



Easebourne Parish Council

Planning Committee

Minutes of meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 1st June 2022 in Easebourne CE Primary School

Present: Noble (MN), J MacDonald-Lawson (JML), D Pack (DP), C Sanderson (CS)

In attendance: F Hobbs (District Councillor), Parish Clerk S Hurr (SH), J Goodenough (Metis Homes) and seven members of the public.

1. **Public Question Time:** Six members of the public gave representations with regards to applications:
SDNP/21/0402/LIS, SDNP/21/04041/FUL and SDNP/22/01858/FUL
2. **Apologies and Reasons for Absence:** T Baker due to work commitments and E Grimsey Roberts due to personal reasons.
3. **Code of Conduct:**
 - a. Declarations of Interest on items included on the agenda: DP with regards to planning application SDNP/22/01858/FUL, due to the close proximity to his own residence.
 - b. Dispensation requests: None
4. **Minutes of the last meeting:** The minutes of the last meeting held on 4th May 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed.
- 5 **Planning Applications:**

SDNP/21/0402/LIS

Easebourne Primary School, Easebourne Street, Easebourne

Works to change the use of core of former school building to three dwellings, demolition of mid to late 20th century rear extensions and outbuildings, and associated development.

On a proposal by the Chairman of the Committee it was RESOLVED to support this application.

SDNP/21/04041/FUL

Easebourne Primary School, Easebourne Street, Easebourne

Erection of 20 dwellings, including conversion of former school building, with associated access, parking and landscaping following demolition and site preparation.

On a proposal by the Chairman of the Committee it was RESOLVED to strongly object to this application (see appendix one).

SDNP/22/01856/HOUS

12 Brackenwood, Easebourne

New lean-to side extension.

On a proposal by the Chairman of the Committee it was RESOLVED to make no objection.

SDNP/22/01858/FUL

Recreation Ground and Allotment Gardens, Egmont Road, Easebourne

Erection of 18 dwellings with association access, parking and landscaping following demolition and site preparation (resubmission of withdrawn application SDNP/04043/FUL).

On a proposal by the Chairman of the Committee it was RESOLVED to strongly object to this application (see appendix two).

SDNP/22/02290/CND

Gilhams Service Station, Easebourne Lane, Easebourne

Redevelopment of service station including the demolition of existing forecourt and shop and construct new sales building, forecourt, car wash and jet wash facilities. (Variation of condition 5 of permission 07/05193/FUL – to allow the site to open 0600 hours daily).

On a proposal by the Chairman of the Committee it was RESOLVED to make no objection.

6 Date of Next Meeting: 7.30pm, Wednesday 6th July 2022

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairman

The Parish Council is pleased that some of the comment and suggestion previously submitted has been acknowledged, as can be observed in the latest planning application; however, there remain a number of matters which continue to be of significant concern, therefore much of this comment is a repeat of representations submitted in regard to the previous application.

The Parish Council is concerned that Easebourne Street is in large part a single-track road used by a regular flow of farm vehicles and existing residents as well as motorists exploiting the road as an alternative access to surrounding villages and for exiting on to the A286 further north. Easebourne Street also has a very busy junction onto the A272 which is a significant pinch-point due in part to the usual one or two parked cars as patrons visit the popular village shop. Vehicles are frequently prevented from turning into Easebourne Street due to existing traffic and this then causes hold ups on the main A272, heading into Midhurst and towards Petworth. We would again request that further work is carried out with the developer and WSCC Highways to determine if enhancements can be made to this junction to improve safety and maintain a better flow of traffic ahead of any development on this site.

There is a total lack of safe pedestrian connectivity on this road which has no pavement or footpath, therefore the Parish Council would greatly support a footpath (which has been mooted by the developers) from the rear of the site leading south towards the burial ground at Glaziers Lane, which would provide safe access to Easebourne Park and Easebourne CE Primary School.

