

Westmeston Parish Council

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Tuesday 10th January 2023 at 6.30 pm at Westmeston Parish Hall

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

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Councillor Cathy Mills.
- 2. Declarations of interest:** None.
- 3. Public questions:** None.
- 4. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 8th November 2022:**

RESOLVED: The minutes of the previous meetings on 8th November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record of the meetings and were signed by the Chairman.

- 5. Financial matters:**

RESOLVED: Payment of the following invoices:

Payee	Reason	Amount
Westmeston Jubilee Pathway Trust	Grant	£350.00
Monday Group	Grant	£250.00
Springett & Campion Educational Charity	Grant	£200.00
Ditchling Streat and Westmeston PCC	Grant	£350.00
Westmeston Parish Hall Trust	Hire for meetings	£125.00
Westmeston Parish Hall Trust	Hire of storage space	£25.00
Cathy Mills	Reimbursement for email anti-spam filtering	£43.20
Cathy Mills	Reimbursement for website domain name	£24.00
Paul Vidler	Clerk's pay including backpay and planning training	£1,241.60
HMRC	PAYE	£310.40
Paul Vidler	Clerk's expenses	£30.60

- 6. Planning:**

- (a) Development opposite Westmeston Place, east of Lewes Road and Blackdog Farm east of Lewes Road:**

NOTED: Application SDNP/22/04495/FUL for the retention of the shed opposite Westmeston Place had been refused and there is currently no information on enforcement action. No further information was available regarding Blackdog Farm.

(b) To agree a response to the following planning application:

LW/22/0818 Thomsetts Farm, Hundred Acre Lane

Demolition of single storey outbuildings, erection of a part two-storey, part one-storey outbuilding with car port with supported two storey access steps and associated landscaping (Resubmission of LW/22/0442).

RESOLVED: Members agreed to comment as follows:

Westmeston Parish Council objects to this application on the following grounds:

1. This is a reapplication following the previously refused application to which WPC objected. The applicants have made changes to make the replacement outbuildings less dominant in mass and style which were reasons for the failure of the previous application. But the changes are slight and the development would still be visible from the Lane. The resubmission would still be an overdevelopment. WPC objects on the same grounds and supports LDCs reason to refuse the previous application:

The increased massing, prominence and two storey design of the proposal development would result in an outbuilding which would not be subordinate to the existing dwelling or sympathetic to its character and appearance contrary to CP11 of Lewes District Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy 2016; DM25 and DM29 of Lewes District Local Plan Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document December 2018; Cons 2 of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Plan; and the NPPF 2021.

2. The application again fails to include a habitat survey. The existing outbuildings have the potential to support bats and nesting birds and the lack of habitat survey was one of the reasons for the failure of the previous application. With no habitat survey the resubmission would be expected to fail.

3. This is not an easy application to make comparisons between the existing and proposed buildings or between the previously refused application. The applicant makes reference to discussions between the planning officer following the previous refusal and these being reflected in the current application. It is important to note WPC has no way of knowing whether these suggestions have been incorporated fully and whether the balance of the development for a successful permission in the opinion of the officer is attained.

4. The application attempts to reduce the mass "slightly", but by an unspecified amount. It reduces the footprint to 158m², but does not quantify the size of the previous footprint. And the proposed development is "moved further back" from the Lane. Nevertheless the application is a replacement of the same outbuildings with the addition of a second storey which increases the size and footprint of the building. It would be visible in public views from Hundred Acre Lane.

5. The proposal would be an overdevelopment and not complement and enhance the character and context of the surrounding countryside location, contrary to Core Policy 11 of the LDLP1, Policies DM11 and DM25 of the LDLP2 and Policy CONS2 of the NDP.

6. The screening offered by the existing planting and hedge is important. There appears to be a tension between the necessary removal of parts of the existing hedge and its providing screening in the long term. This may be resolved by negotiation, minimising the removal of parts of the hedge and a condition regarding the hedge and other screening. This should include a maximum period allowed for it to provide full screening.

