



HEATHFIELD AND WALDRON PARISH COUNCIL
PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 14th October 2024, IN THE MAIN HALL OF HEATHFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE AT
6.30pm

Present: Cllrs Coffey (Chair), Dunstall, Draper, Garnet, Leney, Mian, Pert, Stemp, Snook, Thomas and Whitehouse.

Also in attendance were Wealden District Councillor Gadd and East Sussex County Councillor Anne Cross.

The Assistant Clerk was in attendance

6 members of the public were present

Minutes

24/272 **Public questions-** To **resolve** to close the meeting to enable questions from the Public to be taken, (no more than 15 minutes in total and a maximum of 3 minutes per person)

A member of the public spoke regarding agenda item 24/283, highlighting concerns about the safety of the A267. They explained that they had witnessed a recent accident, which was a deeply traumatic experience, and emphasized the need for improved safety measures on this road. The individual noted that accidents frequently occur along this stretch of the A267, which they believe is no longer fit for purpose.

They expressed a wish to work collaboratively with the Parish Council to reduce the speed limit and implement other measures to enhance safety. To support this initiative, they have recently established a Facebook group, the "A267 Safety Action Group," with the aim of launching a petition. Once the required signatories of 10,000 has been reached, the petition will be sent to the local MP, urging action to address the safety concerns on the A267. As the affected area spans across multiple parishes, they are also asking other neighbouring councils to gather additional support.

Members asked questions:

A member asked the speaker if they could expand on their discussion regarding speed reduction measures for the A267. - *The member suggested that speed reduction signs could be an option, but emphasized the importance of seeking expert advice, as they are not specialists in this area.*

Another member agreed, noting that traffic on the A267 has increased and driving standards appear to have declined. The member then enquired if the public had considered

setting up a Speed Watch group for the area. - *The member of the public explained that while they had considered Speed Watch, they have been unable to gather sufficient volunteers. They added that they had spoken with previous Speed Watch volunteers, who reported dissatisfaction due to the verbal abuse they received from drivers while monitoring speeds.*

A member explained that they are part of a Speed Watch group and noted that their group uses cameras to monitor speed and capture incidents of abuse from drivers. This footage is then reported directly to the Police, who handle the abuse cases. The member offered to send information to the public speaker, hoping this might assist in finding volunteers for the initiative. - *It was also suggested that members of the A267 Safety Action Group on Facebook could be approached, as they might be willing to volunteer for Speed Watch.*

A member explained that it would be beneficial for local groups to unite and present a collective case to East Sussex County Council, as gathering evidence of the issues is crucial. The County Council is unlikely to take action without clear, documented evidence. - *The member of the public responded by explaining that the Facebook group includes members from Mayfield, Hadlow Down, Horam, and Heathfield & Waldron Parish Councils. They stressed that the safety concerns extend across several junctions along this stretch of road, meaning it's not just one specific area that requires attention. They emphasized that this is a long-term project aimed at achieving a lasting solution, and they are aware that it will take time.*

ESCC representative Anne Cross reported that East Sussex Highways is responsible for addressing the concerns raised about the A267. She explained that she had been in contact with the Director of Transport, but noted that they are unlikely to comment extensively until the Police report on the recent accident is received, which could take some time. She also mentioned that East Sussex County Councillor Chris Dowling is the local representative and should be included in all discussions, advising the Parish Council to contact him for involvement in the matter.

Furthermore, she shared the information that she had previously achieved success in reducing speed limit in another area (Wellbrook Hill) through a petition. She emphasized that every accident, even minor ones, can be life-changing. While speed reduction measures are important, she explained that enforcement is equally crucial, as speed limits without enforcement are often ignored. She thanked the community for supporting Speed Watch, noting that volunteers help to slow down drivers. However, she pointed out that on the most dangerous roads, Speed Watch is not feasible due to safety concerns.

ESCC Councillor Cross reiterated that a petition was the method used to achieve speed reduction in Wellbrook Hill and recommended this approach moving forward. She acknowledged that the entire stretch of the A267 needs to be reviewed, although she recognized the challenge of doing so. Referring to the Safer Sussex Partnership maps, she explained that these maps break roads into sections rather than treating them as continuous blocks, making a review of the whole road more difficult. Nevertheless, she expressed a willingness to work with the Parish Council to explore how this could be done.

