

Minutes



Westbourne
Parish Council

PO Box 143
Emsworth
PO10 9DX

07775654483
clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of Westbourne Parish Council's Planning Committee which took place on Thursday 9 April 2026 at 6.15pm at The Meeting Place, North Street, Westbourne.

Present: Cllr Lade Barker, Cllr Roy Briscoe, Cllr Nigel Ricketts, and co-opted non-council members Mr Frank Campbell and Mr Kevan Pegley.

In attendance: Clare Kennett, Clerk to the Council

Meeting chaired by Cllr Ricketts. One member of the public and no members of the press were present.

04/26/84. Apologies for absence: Cllr Pete Watterson sent his apologies. As there was not a quorum for the meeting, Cllr Roy Briscoe was co-opted to join the Committee for one meeting only, with all in favour, to enable the meeting to go ahead.

04/26/85. Declaration of members interest:

- a. Cllr Lade Barker declared an interest in planning application 26/00490/FUL as a friend of the agent. It was **AGREED** that this did not represent a pecuniary interest and that Cllr Barker could participate in the discussion and vote.
- b. The Clerk gave Cllr Barker a dispensation to consider planning application 26/00490/FUL.

04/26/86. Minutes of the meeting of 12 March 2026: Members **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a correct record which were signed by the Chairman.

04/26/87. Planning decisions made since the last meeting: Members **NOTED** the following local planning authority decisions.

24/00806/FUL: Land south of Racton View, Marlpit Lane, Hambrook. Change of use of land for the stationing of 7 no. caravans for residential purposes, erection of associated 7 no. utility buildings and associated landscaping. PERMIT WITH S106.

04/26/88. Planning applications: Members **RESOLVED** to make the following decisions:

26/00627/DOM: Extensions to main dwelling and garage. Silrona, Duffield Lane, Woodmancote, Westbourne. Members **AGREED** to have **NO OBJECTION**.

26/00490/FUL: Use of land for the stationing of two caravans for residential purposes, construction of utility buildings and associated landscape works. Hopedene Common Road, Hambrook. Members **AGREED** to **OBJECT**. See Appendix 1.

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26/00435/FUL: Retrospective (Section 73a) application for erection of 3 no. units for vehicles/showman's units, 1 no. store and electric unit and 1 no. workshop with installation of roof-mounted solar panels. Land east of Rownberts. Woodmancote Lane, Woodmancote. Members **AGREED** to **OBJECT**. See Appendix 2.

04/26/89. Neighbourhood Plan review: Members received an update on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 26 March 2026.

04/26/90. Chichester District Council enforcement reporting: Members **NOTED** the list of enforcement issues in the Parish.

04/26/91. Items to be included on the next agenda: There were no additional items.

04/26/92. Date of next meeting: Members **AGREED** to hold the next meeting on Thursday 14 May 2026 at 6.15pm.

Meeting closed at 7.10pm.

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Appendix 1

26/00490/FUL: Use of land for the stationing of two caravans for residential purposes, construction of utility buildings and associated landscape works. Hopedene Common Road, Hambrook.

Members **AGREED** to **OBJECT** for the reasons set out below.

An application was made for a development on this site under reference WE/23/02921/FUL. It was for the siting of one Showman's mobile home with storage of associated vehicles and equipment. The Parish Council objected on several grounds, most salient being that the location is on the outskirts of Woodmancote, an insubstantial hamlet with no local amenities or services, and outside the Westbourne settlement boundary (contrary to Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan policy OA1, sustainable development).

Chichester District Council refused the development, noting among other factors that it “would result in visually harmful urbanisation that would detract from the rural character of the site and surroundings.”

On appeal the refusal was overturned, the inspector arguing that the site was “an appropriate location for the appeal scheme and would not harm the character and appearance of the area.”

Subsequently a further application was made (ref. WE/25/02374/FUL) to install a large storage and workshop building. The Parish Council objected to the application as constituting overdevelopment of the site; they also noted the highway flooding that they considered was already being caused by the development, and that would be exacerbated by further development. Chichester District Council refused the application, stating that it “would detract from the character of the area which is in the countryside outside of a defined settlement boundary. Furthermore, the size and siting of the building would reduce the space available for open storage on the site below (that) required for the effective operation of a Travelling Showpersons site.”

This new application is for a slightly smaller workshop and storage building on the site. It remains a large construction: taking the roof plan on the provided drawing it would appear to be approximately 24 metres long and over 5 metres deep, with a claimed height of 3.7 metres.

The Parish Council maintains its opinion that a building of this size, despite the claim that it is 25% smaller than the previous, rejected, application, should not be permitted in a countryside site. It maintains that it would cause “unacceptable harm to the character of the local area”. (Chichester local plan, policy H13, paragraph 3.) It would further argue that a development of this large bulk would be contrary to National Decision-Making Policy N2 (National Planning Policy Framework 2026) which requires proposals to “contribute positively to the natural environment and support nature’s recovery”. It understands that the NPPF 2026 has yet to be adopted, but consider it essential that its provisions regarding preservation of habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside be respected.

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Appendix 2

26/00435/FUL: Retrospective (Section 73a) application for erection of 3 no. units for vehicles/showman's units, 1 no. store and electric unit and 1 no. workshop with installation of roof-mounted solar panels. Land east of Rownberts. Woodmancote Lane, Woodmancote.

Members **AGREED** to **OBJECT** for the reasons set out below..