Easebourne Street has suffered from flooding a number of times in the recent past from the river Ez, which causes silt and mud to be washed down to the junction with the A272 resulting in a dangerous surface for vehicles on a significant bend in the road. Furthermore, a number of residential properties on the lower end of Easebourne Street, the Village Shop, the White Horse Public House and houses opposite the junction on the A272 have all been previously flooded as a result of the river Ez being overwhelmed. There is concern that the site is currently partly to blame for this flooding, with water from the hardstanding rushing onto the road. Therefore, the Parish Council would like to be assured that the proposed development does not exacerbate the likelihood of this occurrence becoming more frequent in the future.

As previously submitted, the Parish Council had a number of reservations regarding the design of the proposed new buildings. These misgivings have not been alleviated and Councillors continue to be disappointed by what is being suggested for this landmark site. These dwellings are not in keeping with the elegance and detailed design of the school building or the headmaster's house. The Parish Council would again draw attention to the close to adoption Parish Design Statement, particularly with regards to buildings which neither stand out as distinct or belonging to the built and natural environment. The designs appear suburban and not in keeping with their surroundings or local history. Councillors feel they could easily have been lifted directly from a 'pattern book' and could be seen in many locations across the country. In short, they are atypical as Easebourne homes.

The Parish Council would strongly advocate the use of materials similar to those found in many of the properties on Easebourne Street, and although an attempt has been made to incorporate change into the updated designs, there continues to be an overuse of red brick on housing and dark grey cladding on car ports which does not relate well to surrounding dwellings. The Parish Council is also concerned by the arrangement of windows in many of the dwellings which appear to sit discordantly within the structure of the buildings, and on the larger properties, porch details which give a retrofitted appearance.

The Parish Council also has concerns regarding the levels/height at which some of the plots sit and would concur with Planning Officer comments that some of the dwellings should be single storey to blend with

and not dominate existing neighbouring buildings. The necessity to ensure each dwelling is designed for its individual location within the development is also fully supported by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council would further draw attention to the Parish Design Statement: New Development should not dominate or adversely affect the parish's distinctive, informal character. The Parish Council would like to take a quote from one of the representations it received which referred to the aims of the Parish Design Statement, 'whatever schemes emerge, the style and quality of each, in every detail, will match up to what we already enjoy, such that they should become an integral part of our environment, sitting naturally in their individual local settings, as if they have always been there'.

The Parish Council has again received a number of representations from local residents, some of which have been directly submitted to the SDNPA portal. These representations focus on concerns regarding traffic volumes, and the design of the proposed dwellings which are described as 'not in keeping' with those listed buildings which are in close proximity. Further concerns cite the pressure on local services.

The Parish Council also wish it to be noted that there is a level of confusion amongst residents in understanding the proposals, and a view that the opportunity for a face-to-face public consultation could have been undertaken post the removal of Covid restrictions, to ensure a more acceptable level of community engagement. Although it is understood that the developer has met appropriate measures for public consultation, there is significant strength of feeling that residents have not had a chance to fully understand the applications and their potential impact. Therefore, the Parish Council would like to request, if it is possible, for a meeting to be arranged to give residents such an opportunity? We leave this with you to consider.

The Parish Council also has concerns regarding how the interpretation of affordable will be applied for example rented, shared ownership, or sold at 80% of market value. Although the Parish Council recognises the reduced number of affordable houses on this site is permitted by the discounting of the conversion of the school building, it wishes to make a plea for the number of affordable dwellings to be increased.

The Parish Council again urges a robust construction management plan to ensure construction traffic and deliveries do not negatively impact residents and exacerbate an already difficult situation.

The Parish Council continues to support all opportunities for green initiatives associated with these developments.

To summarise, the Parish Council continues to object to these revised proposals for all the reasons stated and would urge stronger designs for the new dwellings so that they harmonise and blend with the existing historic buildings and take into account the opinions of residents as captured in the Parish Design Statement.

The Parish Council is pleased that some of the comment and suggestion previously submitted has been acknowledged and can be observed in the latest planning application but is disappointed considering the amount of time which has passed since the previous application, that more has not been undertaken to address matters which continue to be of significant concern.

The most notable response to comment is the reduction of the number of units from 20 to 18. It appears to have been a great misjudgement within the Local Plan to allocate this smaller site for 16 to 20 units, when it is now clear that in order to provide the upper end of this number of dwellings, they would need to be very small in proportion, and adroit in layout to enable them to sit comfortably amongst adjacent properties. Therefore, the Parish Council would urge a reduction in units to 16 (understanding that below this number although preferable, may be deemed as an under-utilisation of land in Local Planning terms).