Members asked questions:

A member enquired that ESCC requires areas to meet specific point criteria before action is taken, and asked how these criteria could be met? *In response, ESCC representative Anne Cross explained that, despite requesting this information for over a year, she still*

does not have it. She did note, however, that the recent accidents along the A267 occurred at different points along the road, meaning they would not count as a single incident under the point system. Additionally, if driver error is found to be the cause, the road itself would not be blamed, and this would not contribute to the points tally. She also mentioned that the maps showing accident data are three months behind in updates.

Furthermore, ESCC Cross informed the members that Sussex Police are withdrawing from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, though no explanation has been provided for this decision. She stated that the Police are dissatisfied with the partnership's operations, as there has been no significant reduction in accidents over the past 10 years.

Another member asked about the process for progressing a petition and how it should be delivered to ESCC? *ESCC representative Anne Cross clarified that it is the responsibility of the local County Councillor, along with the petitioner, to take the petition to a full council meeting of ESCC.*

A member of the public then reported that a previous petition was presented by ESCC Councillor Chris Dowling, and requested a stand at the Parish Assembly to gather signatures.

ESCC Councillor Cross further explained that petitions require signatories to provide their addresses, as this information is essential for validation.

Wealden District Councillor Mike Gadd reported to members that, as a member of planning committees, he finds it frustrating when East Sussex Highways changes its stance from objecting to non-objection on certain developments. He explained that planning committees sometimes request speed limit reductions for large or new housing developments, but instead of reducing limits, East Sussex Highways often recommends cutting hedges while maintaining current speed limits. He expressed concern that this approach does not result in biodiversity gains, as preserving hedges would be preferable to meet environmental goals.

He mentioned that recently the HWPC requested a speed survey at Mutton Hall Hill. The results showed that, according to East Sussex County Council Highways' criteria, the road is considered safe, as the 85th percentile speed met their standards. However, 1,200 cars in a 24-hour period were recorded exceeding 35 mph, meaning they would have been subject to prosecution. Councillor Gadd emphasized the need for Highways to provide better explanations of their rationale in such cases. He voiced his full support for efforts to address speeding concerns across the parish.

Additionally, Councillor Gadd reported that there is now a new constituency of Sussex Weald, and much of Heathfield falls under the representation of Nus Ghani, the local MP. He recently met with her to discuss concerns over how Wealden is judged for meeting planning targets. The District is assessed based on the completion of developments, over which it has no direct control, though they are well ahead of targets when it comes to granting planning permissions. Nus Ghani has raised these issues with Labour ministers, particularly regarding how Wealden and Sussex are judged under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). She has asked for representation from these areas in the 2024 NPPF consultation, and Councillor Gadd will provide further updates once he receives a response.

A member of the public spoke regarding planning application WD/2024/2077/F. While they did not object to the principle of the new development, noting that the area has been vacant since the bungalows were damaged by a fire in the 1980s, they raised several concerns about the proposal. Their primary concern is that the building is large, and the third-bedroom window would significantly overlook their property, particularly into their bedroom. Additionally, the proposed chimney is also large and would have a notable visual impact. They are also concerned about the proposed parking area being within the root protection zone of oak trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), fearing this could jeopardize the safety and health of these trees. The main issue raised, however, is the height of the building and its proximity to their property, which will directly affect the performance of their solar panels. They have 14 large solar panels, and the new house would be located only one meter from their boundary line. This would block the sunlight for most of the day, particularly during six months of the year, significantly reducing their solar energy production, with further losses at other times. The speaker referred to a recent High Court ruling that opposed a development due to its impact on solar access, highlighting that the impact upon solar panels must now be considered in planning applications. They noted that the design and access statement for this application makes no reference to the potential impact on neighbouring solar panels, despite claiming the building will be energy-efficient and environmentally considerate. The development, in its current form, would negatively affect their ability to generate solar power. The member of the public clarified that they are not asking for the development to be halted, but rather for minor adjustments to reduce its impact. Specifically, they suggested that moving the building a few metres away from the boundary and slightly reducing its height would lessen the impact on their solar panels and help the development better align with the character of the locality. They emphasized the importance of considering the effect on solar panels in future planning applications, especially in relation to neighbouring properties.

