

Minutes



Westbourne
Parish Council

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Minutes of Westbourne Parish Council's Planning Committee which took place on Thursday 14 April 2022 at 6.15pm at The Meeting Place, North Street, Westbourne.

Present: Cllr Lade Barker, Cllr Kim Franks, Cllr Richard Hitchcock, Cllr David Mack, Cllr Nigel Ricketts and Mr Frank Campbell.

In attendance: Clare Kennett, Clerk to the Council

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

1. Declarations of interest: None. It was **NOTED** that although the Parish Council hires the Meeting Place for its meetings, the interest for planning application 21/02851/FUL was not of a personal or pecuniary nature that would influence the decision.

2. Apologies for absence: None.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2022: Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true record and they were signed as such by the Chair.

4. Updates and issues from the minutes of 31 March 2022: There was no further update.

5. Planning applications: Members **RESOLVED** to make the following decisions.

22/00361/DOM: Infill dormer between 2 no. side dormers (resubmission of WE/21/01673/DOM). 5 River Street, Westbourne. No objection.

22/00500/LBC: New gas meter box to front elevation. 8 River Street, Westbourne. It was **AGREED** not to object.

21/02851/FUL: Erection of a rain shelter for bicycles and baby buggies adjacent to the main entrance on the south side and the affixing of a building name signage to the front aspect. Baptist Church, North Street, Westbourne. It was **AGREED** not to object.

22/00405/DOM: Proposed dropped kerb. Churchfield Cottage, Westbourne Road, Westbourne. It was **AGREED** to object unless WSCC were satisfied with the visibility splays.

22/00289/PLD: Proposed ancillary building in rear garden. Churchfield Cottage, Westbourne Road, Westbourne. Members **NOTED** the application.

6. Planning appeals: Members **AGREED** to object to the following appeal.

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APP/L3815/W/22/3293116, 20/03164/FUL: Change of use of land to 1 no. private gypsy and traveller caravan site consisting of 1 no. mobile home, 1 no. touring caravan, 1 no. utility dayroom and associated development. Land east of Monk's Hill, Monk's Hill, Westbourne. The appeal will be dealt with by way of a hearing. Representations to be received by 5 May 2022.

The Council's representation is included in Appendix 1. It was **AGREED** that the Charity, Westbourne Parish Allotment for Exercise and Recreation (Charity Commission number: 265105), should also submit a representation.

7. Westbourne Character Appraisal: Members **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to the Full Council to support the proposals to expand Westbourne's Conservation Area to include Westbourne Cemetery as it would offer greater protection to the sanctity of the Cemetery and Chapel. Members **AGREED** to offer their thanks to the District Council for reviewing the Character Appraisal and to share the consultation with the History Group and Greening Westbourne. The Clerk confirmed that information had been promoted to the public on the website, Facebook page and noticeboards and had been shared with the JBC.

8. Chichester District Council Enforcement Reporting: Members **NOTED** the list of enforcement issues.

9. Announcements and items for the next meeting: None.

10. Date of next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday 12 May 2022 at 6.15pm.

The meeting was closed at 7pm.

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Appendix 1: Representation for APP/L3815/W/22/3293116, WE/20/03164/FUL Land East of Monk Hill, Monks Hill, Westbourne, West Sussex. Change of use of land to 1 no. private gypsy and traveller caravan site consisting of 1 no. mobile home, 1 no. touring caravan, 1 no. utility dayroom and associated development.

Westbourne Parish Council objects to the planning application on the grounds that the Parish of Westbourne has one of the highest densities of Gypsy/Traveller/Travelling Showpersons pitches and plots in the Chichester District. Were the number of Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches to grow disproportionately to the size of the local community, it would put pressure on the capacity of local services such as schools, nurseries and GP surgeries. This could, in turn, affect the quality of the services that the settled community can reasonably expect or have been receiving thus far. Furthermore, were the number of Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches to grow disproportionately to the size of the local community it would also affect the character and structure of that community. For example, given the transient nature of the Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle, it would lead to a lack of community stability, identity and social cohesion and also result in tensions between the settled community and the Gypsy and Traveller community. These concerns are addressed in the Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan, which has a great deal to say about provision for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople within the context of a 'Community Balance Policy'. The following extracts from the Neighbourhood Plan - approved by Chichester District Council in September 2021 - are of relevance.

"4.5.5. Housing Tenures - Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople (GTTSP). Local evidence has identified that the recent significant and rapid increase in GTTSP pitches/plots in Westbourne ... has increased tensions and significantly impacted on the balance between the various sectors of the community who reside locally. This increase is entirely contrary to Para 4 of the PPTS which states: 'Government's aims in respect of traveller sites are to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions.'

"4.5.7. In addition, Gypsy and Traveller developments tend to be contentious, because they are often in open countryside (and therefore in locations that would not generally be given planning permission if the application came from the settled community) and disproportionately concentrated within the Parish. Despite significant opposition based on concerns for community balance from the settled community, they have been allowed on appeal.

