



Westbourne

Parish Council

PO Box 143
Emsworth
PO10 9DX

07775654483

clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of the Westbourne Parish Council's Extraordinary Planning Committee which took place on Thursday 9 September at 7pm at The Meeting Place, North Street, Westbourne.

Cllr Lade Barker, Cllr Richard Hitchcock, Cllr David Mack, Cllr Pearcey, Mr Frank Campbell, and Clare Kennett, Clerk to the Council.

Meeting chaired by Cllr Hitchcock. No members of the public were present.

1. Declarations of interest: None.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr Nigel Ricketts.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 9 September 2021: The minutes were agreed to be a true record and were signed as such by the Chair.

4. Updates and issues from the minutes of 9 September 2021:

Item 6: It was noted that the leaflet written in partnership with the Save Long Copse Lane group and the Emsworth Residents' Association had not been shared with the committee or Clerk for comment before it was sent to print. The Clerk reminded councillors that they should work with the Clerk to make decisions outside meetings. It was discussed that distribution was still to be organised and that it was hoped this could be organised before HBC's deadline of 11 October.

Item 7: It was noted that the public inquiry into the enforcement notices at the Old Army Camp on Cemetery Lane had been suspended until next year as the inspector had become unwell during the inquiry and was unable to attend.

5. Planning applications: Members made the following comments.

Havant Borough Council, APP/21/00893: Outline planning application for demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a new residential scheme (C3 use of approximately 210 dwellings to include affordable housing) and associated landscaping, access and supporting infrastructure, all other matters reserved. Land north of Long Copse Lane, Emsworth, PO10 7UN.

Members agreed to object to the planning application. The full response is available in Appendix 1.

6. Announcements and items for the next meeting: It was agreed to start the next meeting at 6pm.

7. Date of next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday 14 October 2021 at 6.15pm.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Appendix 1

APP/21/00893: Outline planning application for demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a new residential scheme (C3 use of approximately 210 dwellings to include affordable housing) and associated landscaping, access and supporting infrastructure, all other matters reserved. Land north of Long Copse Lane, Emsworth, PO10 7UN.

Westbourne Parish Council objects to the planning application as it considers it to be premature until the outcome of the Havant Local Plan is known and the Inspector's report is available. The Parish Council considers the development to be an unsustainable extension of northern Emsworth into an area of open countryside which is not close to an established centre with associated amenities and facilities, including public transport. The Parish Council considers that Havant Borough Council should increase density in other sustainable areas of the Borough first to meet its housing allocations before considering the proposed site. The Parish Council also has the following comments.

The proposed site is close to the modest and historic village of Westbourne in West Sussex. The cumulative effect of further housing, in addition to the 250 new homes built at the Redlands Grange development in north Emsworth in 2013, would dominate the local area and have a harmful impact upon Westbourne, and its rural character and setting. The development of a further 210 homes, possibly up to 260 if future development identified on the plan and adjacent to the site is approved, would exacerbate the closing of the countryside gap between the two settlements of Emsworth and Westbourne on the Hampshire/West Sussex border. This gap is important as it helps to define the separate identities of small towns and villages and prevents settlements merging into a South Hampshire urban sprawl.

It is of great concern that the development would generate an increase in vehicle movements of private cars, light goods vehicles and larger vehicles on a regular basis along Long Copse Lane, which is already sensitive to traffic and unsustainable for the volume of traffic resulting from the proposed development. The Parish Council considers that the traffic report grossly underestimates the number of traffic movements along Long Copse Lane and eastwards of the site and the impact this would have on local residents and the Westbourne community. Services in Emsworth are two miles away so, as there is no availability of public transport, car journeys would be the only way to get around. Pedestrians, cyclists and the many horse riders that use Long Copse Lane would be vulnerable due to poor forward visibility, lack of footpaths and limited space available for vehicles to pass.

The transport report refers to the range of local facilities and services available in Westbourne. The comprehensive range of services available in Westbourne would be a major attraction to new residents of the development as it already is to existing residents of Long Copse Lane. Based on the current network of roads, new residents wishing to access these services would use Long Copse Lane in much greater numbers than suggested in the report as it provides the quickest and most direct route. This would also mean travelling via North Street in Westbourne which is a particularly congested part of the village with significant amounts of on-street

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parking. The eastern section of Long Copse Lane in West Sussex is narrow, making it virtually impossible for vehicles to pass, and has poor forward visibility with blind bends and high rural hedges. There are no footpaths or street lights and the narrow lane is unable to accommodate any more traffic. The driving conditions in winter will be particularly dangerous for vulnerable users during the morning and evening peak flow when it is dark.

There is a lack of local facilities to support the proposed development, including schools, local shops, libraries, transport, health services, sports, leisure and community facilities, with the nearest in Emsworth being two miles away. The developer has underestimated the attractiveness of Westbourne, which would be seen as the primary location for shopping, schooling, pubs and restaurants, yet no new infrastructure is planned to support the village. Westbourne's roads are congested, parking is already difficult and services are stretched. The Parish Council considers that infrastructure contributions would be required to support Westbourne village centre and improve its capacity to cope with the potential influx of users arising from the proposed development.

Long Copse Lane also provides an alternative route for commuter traffic heading towards Chichester or northwards towards the A3. This would cause visibility issues at the junction of Long Copse Lane and North Street in Westbourne where visibility is very restricted and increased turning movements would create safety issues. There are no proposals within the scheme to deal with this junction which is considered to be unacceptable.

Chichester District Council's Stantec report states that the A27 through Chichester is at capacity and there is no funding available nationally to upgrade it, which affects the housing capacity that can be taken locally. It could be argued that this also affects new development in Havant Borough as houses built close to the county boarder would generate more traffic through Chichester on the A27.

There are significant flooding issues on Long Copse Lane that occur towards the lower levels of the land nearest to Westbourne. As a result of the flooding, the road surface is poor and there is need to take action to deal with this problem should the development proceed, as increased use would be exacerbated by the flooding problem. The Parish Council considers that the lack of proposals to address this issue is a serious fault with the proposals that have been prepared by the developer.

The form and extent of the proposed development would have a significant and harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the local area and the wider landscape. The site is in an area of open countryside right up against the county boundary and immediately adjacent to the northern end of the Emsworth/Westbourne wildlife corridor. As such, it would constitute a major incursion and barrier to wildlife connections between Hollybank Woods, Southleigh Forest, the Solent Coast and the South Downs National Park. It is increasingly acknowledged that habitat should not be preserved in disconnected islands and that there should be buffer zones around them to minimise disturbance. There would be a loss of habitat for wildlife and 12 species of bats, including one of the largest colonies of rare Bechstein's bats in the UK. The authors of the main ecological impact report with this application play down the importance of the known Barbastelle activity in

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the area and seem to be unaware of the alcatloe records. It would seem that no record searches have been conducted since 2016.

The Parish Council understands there is insufficient capacity at Thornham Waste Water Treatment Works for any new housing within its catchment area. As of 1 January 2021, there was only capacity for around 950 dwellings and 566 of that was already accounted for by estimated completions since January 2021, together with extant planning permissions in both Chichester District and Havant Borough. This effectively reduces the remaining headroom available for further applications to 384 houses. This also does not take account of any permissions granted since 1 April 2021 nor any other applications currently under consideration. Pollution into Chichester Harbour and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be avoided at all costs.

Taking all these concerns into account, Westbourne Parish Council would urge the Borough Council to refuse this planning application on grounds of prematurity but also because the details of the scheme will cause significant harm to wildlife and will create a severe impact on the village of Westbourne that has not been properly considered or dealt with by suitable measures or mitigation.

Appendix 1