The affordable allocation has been very slightly altered to provide one house and although this is considered an improvement, the Parish Council believes this still does not provide the mix of houses required by the Local Plan or by the diversity of families requiring accommodation within the parish. The Parish Council also continues to have concerns regarding how the interpretation of 'affordable' will be applied for example rented, shared ownership, or sold at 80% of market value.

The current appearance of the houses has slightly improved although nowhere near enough to claim acceptability. They continue to be too stark, regular, linear, and too similar to each other, and neither sufficiently innovative to achieve the status of a modern classic concept or good replicas of traditional cottage design. They seem to fall somewhere in between. The flat roof elements appear incongruous and an afterthought, and the Parish Council also query the decision for the gable end to sit at the front of the buildings.

The Parish Council would again draw attention to the near to adoption Parish Design Statement, and highlight the lack of use of traditional materials, and significant overuse of expanses of red brick and consider that 'projecting brick detail' does resolve this issue. The Parish Council again repeats its previous comment that 'New Development should not dominate or adversely affect the parishes distinctive, informal character.'

The Parish Council also wishes to draw attention to the advice of the Planning Officer regarding the withdrawn application, 'It is substantially out of scale with the surroundings, is harmful to the setting of listed buildings and the conservation area, detrimental to the amenities of existing residential properties, has an insufficient scale or quality of amenity space for residents and the design is incoherent as a whole as well as being entirely out of keeping with the surrounding development.' The resubmitted application does not appear to have taken this advice in its redesign of the site. The Parish Council question whether the nearby terraced cottages could have been replicated but with an internal layout which provides for modern-day living.

With regards to the flatted block, the Planning Officer's advice was for 'No more than 6 flats', with which the Parish Council would concur, and also supports these being divided into two blocks to reduce the bulk, and present an appropriate front door entrance, giving the more natural appearance of two larger houses.

The Parish Council also considers that the number of parking spaces is wholly insufficient for the number of dwellings in a rural location with very limited public transport provision. Residents of the new development will have to compete for spaces, extra cars will spill out on to the adjacent roads or 'make use' of landscaped areas within the development. The residents of these new houses and flats are effectively being set-up to be in conflict with each other and existing residents from the outset through no

fault of their own other than the need to have vehicles to access work and services which are not available within walking or even cycling distance. The Parish Council also queries why there are only 31 parking spaces on this site, but 59 on the Easebourne Street site?

The Parish Council has again received a number of representations from local residents, some of which have been directly submitted to the SDNPA portal. These representations focus on concerns regarding traffic volumes, the hectic nature of Egmont Road, and worries regarding safety particular for the children in relation to Conifers School. There are also extensive comments about the difficulties of parking, with limited spaces on the site and within the vicinity, and the assertion that this will lead to an unacceptable use of pavements and grasses verges. The design of the dwellings in close proximity to the listed buildings and other homes are also listed as 'not in keeping'. There is also the view that the energy sources for these new builds have not been explored in terms of the future necessity to provide sustainable facilities, and the potential impact on current utilities. Further concerns cite the loss of wildlife habitat and pressure on local services.

The Parish Council also wish it to be noted that there is a level of confusion amongst residents in understanding the proposals, and a view that the opportunity for a face-to-face public consultation could have been undertaken post the removal of Covid restrictions, to ensure a more acceptable level of community engagement. Although it is understood that the developer has met appropriate measures for public consultation, there is significant strength of feeling that residents have not had a chance to fully understand the applications and their potential impact. Therefore, the Parish Council would like to request, if it is possible, for a meeting to be arranged to give residents such an opportunity? We leave this with you to consider.

The Parish Council again urges a robust construction management plan to ensure construction traffic and deliveries do not negatively impact residents.

The Parish Council continues to support all opportunities for green initiatives associated with these developments.

To repeat the summary previously submitted, the Parish Council strongly objects to the current proposals in this application for all reasons stated and would urge that a further alternative proposal with a greater reduction in density, and more thought given to parking, and stronger design, is sought.