"4.5.14 As of February 2017, Chichester District Council has confirmed that sufficient sites have now been granted for Travelling Showpeople plots to satisfy the identified required and stated need until 2022 and no more are immediately required. The Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029 (Chichester Local Plan) under Policy 36 (Planning for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) sets out the identified need for permanent pitches and plots for the period 2012-2027. It states that the Chichester Local Plan area needs to provide a total of 59 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 18 plots for travelling showpeople. Policy 36 also specifies that 37 pitches and 11 plots be provided by 2017, which has been achieved.

"4.5.17. Development of any further GTTSP sites in the Parish would be premature

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and disproportionate for Westbourne. No further consents are necessary in Westbourne in this Plan period. The broad location of new Gypsy and Traveller sites from 2022 will be determined by Chichester District Council light of revised GTAA findings and the implementation of the overdue GTTSP DPD; it is not anticipated any further allocation for plots or pitches will be made in Westbourne Parish in the forthcoming GTTSP DPD for the 6-15 year period given the disproportionate share of the Council's requirement that has been permitted in the period 2014-2017. This is in order to maintain an appropriate community balance in line with the expired DCLG guidance on plot size and maximum numbers. The policy below reflects the current position.

"4.5.18. Chichester District Council should recognise that dispersal of Gypsy and Traveller pitches across the District is likely to minimise the impact of development. Not all parishes are suitable for Gypsy and Traveller development due to the location within the National Park, however there are over 20 parishes that could take Gypsy and Traveller development.

"4.5.20 In addition to proving a need for either permanent or transit accommodation, development proposals for both types of sites will only be permitted where they comply with other relevant policies. In particular, they are required to be well related to existing settlements and do not harm the character and appearance of the area; they should avoid sites being over-concentrated in any one location, or disproportionate in size to nearby communities.

"4.5.21. In order to justify the application, they are required to demonstrate there is no alternative empty lawful pitch which could be used and confirmed by the local housing authority; and to demonstrate that occupiers of the site satisfy either the definition of a Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople as outlined in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2012) or any subsequent policy.

"4.5.22 Should the revised GTAA findings point to the need to increase provision in the first five years and the identification of new sites in the new GTTSP DPD, again it is not anticipated any further allocation for plots or pitches will be made for Westbourne given the disproportionate share of the Council's overall requirement that has been permitted in the period 2014-2017 and the constrained environment around Westbourne that makes any additional development outside the settlement boundary unsustainable and unacceptable for the reasons set out in section 3.3.6. Therefore, the Plan does not support the development of other greenfield sites outside the settlement boundary.

"4.5.23 At the time of the examination of the Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan, it was evident that the supply of plots/pitches for the identified need for this type of accommodation had already been exceeded for the Neighbourhood Plan period within the Parish. Further provision of GTTS plots or pitches would be likely to erode the current community balance and would not be acceptable unless all of the criteria in Policy OA 3-1 are met.

As is clear from the above, The Parish has already identified sufficient Gypsy and Traveller pitches to fulfil the allocation of such units in accordance with the need previously identified and the subsequent allocations in the Local Plan. Moreover, there are a number of existing unoccupied plots in another location in the Parish

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(Cemetery Lane), and to allow additional units to be formed would lead to an oversupply of such provision that would be contrary to Local Plan requirements and the Community Balance Policy in the Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan.

Access to the site, on a bend, to and from a road with a national speed limit of 60mph, clearly represents a significant danger. The following comment has been made by WSCC Highways: Access and visibility: The applicant proposes to utilise the existing vehicular access on Monks Hill. Whilst it is acknowledged that visibility at the access does not meet DMRB guidance, the highways authority does not anticipate that the proposed change of use would give rise to a significant material intensification of vehicular movements to or from the site. The Parish Council disputes this. If planning permission was granted, there would be people living on the site which, up until now, has not been the case. This would bring with it intensification of vehicular movements to or from the site.

The proposed development is within a countryside location and outside the settlement boundary, as evidenced by the aerial photograph below of Westbourne Common.



The proposed site is surrounded by a Local Wildlife Site (formerly called a Site of Nature Conservation Interest, please see the map submitted with the objection). Although the horse field is not part of this designation, the report from the Sussex Botanical Recording Society from 12 June 2019 (included as part of the objection) states “The Cricket Pitch is part of the old Westbourne Common and is surrounded by other fields of botanical interest. The horse fields are grazed moderately and retain a range of good plants, with many of those shared with the cricket pitch”. Rare plants thrive in the Local Wildlife Site, such as the Green Wing Orchid, the Ladys-Tresses Orchid and a Chamomile which are found in only a few places in Sussex. This is because the land has not been developed or intensively used and careful management is in place.

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The western end of the Parish Council's recreation ground is often very wet and, in the winter of 2020/21, was subject to significant flooding, to the extent that the children's playground, which is situated in the north-west corner, had to be closed for a period of time. The waterlogged ground caused damage to the safety surface and it was considered not to be safe enough to allow children to play on the equipment. Whilst the source of the flooding has been identified - and the situation largely remedied - it is likely that ground water running down the hill and through the fields may have been displaced due to the development on the north boundary line of the recreation ground. The Parish Council is concerned that the proposed development may cause further flooding along the north boundary of the recreation ground which could prevent local residents from enjoying the much-valued community facility

For the reasons set out above, Westbourne Parish Council respectfully requests that this Appeal be dismissed. I would be grateful if you could please send a copy of the decision notice.