Members asked questions:

A member enquired whether the High Court case referenced by the public had gone to appeal. *The member of the public confirmed that it had.*

Another member asked for clarification regarding the properties along the road and their various styles. *The member of the public explained the different types of houses and architectural styles present on that stretch of the road, including chalet bungalows in close proximity to the application site.*

A member then asked for an explanation of the diagrams presented by the public. *The member of the public proceeded to explain the diagrams, emphasizing how even a small amount of shadow can significantly reduce the productivity of solar panels.*

One member suggested that the public should ensure all of this information, including the detailed diagrams, is submitted to Wealden District Planning, as they would be very useful in the planning review process.

A member asked whether the original footprint of the bungalow could still be seen? *The member of the public confirmed that it could, but noted that the new proposal is considerably larger than the original footprint.*

24/273 **Apologies for Absence**

None

24/274 **Disclosure of Interests in matters on the Agenda**

Cllr Pert declared a personal interest in agenda item 24/284 as his property is in close proximity to the streetlight being discussed. He also declared a personal interest in planning applications WD/2024/2111F and WD/2024/2203/F as he lives along the road from the application sites.

Cllr Draper has a personal interest in planning application WD/2024/2111/F as she knows the ESCC employee who wrote a consultation letter within the application and also has a personal interest in planning application WD/2024/2077 as she lives in close proximity.

Cllr Coffey declared a personal interest planning application WD/2024/2111/F as the applicants asked his advice in the early stages. Due to this he will abstain from voting.

24/275 **To receive and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 23rd September 2024 (previously circulated)**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd September 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee

24/276 **Action points from previous minutes**

None

This item was brought forward

24/283 **A267 Cross in Hand accident/safety of the road**

The members engaged in a thorough discussion and approved the following actions:

- *To support the community campaign and assist where required.*
- *To support the Speed Watch initiative in the area.*
- *To establish a book in the office where members of the public can sign the petition, whilst ensuring compliance with GDPR guidance.*
- *To continue to request a meeting with East Sussex County Council Highways.*
- *To keep seeking statistics related to the A267, including updated crash-site tables to provide evidence for future submissions.*
- *To ask East Sussex County Councillor Chris Dowling for his support in this initiative and to encourage him to attend a public meeting. The Parish Council would chair the meeting, facilitating discussion of the issues, but the community would lead the initiative.*

It was also agreed that the Assistant Clerk would enquire with the Police about their departure from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership.

This item was brought forward

24/278 To consider Planning Applications after the agenda was published

WD/2024/2077/F- Mill Road, Heathfield, TN21 0XE. Proposed 4-bedroom dwelling with rear garden and patio, parking and driveway.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee objects to this application on the following grounds:*

1. **Size and Height:** *The design of the development is excessively large in terms of both size and height, which would adversely impact upon the adjacent dwellinghouse, and would also not be appropriate for the area at this prominent junction.*
2. **Access Concerns:** *There are significant concerns regarding the proposed vehicular access point, particularly due to the close proximity to the junction between Ghyll Road & Mill Road. The Arboricultural Report recommends relocating the access point further down Ghyll Road to prevent potential damage to trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), which could result in the loss of these trees.*
3. **Chimney Size:** *The proposed chimney is disproportionately large, and there is a lack of clarification regarding its exact location.*
4. **Impact on Neighbours:** *The overall scale and height of the development would negatively impact neighbouring properties, particularly by reducing solar panel power production, thus creating a detrimental environmental effect. This is especially concerning for a Parish Council that has declared a climate emergency. The development would overlook the adjoining property, furthermore, via the proposed flank bedroom windows.*
5. **Environmental Considerations:** *The Local Planning Authority must consider the environmental impact of this development, which is considered unacceptably excessive.*
6. **Design Consistency:** *The design and style of the proposed development is considered inconsistent with the character of the locality.*
7. **Surface Water Drainage:** *There are concerns regarding surface water drainage, as the runoff could adversely affect neighbouring properties and exacerbate issues in an already vulnerable area*

This item was brought forward

24/290 **Former Broad Oak Primary School, Broad Oak - Forward Plan entry**

The members discussed the proposal for the area and supported the proposal to approve the sale of the property, while also enquiring whether this includes the playing fields. It was noted that this item is also being discussed at the next Full Council meeting.

