE BN26 6RJ – INCREASED VEHICLE AND CYCLE PARKING AND FURTHER BIN STORAGE PROVISION. NO OBJECTIONS, but a Councillor stated that this should not be taken as endorsing the original application under WD/2021/0229/P19 . The Councillor stated that the Committee still remains opposed to the original application in the following terms: <i>A Councillor commented that that the height of the proposed building would be out of character for the area. It appears that having different sized internal rooms does not make any difference to the height of the building. There could be an issue with the increase in parking demand. The Councillor agreed with Wealden District Council's comment in their formal determination issued on 12th November and noted the conclusion of the daylight/sunlight report. A Councillor stated that there were no five storey buildings in Polegate and to allow this development would set a precedent. A Councillor stated that they saw this as overdevelopment that would affect the nearby houses' amenity. <u>The Committee asked that this application be called in, in order that it be heard at a planning meeting and not delegated.</u></i> The chair commented as follows: I would now like to comment on item 8 in Delegated Applications which have already been submitted. This is Application WD/2021/0234/F which is for increased vehicle and cycle parking and further bin storage provision at Water House, Porters Way. We signed off on this application with no objections other than to state it should not be taken as an endorsement of the original application WD/2021/0229/P19 to provide additional storeys to the building which we strongly opposed when it was submitted. Since then there has been a great deal of concern that if this application were approved it could cut off a public path used by many

	residents in the surrounding roads to access the town centre. In a planning letter from Wealden to the developers dated 5th December 2005 it clearly states a public footpath and cycle route shall be constructed – I quote: 5. <i>The public pedestrian and cycle route through the site, as required under Condition 7 of the outline planning permission, shall be constructed up to the east and west boundaries of the site, with no impediment thereto, and shall incorporate a minimum wide of 2 metres.</i> <i>REASON: To ensure satisfactory public access having regard to Policy TR13 of the Wealden Local Plan.</i> <i>Also, the following statement was made by the Appeal Officer during a developer's appeal on October 23rd 2003 regarding Surplus Polegate Shopping Centre car parking:</i> 38. In addition to these, I shall also attach a condition requiring that arrangements are made to provide a public pedestrian and cycle route across the site between Porters Way and the remaining Polegate Centre car park. This is necessary to ensure that the present permissive route is not lost and that the opportunity to connect it into the proposed extension of the Cuckoo Trail is preserved. The Town Clerk is in urgent talks with Wealden about this issue and any update will be posted on social media as soon as possible. The committee was briefly updated prior to the start of the meeting. <u>It was agreed to submit further comments of the councils' objections to any blocking of the right of way across the land having spoken to the County Council, Wealden District Council and the landowner. (The landowner had stated that it was not the intention to block the right of way as it was also needed for his tenants. It was now likely that the landowner might agree to a dedication to show the right of way on the definitive map.)</u> <u>It was resolved that the minutes of 3rd March 2021 are an accurate representation of the meeting and signed by the chair. VOTE All in favour Cllrs Mrs W Alexander, Mrs C Berry, Mrs M Piper, M Falkner, Mrs L Sargent</u>
12840	Any other plans received prior to the meeting - notified to the public None
12841	Planning Applications WD/2021/0594/MEA – HINDSLAND, EASTBOURNE ROAD, LOWER WILLINGDON BN20 9NU – OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR ACCESS (EXCLUDING INTERNAL ESTATE ROADS BEYOND THE ACCESS TO SERVE THE MEDICAL CENTRE PLOT) FOR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING VACANT DWELLING AND ERECTION OF UP TO 180 NO. DWELLINGS AND MEDICAL CENTRE TOGETHER WITH ALL PARKING, SERVICING AND ON-SITE OPEN SPACE. The chair opened the meeting stating that there have been many objections to this application, as there were against the Mornings Mill development. She stated that it is fair to say most of these objections were based upon issues of over development, loss of green space between Willingdon and Eastbourne, major traffic congestion on the A2270, lack of employment in our part of Wealden, too close to the Southdown National Park, over-flow of education facilities and, importantly, increased pollution levels. No public had sent in comments or asked to speak at the meeting. She invited committee members to speak A councillor commented that she agreed with many objections made by the public summarized as follows:

