

COLDWALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD on TUESDAY 17TH MARCH 2020 at 7.30PM AT FIELD HOUSE, BROCKHURST FARM, WATERSFIELD

Those Present: Cllr G Nelson Chairman
Cllr T Burr Vice Chairman
Cllr A Lane
Cllr O Dudman
Cllr C Dennis

P 19 / 21.00 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - to receive comments made by members of the public.

None

P 19 / 22.00 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Hewer and Evans.

P 19 / 23.00 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None received.

P 19 / 24.00 PLANNING

P 19 / 24.01 SDNP/20/00694/FUL LAND NORTH OF WALTHAM PARK ROAD, COLDWALTHAM

Change of use of agricultural land to form a campsite, demolition of an agricultural building, conversion of a farm building to form a reception/office and 2 bed holiday lodge, erection of facilities buildings.

Cllr Burr presented the plans to the meeting. He noted that the application had been reserved for decision by the National Park Authority, rather than Horsham District Council, because it entailed a conflict between the Park's two statutory purposes: first, to conserve and enhance, and secondly to promote public enjoyment of, the special qualities of the National Park. The proposed campsite would help meet the shortage of visitor accommodation in the peak tourist season, but there was potential for adverse impact on the natural environment, which the developer claimed to mitigate.

In discussion, the Council recognised that the attractive setting of Coldwaltham and surrounding areas of the National Park was a national asset, which people from across the whole country should be able to visit and enjoy. There was therefore no objection in principle to low-impact accommodation offering immersive experience of the natural environment. Inevitably, however, there were issues to consider.

- The points raised in observations from the Highway Authority, in respect of both traffic flow and pedestrian rights of way, were important and should be supported. Peak vehicle movements should be quantified and if necessary limited, and site vehicles should give due priority to walkers using the access way.
- Vehicle impact should be considered for Waltham Park Road as a whole, with its various blind bends, and not just around the junction with the site access way.

- While there was a proposed limit of 30 on the number of camping pitches, there was less clarity on the types of accommodation to be put on them. Impermanent tented accommodation would be one thing. Glamping pods, chalets, and caravans, on the other hand, formed an intrusive spectrum, increasingly at odds with the professed aim for authentic experience of the natural world. Accommodation should be kept to the low end of the spectrum, if necessary, through planning conditions.
- Specific objection should be made to the proposed barn conversion into a two-bed holiday let. Such a built structure was inconsistent with the proclaimed green ethos of the site. It could also be the thin end of the wedge for further buildings which might in the end take over the site. The loss of an established nesting site for barn owls was also incompatible with the Authority's first duty to conserve the natural beauty and wildlife of the National Park, and there were no proposals to provide an alternative site.

RESOLVED: **To raise no general objection to the application, but to make specific objection to the barn conversion, and to draw the National Park Authority's attention to this and the other points made in discussion.**

P 19 / 25.00 **OTHER ITEMS**

The Chairman briefed the Council on the advice he proposed to put round the Parish regarding its Council's response to the coronavirus emergency. The focus would be on protecting vulnerable parishioners, and would enable anyone concerned about a neighbour to put a discreet card through their door, offering help. Any comments on the text should be put to him quickly, so the advice could be issued by the weekend.

The Council welcomed the Chairman's initiative, and wholeheartedly endorsed it.

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