Cllr Snook left the meeting 8.38pm

24/277 **To consider Planning Applications received since the last meeting**

WD/2024/2111/F- Deerness, Alexandra Road, Heathfield TN21 8EQ. change of use from residential to community/religious use.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee objects to this application on the following grounds:*

- **Negative Impact on the Community:** *The proposed development would have a detrimental effect on the local residential community by reason of increased noise and activity, including vehicular activity.*
- **Insufficient Parking:** *The application does not provide adequate parking for its intended use, which is particularly concerning given the existing parking issues in the area.*
- **Incomplete Plans:** *The submitted plans are insufficient and incomplete, notably lacking details about the church that is already owned by the applicant, which should be outlined in blue on the plans.*

Cllrs Pert and Coffey abstained.

WD/2024/2159/F- Combe house, Burwash Road, Broad Oak, Heathfield, TN21 8XE. Single storey rear extension.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members support this application and consider the size and appearance to be in keeping with the locality.*

WD/2024/2203/F- Manora, Alexandra Road, Heathfield, TN21 8EH. Proposed single storey extension.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members objected to this application on the following grounds:*

- **Design and Character:** *The proposed flat roof design is out of character with the existing property and other properties in the area.*
- **Negative Impact on Biodiversity:** *The application poses negative impacts on local biodiversity in terms of light pollution.*
- **Dark Skies Concerns:** *The excessive glazing, including the proposed lantern, raises concerns regarding light pollution and dark skies.*
- **Environmental Impact:** *The overall design and features of the development would result in a negative environmental impact.*

Cllr Pert abstained.

WD/2024/2200/F- Yulden Farm, Sandy Cross Lane, Heathfield, TN21 8QR. New porch and alterations to windows and doors.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members support this application and consider the size and appearance to be in keeping with the locality.*

WD/2024/2204/FA- 2 Gorse Cottages, Cross in Hand Road, Heathfield, TN21 0SL. Variation of condition 13 of WD/2024/1517/FA (Variation of condition 13 of WD/2023/1396/O (Development of No. Low carbon semi-detached dwellings) change to house design) to amend plans.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee supported the application on the basis that the minor amendments are acceptable. However, members expressed concerns regarding the excessive removal of vegetation that has already taken place at this site and requested that care and protection measures be implemented for the existing trees and boundary hedges.*

WD/2024/2224/F- Hill Waters, Firgrove Road, Cross in Hand, TN21 0QL. Proposed ground floor & first floor extensions; internal and external alterations, including new roof over existing bay window & forming new bedroom over existing sitting room.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee supported the application, subject to the applicant entering into an appropriate Section 106 agreement with the District Planning Authority. This agreement should ensure that measures are in place to prevent the continuation of any remaining unimplemented works in respect of the 2018 Planning Permission Ref: WD/2018/1313/F.*

WD/2024/7031/AD- Oaklands Farm, Newick Lane, Heathfield, TN21 8PU. Agriculture storage barn & hardstanding.

WD/2024/7032/AD- Dower House Farm, Possingworth Lane, Waldron, TN22 5HJ. Polytunnel for growing fruit, vegetables and flowers.

These applications were noted by members

It was approved to continue with the meeting, as it will exceed the 2 ½ hour limit outlined in the Standing Orders.

24/278 To consider Planning Applications after the agenda was published

WD/2024/2251/F- 52 Broad View, Broad Oak, Heathfield, TN21 8SB. Enlarged rear dormer window and roof lights to front pitch of roof.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members support this application and consider the size and appearance to be in keeping with the locality.*

Note: *The members wish to note that the drawings are inaccurate. The front bedroom window is not shown on the elevation, although it is indicated on the plans. If there were no window, this would not comply with Building Regulations.*

WD/2024/2248/F - Heathfield Park cricket Club, School Hill, Old Heathfield, TN21 9AE. Installation of replacement cricket nets including refurbishment of 2 x practice wickets and associated netting.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members support this application and consider the size and appearance to be in keeping with the locality.*

WD/2024/1973/F - Cedar Cottage, Nursery Lane, Cross in Hand, Heathfield, TN22 4EU. Partial change of use of land to equestrian and construction of new sand school for private equestrian use.