Westbourne Parish consists of the main settlement of Westbourne Village and two nearby hamlets of Woodmancote and Aldsworth. Each of these three communities has a strong community identity and a distinctive character. They are separated from each other by open fields and woodland and have a generally rural character. The Parish lies on the southern boundary of the South Downs National Park with part of the Parish within the Park boundary. The Chichester District Local Plan, the general policies of the National Park and the policies of the adopted Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan all serve to protect and enhance this special countryside character and community identity.

It is against this background that the Parish Council makes comments on planning applications to the District Council and Park Authority.

One particular form of development that features, almost on a monthly basis, in the Parish is for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and related activity. The Parish already experiences one of the greatest concentrations of this kind of accommodation compared to most other Parishes in the District. This concentration at the western edge of the Chichester District area is even more intensive when taking into account similar concentrations of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation at West Ashling in the adjoining Parish of Funtington and at Priors Lease Lane, Hambrook in the adjoining Parish of Southbourne.

It is the significant concentration, sprawling form and scale of use which affects both the rural character of the Parish and the community identity of these settled communities.

Policy Considerations

There are policies linked to the provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation at National and Local level that are relevant.

Assessment of Need – The Housing and Planning Acts, underpinned by the NPPF require Local Authorities to make an assessment of need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in their area. This assessment carried out by Chichester District Council as part of their local plan preparation identifies that need. Apart from the allocation of specific sites the need was also intended to be met by contributions from windfall sites as they arise. Recently this unmet need from windfall sites has been met in various locations including a recent permission granted to a site at Marlpit Lane close to the current application site under consideration. The Parish Council would therefore contend that there is **no demonstrable need** for this current application to be approved.

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Assessment against Policy H13 of the Local Plan – Policy H13 sets out the criteria that any site for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation must satisfy in order to be acceptable in planning terms. There are seven criteria to be satisfied and the Parish Council would contend that the following of these criteria are not met in this case.

1. Criteria 1, the proposal is adjacent to another site for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and this proposal increases the total bulk and scale of provision in one location so that the cumulative impact adversely affects the settled community of Woodmancote and in relation to other existing and approved encampments in the area will dominate the settled community. This includes impact on the services of other nearby existing local communities. It should also be noted that the site is remote from centres where the services that residents need are found. On that basis the site is also not in a sustainable location and would be totally dependent on the use of private transport.
2. Criteria 3, The proposed use would create unacceptable harm to the character of the local area due to the cumulative impact of a sprawling form of development in a rural location where the character of the rural countryside setting is an important consideration in both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition the site is immediately adjacent to the boundary of the South Downs National Park where the character and appearance of the countryside and the general landscape is a critical consideration for any application.
3. Criteria 4, The site lies within a Strategic Wildlife Corridor as defined in the Chichester Local Plan. The proposal would adversely impact local wildlife especially in relation to bats and birds. The Parish Council have no confidence that the mitigation measures proposed by the applicant are sufficient or indeed would be effectively implemented.
4. Criteria 7, This site is outside the settlement boundary and as previously mentioned there is no proven need for additional Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the plan area.

Assessment Against the Provisions of the Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan

Policy OA 3-1, This policy seeks to achieve a community balance that reflects Westbourne Parish's circumstances and particular needs. New sites for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will require to meet criteria as follows

- a. **Demonstrate a local connection** – The application does not demonstrate any local connections or specify who the intended occupants would be or what their needs would be. This is a significant issue for the Parish Council as there is real concern that there would be no attempt by the applicant to ensure that the proposed units were occupied by persons with either a local connection or any Gypsy and Traveller heritage.
- b. **Alternative pitches available in the locality** - The Parish Council would contend that there are both vacant pitches available within the local area and also unimplemented planning permissions such as the recent permission at Marlpit Lane and in Cemetery Lane.
- c. **Over concentration in any one location or disproportionate in size to nearby communities** - This proposal would extend the scale and concentration of similar uses on a very large adjoining site and when taken together with a plethora of small and large existing and proposed sites for

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similar use both in Westbourne and the wider south western area of the District this results in a completely unacceptable concentration of activity that adversely impacts on the settled communities of Woodmancote and Westbourne.

- d. **Disturbance to amenities of neighbouring uses and occupiers** – Although there are no immediate neighbouring properties apart from the adjoining encampment the concentration of these uses at the adjoining site has a history of illegal black smoke fires that have affected residential property in Woodmancote and the extension of the site will increase the potential for further similar behaviour.

Additional Concerns

The experience of the Parish Council in responding to the pressures that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation create and in relation to the assessment of the never ending series of applications for such use is considerable. It seems to the Parish that there are serious issues that must form part of the judgement in determining this and further similar applications.

1. There is no adequate enforcement of the implementation of approved applications so that there is never any effective guarantee that the new homes will be providing accommodation for persons of gypsy and traveller heritage.
2. This lack of scrutiny in effect means that the new homes will probably not address the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Community leading to an ever rising unmet need.
3. In addition the lack of effective enforcement of many unauthorised sites / plots results in the true extent of provision being wrongly quantified. This unauthorised development also results in over developed and unsatisfactory facilities provided that are never adequately reviewed and enforced.

Conclusions

The Parish Council would therefore urge the District Council to refuse this application for the reasons set out above and in particular because there is no demonstrable unmet need and it is contrary to adopted policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, The Local Plan and the emerging policies of the draft NPPF.