

WESTMESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on Monday 25th April 2022 at 6.30 pm at Westmeston Parish Church

Present: Councillors Mark Clark, Clare Farrands, Tessa Houghton, Vincent Tickner
Paul Vidler, Clerk

Four members of the public were present.

Councillor Mark Clark was appointed Chairman of the meeting as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were not present.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Councillors Rob Mills, Cathy Mills and Joyce Dudeney.
2. **Declarations of interest:** None.
3. **Planning:**
To agree a response to the following applications for planning permission:

(a) **SDNP/22/01125/FUL Land West of Lewes Road**

Redevelopment of the existing stable block with a holiday accommodation unit.

The application proposes the demolition of the existing stable block on the site and the construction of a single storey building to provide a holiday accommodation unit for 6 people and a new hard surfaced driveway and vehicle hard standing. Vehicles would access the site from the existing access from Lewes Road.

Claire Mills, the applicant, spoke in support of the application. The proposals complied with relevant planning policies for small holiday lets; would reduce traffic movements compared to the existing use; and were designed to resemble a barn. Ms Mills also explained the recent use of the site; and confirmed the access arrangements.

Philip Andrews, a local resident, raised concerns about highway safety as the traffic survey was conducted during the pandemic lockdown; the land required for visibility splays were outside the applicant's control; and trees and vegetation would restrict visibility.

Marieanne Hickman, a local resident, raised concerns the development would be outside the settlement boundary; referred to a dismissed planning appeal for a similar proposal in Beacon Road, Ditchling; and adequate visibility splays would not be provided without the consent of the adjoining landowner.

Members raised concerns about the construction of a larger building on the site outside the settlement boundary, comprising an additional 30% increase in the footprint and having an increased roof height than the existing stables building. Together with the proposed the new hard surfaced driveway and vehicle hard standing, this would result in the urbanisation of farmland and the over-development of the site within the South Downs National Park.

Members were also concerned about the increase in vehicles entering and existing the site by drivers unfamiliar with local traffic dangers along this section of Lewes Road and noted the traffic survey had been undertaken at a time when less traffic was using the road. The improvements to site lines would be on land outside the applicant's control. It was considered the proposals will increase traffic levels and increase highway safety concerns in Lewes Road.

Members also raised concerns about the impact on dark night skies, the future expansion of the holiday accommodation use on the site and possible future use of the development for residential accommodation. The planning authority was requested to attach planning conditions should the application be granted.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to object to the application and for Councillor Clark to agree the final version of the comments for submission to Lewes DC.

Meeting closed at 7.32pm.

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