

Minutes of the Additional Meeting of the Parish Council held on
Monday 8th January 2024 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Parish Councillors present: Cllrs Geoff Thomas (GT), Sonia Plato (SP), Sue Laimbeer (SL) Lynda Roller (LR), Jill Mitcheson (JM) and John Goddard (JG).

In attendance: Gilly Lowe, Parish Clerk and 14 members of the public

1. Public Questions

The Chairman referenced that a Proposal in Principle (PIP) – Item 4 – can be commented on by the council in the usual manner, but comments should be contained to the location, use of the land and development only.

Chris Davidson (CD) from the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group then summarized their main objections:

Part of the development is outside the development boundary, an area that is defined as unacceptable; the statement that “the development would be unobtrusive” is questionable – the ground drops away and the vegetation is not dense - also, in line with the NP design guide, a building should be of such quality and design that it shouldn’t need to be hidden away; should form part of the village community rather than be segregated and finally, the NP is there to protect, enhance and add value to bio-diversity and the environment – this development would cause some priority habitat to be lost. The Tree Warden believes there would be a loss of valuable green space and habitat within the site. Bio-diversity has to be compensated for, and the ability to achieve that is unlikely.

The other main concerns raised by members of the public were the number of proposed houses - this number of 8 would be governed by policies under the Neighbourhood Plan - the loss of a local amenity used by some residents, and the employment it provides. Concern was raised as to the increase in traffic over that of the current vehicle movements associated with Edendale. This could become a particular problem for Station Road if the additional dwellings earmarked in the NP went ahead. The healthcare provider is futureproofing against the number of residents, but since the rumours began to circulate pre-Christmas, there is now talk by Belmont of finding alternative premises that have more secure long-term futures. The dwindling numbers will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Chairman expressed disappointment that rumours had been allowed to surface – no one had known about the proposal until it appeared on the district council’s planning portal, and members felt that the deadline to submit comments was short given the Christmas/New Year break. This has now been extended to 25th January, as confirmed by the district councillor. A member of the public asked if the healthcare provider could be asked about a planned time horizon, and someone else suggested asking the Care Quality Commission for advice. An alternative suggestion was to convert the existing building into flats – this would not increase the size and therefore not require building outside of the development boundary and create affordable housing in line with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman also confirmed that the district councillor had offered to ‘call the application in’ i.e put it before the Planning Committee if permission was granted.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr Chas Pearce, RDC

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Laimbeer declared a pecuniary interest in item 4 and withdrew from the discussion and associated decision. Also, the Annual Fayre Committee, Horticultural Group & Crowhurst Environment Group.

Cllr Thomas – Village Hall Committee

Cllr Roller – Member of the Crowhurst Environment Group

Cllr Plato – Youth Club & Crowhurst Environment Group

4. Town & Country Planning

RR/2023/2565/PIP – Edendale Lodge, Station Road, Crowhurst TN33

Proposal: Demolition of care home and erection of 8 residential units.

After listening to the concerns of members of the public, and following a brief discussion, councillors unanimously agreed to submit the following comments online:

Crowhurst Parish Council strongly objects to this Proposal in Principle as it is unacceptable in its current form with part falling outside the Development Boundary. We are also against the loss of a care home as a facility and the employment it provides for the local area.

5. Sandrock Hill Bollards

GT summarised the history of Sandrock Hill, and the fact that a formal parking area had been consulted on by East Sussex Highways and ruled against due to visibility issues. The alternative to prevent parking on the verges by residents and delivery drivers is to install bollards. Again, the Highways report suggests a large area should be covered by the bollards to prevent vehicles accessing from behind the bollards. The Chairman explained that consulting residents will come down to a Yes/No referendum style question. The clerk explained parish polls, and the council decided that the first step of arranging a Parish Meeting should be on the agenda for the next parish council meeting. Questions were asked about likely costs, or spreading the cost and what alternative parking provision would be made instead? GT said that sufficient parking is an ongoing problem in the village and mentioned the plan to tarmac and mark out the car park at the Rec. SP said that pedestrian access is hindered by parked cars and the maintenance contractor expressed concern about strimming the grass with vehicles speeding down the hill as a health and safety issue for their workers due to the impaired visibility by traffic due to parked vehicles. There is some limited parking around the back of the residential properties.

The Chairman thanked the members of public for attending the meeting, and the clerk reminded everyone that there remains a councillor vacancy, and to contact her for further details.

6. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Parish Council, the AGM, will take place on **Monday 15th January at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.33pm

Signed by

Date:.....