	TRAFFIC – the roads can’t cope with traffic as it is and its being used more by larger vehicles. POLLUTION – extra traffic movements will adversely affect health and emergency vehicles might struggle to get through. SDNP – the adverse affect on the views from South Downs national Park and dark skies. It would also leave no greenspace between Eastbourne and Polegate, giving an urban sprawl. HABITATS AND WILDLIFE – The councillor had serious concerns over the affect on the flood plains on Pevensey Levels (SSSI). She felt that Natural England should be consulted over potential flooding and affects to Pevensey Levels. GENERAL – a three-storey building on this site would be too high and out of keeping . She felt that if this was approved it could set a precedent for further housing locally. She stated that residents she had spoken to were opposed and she represented the views of those who had contacted her. She did agree that a medical centre was needed but not if it meant having 180 (or more) houses as there was no guarantee that once approved the 180 wouldn’t increase to higher numbers. She stated that once green space had gone it would be lost for good. A Councillor agreed that her residents contacting her had also stated they did not wish to see the building of the 180 houses. She stated that even if the housing numbers stayed the same, those houses could include 540 children and there was no new school on this site and no mention of how these would be accommodated in already oversubscribed schools. A Councillor stated that she agreed that she didn’t wish to see 180 houses and that this could increase once approved. She stated that the green space was alive with wildlife and is tranquil. She stated that petty crime is likely to go up with that number of houses and there were huge numbers of empty properties in Eastbourne and Wealden and these should be brought into use first instead of building more houses. She commented that once the green space had been concreted over you can’t bring it back. The green space and fresh air would be gone. A councillor stated that the Application is for 180 dwellings and a medical centre upon an area of land whose previous owners passed on ownership of their land with an express intention and agreement that the land was to be used for recreational purposes. This was done up until recently whereupon local people were able to utilise the area for recreation and health exercise. The need for this has become very relevant over the past year as physical health and mental wellbeing have become even more important to local people. In past times this land, according to a geological survey consists of buried waterlogged prehistoric land surface associated with organic structures and remains. Within this application the Environmental Statement – non technical summary Concludes in point 13.1.2 that there ‘will be noise and vibration effects and <u>5</u> moderate to <u>major</u> adverse visual effects at 3 viewpoints that lie in close proximity to the site’ The Shadow Habitat Regulation Assessment concluded that during the operation phase there was the potential for the proposed development to result in a <u>significant</u> impact upon the Pevensey Levels through <u>increased</u> water pollution via surface water runoff and foul water discharge. And a significant impact upon quality features of Lewes Downs and Ashdown Forest by increased atmospheric pollution due to increased vehicle emissions. The Assessment concludes on Page 22 in the last paragraph before the recommendations: it is ‘highly unlikely that the proposed development will not result in a significant impact upon the qualifying habitats and species: supporting habitats upon which qualifying species are reliant on delivery of the conservation objectives of the site under consideration’ If one turns this double negative around, it is saying that, in other words the development <u>will</u> have an
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impact and conservation objectives may not be met.

Air Quality will be diminished by added emissions from many extra vehicles.

With regard to Foul Water, the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy describes that there is currently inadequate capacity with the foul sewerage network to accommodate 4.25 l/s for development. Southern Water aim to get it done within 24 months after, and if, planning is granted. It does not guarantee this will be done on time. It is obvious sewerage capacity is an issue.

However, another major issue is that of Transport. Using the population gravity only figures relating to proposed trips to the medical centre alone, as stated in part 1 on page 60 indicate 56% of proposed trips would be from Eastbourne, 21% Brighton, 8% Hailsham, 2% Bexhill, 6% Hastings, 1% Crowborough, 1% Uckfield, 2% Lewes. I noticed that Polegate and Willingdon were not mentioned.

This proposed development traffic was assigned to the local highway network using the Google map journey planner by the authors!

With regard to Point 9.1.7 on page 79, Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne movement and Access Corridor shows a commitment to integrated transport improvements. This doesn't state a reason but it may be reasonable to assume it is because of congestion at peak times over the past years.

The Accident Reports in part 3 of the Transport section describe a Road Safety Audit completed on 23rd Feb 2021 by M and S Traffic: It highlights there are Safety Issues with regard to the speed limit, shared footpaths and cycleways. There is a brow of a hill nearby. Several problems are identified and not all with recommended measures that have been accepted.

Between 2015 to 2020, five year collision data was collected. Side impact collisions with proposed access road traffic at 40 mph would be likely and a 30 mph suggested. I wondered how many motorists would adhere to this which unfortunately is a hard truth about the dangers on our roads today.