7. The building is close to the oak tree on the road edge which is of prime value. Concerns are raised about the future loss of the tree should the development be implemented, contrary to Policy DM11 of the LDLP2 and Policy CONS2 of the NDP. Should the application be approved, WPC requests a

planning condition is attached requiring appropriate tree protection measures to ensure the retention of the tree.

8. The existing outbuildings have the potential to support bats and nesting birds. The application is not supported by a habitat survey and this requirement should not be waived. The application has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would avoid harm to protected and other species contrary to CP10 of LDLP1, DM24 of LDLP2 and the NPPF.

(c) To note the responses made on the following planning applications:

NOTED: Members noted the responses made on the following planning applications since the previous meeting.

SDNP/22/04929/HOUS School House, Lewes Road

Reconstruction of outbuildings to the rear of the property to create kitchen/dining/utility areas with glazed connection to the house, additional roof lights to front and rear, and solar panels to front elevation.

No comment.

SDNP/22/05010/LDP Hayleigh Farm, Streat Lane

Confirmation of the Use of Building and Yard as B8 Storage & Removals Business.

No comments submitted.

SDNP/22/04487/FUL Holly Trees, Underhill Lane

Construction of an equestrian sand school.

Westmeston Parish Council notes that the two applications at Dunster (SDNP/22/03352/FUL) and Holly Trees (SDNP/22/04487/FUL) are essentially the same with a different access. WPC objected to the Dunster application and resubmits this in objection to the Holly Trees application mutatis mutandis. WPC fully supports the objection by Ditchling Parish Council.

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/22/05335/HOUS & 05336/LIS Hayleigh Farmhouse, Streat Lane
Replace a single-storey later addition with a new single-storey extension to the main house, internal alterations, roof repairs and the construction of a small single-storey extension to the side of the main house to create a secondary entrance, extend the driveway and new entrance gates to the main house, upgrade and refurbish the pool house and convert and refurbish the stables to provide guest accommodation with associated hard and soft landscaping.

SDNP/22/05552/HOUS & 05553/LIS Hayleigh Farmhouse, Streat Lane

Demolition of existing garage and erection of replacement single-storey annexe dwelling.

Pre-application advice was sought and the assessment made that the proposals are likely to be acceptable in principle at the application stage. WPC does not know if the applications for planning permission and listed building consent depart from the schemes discussed at the pre-application stage. From the evidence of the quotations of the pre-application advice in the applications, it would appear not.

The scale and massing of the buildings seem to remain virtually the same. Portions of the house having historic value would appear to have been kept. Provided this is the opinion of the planning officer, WPC would have no concerns on these counts.

Regarding the removal of the existing garage and replacement with a single story detached building to form an annex, there is inevitably some concern that at some later stage the annex becomes severed from the main house and used for purposes not ancillary to it. It is recommended that a condition is made on any permission to explicitly prevent any separation.

(d) Inter Parish Working Group on Housing/Eton College Site/Lewes District Council Local Plan:

NOTED: Councillor Vincent Tickner reported the meeting on 16th November 2022 between the Inter Parish Working Group and Maria Caulfield MP had been cancelled. The next meeting of the Working Group is on 19th January 2023.

(e) National Planning Policy Framework – updating consultation:

The consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF in connection with the provisions in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill runs until 2nd March 2023. Details have been circulated by the Clerk.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to circulate further details from the Inter Party Working Group, the Community Planning Alliance and a summary of the NPPF changes. Members to circulate their comments on the changes for agreement by the council and submission before the consultation deadline.

7. Ditchling Parish Council Traffic Committee:

NOTED: Members noted that a meeting between Westmeston and Ditchling Parish Council members will be held on 16th January 2023. Notes from the meeting will be circulated.

8. Any other information for noting:

NOTED: Flooding in Lewes Road resulting from run-off from land to the south of Hooks Acre and damage to the Jubilee Pathway had been reported to East Sussex County Council, who did not consider this to be a significant issue. Sandbags are in place to at the field entrance and the situation will be monitored by members.

9. Date of next meeting: 14th March 2023 at 6.30pm.

Meeting closed at 7.08pm.

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