OBSERVATIONS: *The committee members objected to this application on the following grounds:*

- *It is not clear whether the stables have planning permission.*
- *There is no clear indication of how construction vehicles will access the site.*
- *There are drainage concerns, with insufficient details provided in the plans.*
- *More detailed plans are needed, particularly regarding site levels, cross-levels, and access arrangements for both horses and construction vehicles.*

24/279 **Planning applications approved: Parish Council Comments are in *Italics*. Please note any decisions that vary from the parish council comments are attached.**

WD/2024/1886/F – Waldron Thorns, Heathfield, TN21 0AB. Removal of existing defective lean-to roofs, raise brickwork and construct new flat roof.

Approved/ Support

WD/2024/1546/F- All Saints Church, Church Street, Old Heathfield, TN21 9AG. Level metal railings with new higher railings to remove the risk of falling into external stairwell leading to boiler plant room. Approved/ Support

These were noted by members

24/280 **Planning applications refused:**

WD/2024/0814/O- Land to the east of 1 Heath Cottage, Cross in Hand Road, Heathfield, TN21 0SJ. Development of 4 low carbon semi-detached dwellings. Refused/*Object*

WD/2024/1360/F- Land East of Tanyard Cottage, Newick Lane, Heathfield, TN PT. erection of six 4-bed dwellings with means of access (amended description) Refused/*Object*

These were noted by members

24/281 **Tree Works**

TM/2024/0185/TPO

25 Bay tree Close, Heathfield, TN21 8YG. Crown reduce 4 beech trees within tree preservation order no.14, 1989.

TM/2024/0199/TPO

Autumn cottage, Collingwood Avenue, Heathfield, TN21 8DN. Cut back oak tree by approx. 10% and remove secondary growth subject to tree preservation order (Heathfield and Waldron) No. 39, 1991

The Committee did not object to either of these applications.

24/282 **Planning Appeals**

Ref: APP/C1435/W/24/3349065- Land adjoining Mill Lane, Lewes Road, Cross in Hand, Heathfield, TN21 0TA

This was noted by members

24/284 **Streetlights**

- (i) Vale View Road report – to consider- RP talked to residents and has created a report
- (ii) Vale View Road quote – To approve
- (iii) ESCC contract and concerns – To consider
- (iv) Annual Costs- To consider

These items will be brought forward to the next Planning and Highways Committee Meeting as the Council is waiting for further information.

24/285 **Planning decision record**

This was noted by members

24/286 **SLR minutes**

These were noted by members

24/287 **Gatwick Airport FASI South Airspace Change Proposal Update**

Cllr Whitehouse provided a brief outline of the proposal and informed members of an upcoming consultation, which they may wish to consider. He assured members that he would keep them updated with any new information as it becomes available.

- 24/288 **Terms of Reference**
This was adopted by members
- 24/289 **Budget 2025/26**
Members discussed the expenditure for 2025/26 and agreed on two additional suggestions: the provision of T-board signage for road safety and the consideration of sample surveys to gather evidence to support planning comments.
- 24/291 **Environment** – to identify agenda items where the environment has been considered by the Council/Committee in their deliberations and decision making
The Committee considered the environment in all of the planning applications and other matters
- 24/292 **Crime & Disorder Act 1998 Section 17** – to consider effects (if any) arising from items on the Agenda.
Streetlights and road safety issues were considered.
- 24/293 **Risk Management:** -To consider effects (if any) arising from items on the Agenda
Streetlights and road safety issues were considered
- 24/294 **The next Planning and Highways Meeting will be held on Monday 4th November 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Main Hall, Heathfield Community Centre, Sheepsetting Lane.**
This was noted by members

Meeting closed at 21.28pm