

FRANT PARISH COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF A PLANNING MEETING HELD ONLINE VIA 'ZOOM' ON MONDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7:30PM

Present: Cllr William Rutherford - Chair
Cllrs Luther, Macdonald-Brown, Best, Park

Mrs Rosie Karim – Clerk/RFO
Mr Russell Prince – The Door

1. Enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting.

None.

2. To receive apologies.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Wallis, Howell, Steadman and Crookshank.

3. Declarations of Interests on items on the agenda.

Cllr Macdonald-Brown declared a personal interest in planning application WD/2020/2662/F at Long Marling, Down Lane, Frant and said he would abstain from discussing or voting on it.

4. Public forum (15 mins).

Mr Prince introduced himself as working with the Abergavenny Estate to develop an area at Warren Farm in Eridge for new housing. He noted that the Parish Council had considered the first application, which was subsequently withdrawn.

(Cllr Park joined the meeting at 7.35pm).

The reasoning behind the new-build houses in that scheme had been one of viability. He explained that the costs involved in restoring and repairing historic buildings - especially those in poor condition, as is the case at Warren Farm – can be prohibitively high due to a number of factors, including the specialised nature of the works and materials required. In order for the project to be viable, it was therefore proposed previously that three new dwellings would be required, with the proceeds generated by them helping towards the costs needed for the restoration of the historic farm buildings. However, the issues with this proposal at Warren Farm were twofold: 1) the impact of the new dwellings on the setting of the historic farmyard and the Grade II listed farmhouse, and 2) the impact on traffic.

Mr Prince said that a revised proposal to restore and convert the existing buildings to create six dwellings had thus been drawn up, in informal collaboration with Wealden District Council and a heritage consultant. In concentrating only on the existing buildings, Mr Prince said there would be little impact on the setting at Warren Farm and the traffic numbers would be reduced.

With no new build included in the revised scheme, it was felt the solution may be to provide the new build element elsewhere on the Estate. Thus, an additional location was identified at Strawberry Hill Farm, on the A26. This former Estate farm site contains a number of dilapidated buildings and Mr Prince said it is proposed to demolish these and replace them with three pairs of Estate-style cottages, in keeping with the local vernacular.

Cllr Best enquired about whether the scheme at Strawberry Hill Farm would exit onto the fast-moving A26 or via Bunny Lane, noting also a 'dip' in the A26 near the existing exit which can create a blind spot. Mr Prince responded that ESCC Highways had carried out a speed survey and this suggested to him that the existing visibility splays would be more than adequate, for at least 200m in each direction. Mr Prince confirmed, however, that ESCC Highways had not yet commented on the proposed scheme.

Turning to the sight lines at Warren Farm, Mr Prince said that an agreement had been reached with residents to protect the sightlines at the entrance to Warren Farm in perpetuity; the entrance would be widened with side verges and nine passing places and an area for turning would be provided. Cllr Rutherford raised a concern that the passing places and verges might be misused as parking for people visiting nearby Eridge Rocks. Mr Prince responded that suitable signage would be installed as a deterrent. Cllr Rutherford noted that local residents had, in the past, asked for bollards to be installed.

Cllr Best asked about what the long term view was for farm machinery at Warren Farm. Mr Prince said that there was likely to only be 10-12 movements of one large piece of machinery during the spring only, noting that the farm itself was now defunct.

Cllr Rutherford thanked Mr Prince for attending the meeting. He noted that any views that had been expressed during the public forum were informal, given in good faith and did not prejudice the Parish Council when it came to respond formally to the planning application, once submitted.

(Mr Prince left the meeting at 7.50pm)

5. To consider licence and planning applications received and make recommendations:

- WD/2020/2606/FA – Bohemia Lodge, Eridge Park, Eridge Green, TN3 9HA

Minor material amendment to WD/2020/1594/F (removal of existing conservatory and erection of two-storey side extension) to allow for a variation in the design

It was noted that the Parish Council had supported the previous scheme. No concerns or objections were raised about the current application and it was **agreed** to support the proposal.

- WD/2020/2613/F - Woodlands, Shernfold Park Farm, Frant, TN3 9DL

Conversion of existing garage into habitable space, with the addition of a second storey and a new single-storey garage addition.

It was noted that the proposal would result in the existing dwelling almost doubling size. However, it was also noted that the Heritage Statement seemed satisfactory and no neighbour objections had been received. It was thus **agreed** to support the application.

- WD/2021/8001/AA - 13A Benhall Mill Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5JH

Redevelopment of the site to provide 7 no. dwellings, associated parking and gardens.

The nature of the site being brownfield was noted, as was the replacement of the existing quasi-industrial units with new houses. It was felt that the provision of seven units on this site would be very tight and would possibly constitute over-development. The inevitable cumulative impact and pressure on the local D-class road network was discussed. It was noted that the modelling suggested the road infrastructure into Wealden was 'perfectly' sufficient for the proposed development, contrary to the experience in practice, 'on the ground' whereby the road network is already struggling to cope and the rural characteristics of the area are being steadily eroded. The Council decided, in this instance however, to decline to comment, give that six dwellings had already been approved on the site and given the spate of recent approvals in the immediate area.

- WD/2020/2662/F - Long Marling, Down Lane, Frant, TN3 9HP

Two-storey extension and single-storey orangery to west elevation with first floor extension to north elevation. Timber framed, three bay garage.

The history of the site was discussed and the new proposal, although rather 'grand', was not considered controversial. It was thus **agreed** to support the application.

6. Further matters at the discretion of the Chairman, for discussion purposes only

Cllr Best asked the Clerk about when the lease for the green in Eridge was expected to be completed. The Clerk responded that recent correspondence suggested that various signatures were still being awaited and she agreed to chase them on this. Cllr Rutherford said he would also contact Strutt and Parker to do likewise.

Action: Clerk/WR

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.05pm.