Additionally, a proposed signalised crossing may see excessive speed upon approach to signals which could lead to vehicle to pedestrian/cyclist collision or, near end shunt collisions. With the brow of the hill nearby there may be a lack of visibility'

Trip rates of vehicle users to houses and medical centre will add to congestion and an increased risk of danger on the road. One also has to factor in the commuter traffic in and out of Eastbourne. Plus, as stated in part 4 of the transport assessment, the traffic flow associated with Huggett's Lane onto and off of the Eastbourne Road which will increase saturation flows and turning traffic will lead to more congestion.

There are also the traffic lights on Eastbourne Road from Wannock Road and the High Street that cause delays with further significant increase forecast by 2030.

I would like to briefly mention the Noise Assessment of March 2021. Item 4 on page 21 states the Target external noise levels of 50 to 55 decibels (db.) has been recommended by the World Health Organisation in their Guidelines for Community Noise.

The existing average daytime noise levels for (NM1) Hindsland site is 48db (NM2). Adjacent to A2270 62 db. And (NM4) the North East corner 42db. The maximum for the A2270 is 74db.

Page 27 says the noise levels will exceed up to 80 db. during construction. The dominant noise source from traffic is to the south west of the site on the A2270.

Finally I wanted to mention the Statement of Community Involvement.

The developers own statement says Quantitative feedback results with regard to the publics overall view of the proposals were as follows: Positive 29, Negative 82, Neutral 7

With regard to having a Care Home on site, the response was Positive 19 Negative 60 Neutral 12. As you are aware a new care home has been planned for the area already being built by Stone Cross garden centre.

With regard to having a new Medical Centre the responses were: Positive 59 Negative 41

Neutral 0. It is obvious Polegate desperately needs new medical facilities. Due to other developments that have swallowed up the remaining green space in and around Polegate, our local population is rapidly growing. One is told that we only get a new medical centre if we agree to housing and there is no money for an independent build but this may be inaccurate information as there have been other discussions taking place for a new centre independent of any new development. There have been numerous discussions held by various people and either conflicting information or no responses coming forth following these discussions. I do not accept that the only way to achieve new medical facilities is by accepting yet more unwanted development.

My priority is to serve the local community by listening to genuine concerns unlike others who are not local residents. My decision making is not based upon making profit at the expense of the last remaining piece of green land in Polegate and Willingdon. As a Councillor, I wish to work for residents not against the majority wishes.

I will continue to work hard along with my fellow councillors to pursue new medical facilities but not at the cost of losing our last remaining green space for us and future generations. I would like to finish by saying that in my experience it can happen that developers and private land buyers who obtain planning application approval, will often hand over a project onto builders or others having made a sizable profit. The new owners may then make any further changes if they so wish, such changes usually involve adding yet even more houses at a later stage.

The chair person commented “there has been a lot of rumour and misinformation about this development. The sad fact is that unless we approve this development, within 2 or 3 years there will be no medical facilities left in Polegate and 18 thousand plus patients who currently attend at Downlands or Manor Park will be looking for cover elsewhere. Hailsham and Eastbourne surgeries are already oversubscribed so I don’t know what we will do then. I’ve spoken at length to the Practice Manager at Downlands and he is adamant neither Manor Park nor Downslands can continue in their current buildings which are not fit for purpose and have no room for expansion. Their first choice for a new facility is Hindslands and they have been in ongoing talks with Assura to make this happen. They are against the ESCC site – if it ever became available – because of access and land level problems. They have not been in any talks with Mornings Mill. Our surgeries have looked at over 18 sites over the years and nothing has been suitable. Recently they were offered a site on the A27 near Drusillas which is, frankly, ridiculous.

I strongly object to being held to ransom by developers – in this case 180 houses in exchange for a medical centre – but honestly I can’t see any alternative. No-one has come up with any other viable plans for a new centre which is so desperately needed by Willingdon and Polegate. So, for this reason and this reason only, I shall be voting for this application and urged councillors to consider the medical centre before voting against this proposal.”

Other councillors spoke at the meeting – not able to vote as they are not on the committee: A councillor commented that as much as he agreed there should be no more houses, the medical centre was important and that Manor park was all but closed, residents would be forced to go to Eastbourne or Hailsham. He felt that the long term health of the residents should also be considered. (he was unable to vote but stated that he would have voted for the application.)

