

# WESTMESTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 6.30 pm at Westmeston Parish Hall

**Present:** Councillors Rob Mills (Chairman), Cathy Mills (Vice-Chairman), Mark Clark, Joyce Dudeney, Clare Farrands, Tessa Haughton  
Paul Vidler, Clerk  
No members of the public were present.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Councillor Vincent Tickner.
2. **Declarations of interest:** None.
3. **Planning:**

(a) **To agree a response to the following applications for planning permission:**

**SDNP/22/03352/FUL Dunster, Underhill Lane**  
Construction of an equestrian sand school.

Members noted the previous application and dismissed appeal for a similar development at Holly Trees to the west of the application site. Members raised concerns about the impact of the proposed equestrian sand school on the character and appearance of the National Park, with reference to screening, the scale of the works, the proposed use and lighting.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to comment as follows:

Westmeston Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds that the development outside the settlement boundary fails to contribute to and sufficiently conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of a valued landscape. It contravenes policies SD4, SD5, SD6 and SD24 of the South Downs Local Plan and policies CONS2 and CONS6 of the Ditching, Street and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Landscape Appraisal goes to some lengths to conclude that the development is sufficiently screened and any visibility is minor. Nevertheless, as the Appraisal itself says, this conclusion is dependent on seasonal leaf coverage. No further evidence (e.g., an arboriculture assessment) is presented. WPC doubts that it will be sufficient in all seasons making the impact of the development worse.

Furthermore, WPC wishes to raise doubts that all of the trees providing the screening cited in the Appraisal are owned and controlled by the applicant. In addition to this problem future land sales could reduce control and the effectiveness of the screening still further.

WPC has concerns about access to the development without reducing screening. The applicant refers to access via Stable View, but because of the newbuild garage it is not apparent how access will be gained for horse paraphernalia past the garage and up the 30 degree slope.

WPC also has concerns about the scale and impact of the engineering works which because of the 2.8m meter excavation are considerably bigger than the sand school itself. Because of the scale and the proximity to neighbouring properties it is not clear how the edge to the east and west are to be retained.

The facility would be for private use. As such the public benefit is extremely limited and would not seem to outweigh the risk of harm to the character and appearance of the rural landscape that ranges between minor and substantial.

Should the LPA be minded to grant permission for the development, WPC would request the imposition of strict conditions insofar as these are possible to safeguard trees and screening, dark skies and restrict use to private-only. If conditions sufficiently strict to safeguard these into the future are not possible then their absence should weigh in the balance for refusing permission.

**SDNP/22/03667/FUL Larchfield House, Spatham Lane**

Demolition of existing dwelling and replacement with a single storey, 3no bedroom house with associated parking and landscaping.

Members noted the proposed development would not result in more than a 30% increase in the floorspace of the existing dwelling. Members noted the polytunnel would be removed, the improved landscaping on the site and did not consider the new dwelling would be harmful.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to comment as follows:

Westmeston Parish Council makes no comment on this application.

**(b) To agree a response to the appeal lodged against the following refusal of planning permission:**

**SDNP/22/00478/FUL Green Plat, Spatham Lane**

Removal of stable and workshop and erection of new 3 bedroom dwelling house with parking.

Members noted an appeal had been lodged against the refusal of planning permission for this proposal.

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed to comment as follows:

Westmeston Parish Council reiterates its previous objection to the planning application as follows:

*Westmeston Parish Council objects to this application, which will result in development within the National Park outside the settlement boundary in open countryside, contrary to policy SD25 of the South Downs Local Plan and policy DS1 of the Ditchling Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan. The proposed house does not meet the specific exception criteria set out in these policies.*

The Parish Council also supports the reasons for refusal of the planning application by the local planning authority.

Meeting closed at 6.53pm.