

# COLDWALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD

on WEDNESDAY 10th MARCH 2021 at 7.30PM \* HELD VIRTUALLY

\* The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (Regulation 5)

### Those Present:

**Cllr J Evans**  
**Cllr C Dennis**  
**Cllr S Hewer**  
**Cllr O Dudman**  
**Cllr A Lane**

**Vice-Chairman**

**Mrs LD Sherlock-Fuidge**

**Clerk**

**Lisa May**  
**Matthew Wykes**  
**Peter Cleveland**

**CEO Lodge Hill Trust**  
**Lodge Hill Chair of Trustees**  
**Henry Adams**

### Parishioners:

**Laura Braun**  
**Chris & Rosemarie Glithero**

**Lucy Pecks**  
**Tim Attfield**

Before the meeting there was an opportunity for members of the public present to speak with council.

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Cllr Evans welcomed members from Lodge Hill and local residents to the meeting, reminding everyone that residents and councillors were all able to make personal comments on the application, via the South Downs planning portal.

Cllr Dennis, as planning lead, asked for comments for those attending.

**Lisa May**, CEO of Lodge Hill Trust, highlighted the aims of the Lodge Hill Trust in running courses to provide support for children and young people across the West Sussex and beyond. The Trust have taken three years to develop this application, having explored all other options, a carpark, buildings leased out to third parties, but each option did not generate the level of income needed to support the work they do. The pandemic has increased the need, to secure the future, with the loss of income it has caused. During September 2019, Lodge Hill held a public consultation attended by many local residents, since then the Trust has developed the plans. This is not a profit-making exercise; however, the Lodge Hill site is tired, and it needs investment, the buildings, the woodlands and the perimeter fencing all need money spent and this development is to build up reserves to secure the future of the site. It is a one-off opportunity for the Trust and do appreciate the comments received and want to work with our neighbours to achieve this.

**Peter Cleveland**, planning consultant for of Lodge Hill, provided an overview of the application has been submitted for 16 open market dwellings as an outline planning, so it is just an agreement in principle to secure the access, with images of the layout and design of the dwellings only being indicative at this stage. This proposed scheme is an Enabling Development application, the definition of which is, to allow a development to be granted, where an application would not normally be allowed permission, as it provides significant public benefit, originally to provide for heritage features, and is now commonly applied to social and commercial enterprises in the charity sector. The Lodge Hill Trust will retain one property to ensure a long-term income for them, and they will work with the builders to make sure that certain properties are made available to local residents first. The position of the access has been carefully considered following

traffic surveys. There have been concerns raised about the ecology of the site but appreciate that impact can-not be fully avoided as a wooded site but hope that the National Park will apply the enabling principles, and extensive tree screening will be kept with new planting introduced. They are committed to working with the local community. The proposed scheme will secure enough land value and with the retained income will secure the viability of Lodge Hill for the foreseeable future.

**Tim Attfield**, resident, is objecting to the application in part, but appreciated that Lodge Hill is an asset to the community but highlighted some concerns he had:

- The impact of COVID should not be made so much of as this process started before it began.
- The proposal represents a 160% increase in houses along Waltham Park Road, this is a small country lane.
- Waltham Park Road access with the A29 is very close to a blind brow in the road, which often has accidents. The Application indicates that the average speed of cars is 33 mph, this is unlikely, as there is often a police speed enforcement vehicle at the layby most weeks.
- The documents indicate that the average price of a 4-bed property is £485K, recently a property on the A29 looks like it sold for £780K, quite a difference there.
- The SDNPA Local plan – Policy 28 sets out that developments of 11 or more properties should have 50% social housing, this application does not have any, he appreciates what Lodge Hill are trying to achieve, but it seems to be going to the other extreme.
- It appears that, if Lodge Hill do not get this application, there seems to be a vague threat that something else will occur.
- As indicated that there is still opportunity to change the layout in the plans, suggested that something that would be of benefit to the community would be a way of slowing traffic down and a way of doing that would be with a roundabout entrance on the A29.

**Laura Braun**, resident, advised that she lived opposite the proposed development on the other side of the A29, and are big supporter of Lodge Hill, but wish to raise her concerns:

- The junction of Waltham Park Road, Brook Lane and the A29 is dangerous, with the increases traffic the junction could potentially be more dangerous, especially as it is situated near a blind hill.
- The layby is used by some residents in Brookview, who do not have a driveway to park their cars, and is worried that it will be used for extra parking by resident of the new properties.
- Also, she wished to highlight that the new dwellings would look directly into the bedrooms of the homes in Brookview, the plans note the retention of screening on the boundary with the A29, but to what depth? Essentially, what she is concerned about is; would the new properties be able to see into her bathroom?

Cllr Dennis thanked everyone for their comments.

**P 20 / 6.00**      **TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Nelson and Davies

**P 20 / 7.00**      **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS, AND ANY CHANGES SINCE THEIR LAST DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Nelson advised of his trusteeship to Lodge Hill and did not attend the meeting.

**P 20 / 8.00**      **PLANNING**

**P 20 / 8.01**      **SDNP/21/00627/OUT**                      **LODGE HILL, LONDON ROAD, WATERSFIELD**

Application For:                      16 Dwellings

Cllr Dennis reiterated that the Parish Council represents the community, and need to be seen to be fair and equitable to all applications. Councillors need to be aware that, while this is the Lodge Hill application is being discussed tonight, there are others in the pipeline, and we need to be mindful that no precedent is set. The end result, that we arrive at an objective and unbiased response.