A councillor stated that he was also unable to vote at this meeting but would be voting at Wealden. He agreed that a medical facility was needed but that the NHS should be providing this and not relying on developers to do this. He stated that residents were entitled to have a surgery without having the housing as in 2-3 years it was unlikely that the two current

	surgeries would remain. A councillor commented that he resented being held to ransom to have a medical centre in exchange for 180 (or more) houses. He stated that in the past the two parish/town councils had attempted to buy the land but had not been able to because of the value placed by the district valuer. He stated that he would however be prepared to have the housing to get the medical centre. A councillor stated the situation was very difficult choice between having the medical centre and accepting 180 houses also in the application. He stated that he had serious reservations about the road capacity and other infrastructure concerns. He agreed that the dr surgeries were now outdated and not fit for purpose but mentioned that he left at the time of the application going to wealden maybe the public should be asked whether they were for the houses and medical centre or against it, as the repercussions for the future of the surgeries was not looking good. He also stated that although the ESCC land might be now available the doctors' surgeries were stating that it was NOT suitable due to access and levels of the land. The area had also already been highlighted in the local plan as an area for development. A councillor commented that if it was suitable for housing it was suitable for a Medical centre. A councillor commented that the ESCC land had been around ages and not been brought forward. Councillors were asked to indicate if they wished to vote for or against the application: A vote to submit objections to the application was taken <u>Vote 4 against the application Cllrs Mrs M Piper, Mrs C berry, Mrs L Sargent, M Falkner and wished to submit the above objections 1 vote for the proposal and against the decision to submit objections Cllr W Alexander.</u> <u>Motion carried to submit objections to the application as shown above .</u>
12842	Delegated applications – already submitted – for information only <u>WD/2020/1765/F</u> – ‘CLAREHOLM’, DITTONS ROAD, POLEGATE BN26 6HT – PROPOSED THREE, FOUR BEDROOM HOUSES, REMOVAL OF SIDE EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING HOUSE, WIDENED CROSSOVER. OBJECTIONS: The Committee considered the application to be overdevelopment, given the surrounding area and the impact it would have on nearby residents. The Committee was still of the opinion that two houses, not three, would be more suitable for the site. The third house would adversely affect houses in Buttercup Drive. <u>WD/2020/2347/AI</u> – CONNECT 27 BUSINESS PARK, UNIT 6, TWIN OAKS DRIVE, POLEGATE BN26 6GP – 2 ELEVATION SIGNS. NO OBJECTIONS. <u>WD/2020/0119/DC</u> – JOAN HUGHES COURT, WALNUT WALK, POLEGATE BN26 5AR – THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BIN STORE USING 1800MM HIGH HIT AND MISS FENCING SET ON 100MM x 100MM ARRIS RAILS. DOUBLE GATE AT ENTRANCE TO BE 1800MM HIGH HIT AND MISS TIMBER. NO OBJECTIONS. <u>WD/2021/0159/F</u> – ‘HAERE MAI’, DITTONS ROAD, POLEGATE BN26 6HU – PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR ADDITION TO EXISTING SINGLE STOREY DWELLING. NO OBJECTIONS. <u>WD/2021/0421/F</u> – 44 ST MARY’S, ABERDALE ROAD, POLEGATE BN26 6NH – PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF REAR FACING ATTIC DORMER AND CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE

STOREY REAR EXTENSION. NO OBJECTIONS.

[WD/2021/0447/F](#) – 37 OAKLEAF DRIVE, POLEGATE BN26 6PS – SINGLE STOREY SIDE/REAR EXTENSION, EXISTING DORMER EXTENSIONS TO FRONT AND REAR & SIDE PORCH. ERECTION OF NEW GARDEN WALLS WITH NEW DROPPED KERB TO FORM OFF STREET PARKING. NO OBJECTIONS.

[WD/2021/0503/F](#) – 40 BROOK STREET, POLEGATE BN26 6BH – REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING EXTENSION. NO OBJECTIONS.

[WD/2021/0234/F](#) – 1-21 WATER HOUSE, PORTERS WAY, POLEGATE BN26 6RJ – INCREASED VEHICLE AND CYCLE PARKING AND FURTHER BIN STORAGE PROVISION. NO OBJECTIONS, but a Councillor stated that this should not be taken as endorsing the original application under [WD/2021/0229/P19](#). The Councillor stated that the Committee still remains opposed to the original application in the following terms:

A Councillor commented that that the height of the proposed building would be out of character for the area. It appears that having different sized internal rooms does not make any difference to the height of the building. There could be an issue with the increase in parking demand. The Councillor agreed with Wealden District Council's comment in their formal determination issued on 12th November and noted the conclusion of the daylight/sunlight report. A Councillor stated that there were no five storey buildings in Polegate and to allow this development would set a precedent. A Councillor stated that they saw this as overdevelopment that would affect the nearby houses' amenity. The Committee asked that this application be called in, in order that it be heard at a planning meeting and not delegated.