Councillors were asked for comments:

Cllr Hewer noted that she thought that one of the speakers had indicated that Lodge Hill would offer the houses to local residents first, however a second speaker had mentioned that there was no affordable housing, not clear on the situation.

Cllr Dudman wish to highlight:

- Habitat loss and destruction, good site for deer and hedgehogs, there is not much similar habitat for these two species in Coldwaltham, especially hedgehogs, which are in decline.
- Darks Skies, the site is on elevated ground, and putting a screen in is not a permanent solution, over time people will want to cut the hedge back or thin it out, highlighting the properties 1-8 Brookview, which are on a lower level.
- Waltham Park Road is a small lane, which is often used by many cyclists and dog walkers, along the side of the road. In particular, the proximity of the junction of the A29 cars having to accelerate from the crossroads, up the hill along Waltham Park Road, meeting cars exiting the development.

Cllr Lane highlighted that there are two other proposed developments in the area, the proposed development site in the SDNPA Local Plan and the possible campsite further along Waltham Park Road, these will all contribute to an increase in traffic at the crossroads. The addition of potential school children having to cross the road, with no pavement, to access buses.

Cllr Dennis noted the lack of affordable housing – SDNPA Local Plan notes that for development of 10 or more homes, a minimum of 50% of new homes created will be provided as affordable homes on-site, of which a minimum 75% will provide a rented affordable tenure. The proposal has no provision. She appreciated that Lodge Hill are seeking to raise funds from this project but should be aware what the Local Plan states and of the impact to the community if there is no affordable housing included.

Peter Cleveland clarified that if a development includes an element of affordable housing, depresses the land value associated to that of a marked property, it reduces the viability of the scheme to not make it worth doing, or more homes are required from the site. This is set out in the planning statement, as to why no affordable housing is included.

The SDNPA Local Plan states that the provision for the village should be for 28 houses, if this application is approved and the other site also occurs then this would increase the provision by half as much again.

Cllr Evans reviewed the comment about house prices - the one mentioned although it sits on the main road it sits on an individual plot that might have influenced the sale price. The position that Lodge Hill is taking does need a bit of consideration, the value of the 4-Bed property at £485K is a bit low, but that would suggest that the prices of 2 and 3 Bed properties are possibly also low, which would put them higher in value and more out of reach of buyers from the village. It might be hard for Lodge Hill to sustain their position of offering the properties to local residents first, especially in the current situation and we don't know how long it might go on.

Members may need to consider affordable housing in its widest possible terms, as rented and affordable for all, needs much more careful consideration in terms of what is written in section 7 of the planning statement, which merely says that the proposal is an exceptional development.

Cllr Evans, also stressed the increases in car ownership in society, a general rule of thumb 16 properties in the proposed development will generate a possible 32 cars for adults. If the last few months experience, has been anything to go by, those 32 cars need to make space for delivery vans, other visitors to the site, with very much more space than would have been considered even five years ago. With that in mind the development site looks very crowded.

Chris Glithero asked to speak, he highlighted: the additional road traffic especially at the junction of Waltham Park Road and Brook Lane, which is difficult even now, the mix of the housing is very important, yes affordable housing should be accommodated, equally the pricing of the independently owned houses is unrealistically low, so the calculations should be reconsidered to make the site viable with some affordable housing for local people. Is it viable with fewer properties?

Peter Cleveland clarified about the property values, are calculated on floor area, and these are likely to be of a reduced size to those which you take comparable prices from. This has a huge influence on the value of the properties.

Tim Attfield noted should these be comparable to a property in Pulborough isn't a fair comparison, the one in Coldwaltham was possibly purchased by a developer to be developed.

Cllr Dennis restated the effect the development would have on the local ecology. There is information stating that works will be carried out at certain times of the year to mitigate problems for wildlife, with hedgehog corridors put in place. However, concerns were raised that following the development's completion, that these measures are monitored and kept in place.

Peter Cleveland clarified that any ecological enhancements are covered by a management contract, which would be taken forward and protected by planning conditions.

Cllr Dennis raised concerns regarding pedestrians crossing the A29 to access the only footpath (pavement) on the opposite side of the A29 to the proposed site, the proposed site is just under the brow of the hill and would be very dangerous. Alternatively, pedestrians crossing Waltham Park Road to access the post office or school is also dangerous.

Cllr Dennis reminded members that Coldwaltham is located in the Dark Skies Reserve in the South Downs National Park, highlighting that there is no street lighting in the village.

Peter Cleveland asked the Parish Council to consider the overall benefits which Lodge Hill provides the community.

Laura Braun confirmed that Lodge Hill have provided much for local schools and community groups like Cubs, Scouts etc and also running holiday clubs for local children during school holidays.

Lisa May confirmed that these are usually run between 3 -5 days a week. They also support the Lunch Club.

Cllr Evans summed up the meeting by agreeing that there is no doubt that Lodge Hill provides many benefits to the community but that should not prevent us from critiquing a plan which we think offers potential downsides to the village which needs to be thought through some more. He appreciated that there is perhaps an urgency but that it needs to be balanced. There is a reason that Lodge Hill exists and there is a need that it should continue with this, but this should not brush aside the quality of life for others in the village.

Cllr Evans thanked everyone for attending the meeting and giving their comments and encouraged residents that they should forward their comments to the SDNPA via their planning portal as soon as possible.

Meeting Closed at 8.35 pm.

**Chairman:**..... **Date:**.....

Distributed to those present, also Cllrs Nelson, Davies, Bowler, Hewitt.