The chair commented as follows:

I would now like to comment on item 8 in Delegated Applications which have already been submitted.

This is Application WD/2021/0234/F which is for increased vehicle and cycle parking and further bin storage provision at Water House, Porters Way. We signed off on this application with no objections other than to state it should not be taken as an endorsement of the original application WD/2021/0229/P19 to provide additional storeys to the building which we strongly opposed when it was submitted. Since then there has been a great deal of concern that if this application were approved it could cut off a public path used by many residents in the surrounding roads to access the town centre.

In a planning letter from Wealden to the developers dated 5th December 2005 it clearly states a public footpath and cycle route shall be constructed – I quote:

5. *The public pedestrian and cycle route through the site, as required under Condition 7 of the outline planning permission, shall be constructed up to the east and west boundaries of the site, with no impediment thereto, and shall incorporate a minimum wide of 2 metres.*

REASON: To ensure satisfactory public access having regard to Policy TR13 of the Wealden Local Plan.

Also, the following statement was made by the Appeal Officer during a developer's appeal on October 23rd 2003 regarding Surplus Polegate Shopping Centre car parking:

	38. In addition to these, I shall also attach a condition requiring that arrangements are made to provide a public pedestrian and cycle route across the site between Porters Way and the remaining Polegate Centre car park. This is necessary to ensure that the present permissive route is not lost and that the opportunity to connect it into the proposed extension of the Cuckoo Trail is preserved. The Town Clerk is in urgent talks with Wealden about this issue and any update will be posted on social media as soon as possible. The committee was briefly updated prior to the start of the meeting. <u>It was agreed to submit further comments of the councils' objections to any blocking of the right of way across the land having spoken to the County Council, Wealden District Council and the landowner. (The landowner had stated that it was not the intention to block the right of way as it was also needed for his tenants. It was now likely that the landowner might agree to a dedication to show the right of way on the definitive map.)</u> <u>WD/2021/0720/F – 36 CENTRAL AVENUE, POLEGATE BN26 6HA – PROPOSED REAR AND SIDE EXTENSION AND ENTRANCE PORCH TO SEMI-DETACHED BUNGALOW. NO OBJECTIONS.</u> <u>WD/2021/0501/F – UNIT 5, THE CENTRE, HIGH STREET, POLEGATE BN26 6DU – PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE FROM THE NEW CLASS E (WAS A1) TO A TAKEAWAY USE, FORMALLY AS AN A5 USE WHICH IS NOW A <i>SUI GENERIS</i> USE. NO OBJECTIONS.</u>
12843	Planning decisions by Wealden District Council – for information only <u>WD/2021/0037/F – 3 WESTERN AVENUE, POLEGATE BN26 6EP – SINGLE STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSION. APPROVED BY WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL ON 1ST MARCH 2021.</u> <u>WD/2021/0077/F – 23 SUNSTAR LANE, POLEGATE BN26 5HS – PROPOSED REPLACEMENT SIDE EXTENSION AND FRONT PORCH INCLUDING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS. APPROVED BY WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL ON 1ST MARCH 2021.</u> <u>WD/2020/2532/FR – 16 BRIGHTLING ROAD, POLEGATE BN26 5DB – CONSTRUCTION OF DETACHED GARDEN BUILDING (SUMMERHOUSE/GYM) AND ALTERATIONS TO BOUNDARY FENCING TO INCREASE HEIGHT TO OVER 2 METRES (BOTH RETROSPECTIVE). APPROVED BY WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL ON 5TH MARCH 2021.</u> <u>WD/2020/2642/F – 23 HERON RIDGE, POLEGATE BN26 5BJ – TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION. APPROVED BY WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL ON 2ND MARCH 2021.</u> <u>WD/2020/2419/F – LAND AT 60 GREENLEAF GARDENS, POLEGATE BN26 6PQ – DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING SINGLE-STOREY EXTENSION AND THE ERECTION OF A NEW ATTACHED THREE-BEDROOM TWO-STOREY DWELLING. REFUSE BY WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL ON 3RD MARCH 2021.</u> Noted by all present
12844	Other planning items None

The remote meeting ended at 11.00am

Chair of Planning Committee _____ Date