

**MINUTES OF THE BALCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING (BPC) HELD  
IN BRAMBLE HALL ON  
WEDNESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs Alison Stevenson - Chairman (AS), Nicky Gould (NG), Paul Williams (PW), Manouchehr Nahvi (MN), Nick Major (NM), Nick Beecroft (NB), Helen Caudrey (HC).  
District Cllr Jenny Edwards (JE)

**723. Declarations of personal or pecuniary interest in any agenda item listed**

None declared.

**724. Apologies for absence**

Lloyd Thompsett (LT) - Unwell, Massi Smith (MS) – travelling, Joanne Blundell (JB) – Travelling.

**725. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

To Approve at the next meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September.

**726. Updates on Planning applications:**

Number	Site/Address	Proposal	Decision/ Decision Date
DM/23/1458	Brettsway, 1 Bretts Orchard, Haywards Heath Road	Magnolia T1 - Fell. Pear T2 - Fell.	No objections 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
DM/23/0548	Forest Farm Paddockhurst Lane	Removal of condition 2 of planning permission 13/02388/COU.	Refusal 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2023
DM/23/1270	Kibo House, Stockcroft Road	Hip to gable front and rear. Removal of dummy pitch with new flat roof canopy to ground floor front, rear and side elevations. erection of first floor terrace with privacy screen to side elevations. Alterations to fenestration, external materials and internal alterations following previous approval (DM/22/2878).	Refusal 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2023

**727. Planning - to consider the following applications:**

Number	Site/Address	Proposal	Assigned
DM/23/1760	Little Bretts, Haywards Heath Road RH17 6PG	Resiting of overhead electric supply to underground and creating a ground level entry point to the cottage.	NB
Balcombe Parish Council have no objections to this planning application.			
DM/23/1744	Little Bretts Haywards Heath Road RH17 6PG	Removal of paint on internal oak beams, fireplace, doors and fireplace surrounds. Removal of hardboard between oak ceiling/floor joists and skellings (sloping ceiling).	NB
Balcombe Parish Council have no objection to this planning application.			
DM/23/1923	Little Bretts Haywards Heath Rd RH17 6PG	Replace/cover the existing painted concrete hearth	NB

Balcombe Parish Council have no objections to the planning application, however would like to defer to the conservation officer to select a suitable and in keeping alternative material.			
DM/23/1500	21 London Road, RH17 6PZ	A single storey side extension and side dormer. (Amended plan received 13.07.2023. Application description amended 14.07.2023)	NM
Balcombe Parish Council have no objection to this planning application, and note the applicants commitment in the amended application to make changes to the fenestration which is now in keeping. We note the new windows are to match the existing.			
DM/23/1742	Land Adjacent To Balcombe House London Road	Variation of condition 2 of planning approval DM/23/0630. Amendment to site layout to detach plots 13 and 14.	NG
<p>Balcombe Parish Council object to this application to vary conditions as it does not meet a number of requirements from the Balcombe Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2031, nor its design guide, as noted below.</p> <p>We would highlight in particular that the splitting of the semi-detached into two detached houses, firstly pushes Plot 13 to be fully facing the garages and secondly creates a row of 5 very similar detached houses, removing variety from the street scene. It will also increase the size and cost of the properties, when smaller, lower cost units are required.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paragraph 5.15, specifically discussing the Rectory Gardens site, it is stated that <i>“A successful scheme will likely comprise a mix of dwellings <u>in distinct groups</u>”</i>. The application splits up two semi-detached into detached houses, further reducing the already limited grouping that is shown within the current layout. This would result in the row comprising of only 5 detached houses and no other housing types, i.e., no grouping.</li> <li>Paragraph 5.25 <i>“In addition, the local community is keen to ensure that all housing schemes contribute to broadening the existing housing stock, in which <u>smaller dwellings are relatively few</u>. The policy therefore requires schemes to give a clear emphasis to delivering dwellings suited to <u>newly forming households and older households wanting to downsize from larger properties but to remain living in the village.</u>”</i> Expansion of the floor area is not consistent with providing the required smaller dwellings.</li> </ul> <p>Design Guide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paragraph 5.24 of the neighbourhood plan states <i>“This policy requires all development proposals to deliver high quality schemes <u>that reflect the distinct character of Balcombe and its location with the High Weald AONB</u>”</i>. This distinct character referred to is described in the design guide with the centre of the village is typified by terraces of cottages; splitting semi-detached houses into detached is moving further away from this principle. The design guide includes that <i>“They tend to be <u>smaller houses, compactly planned, but built of good materials, well-detailed and decorated.</u>”</i></li> <li><i>“Garages and driveways that take up, or overshadow private garden space, especially where those gardens are small, will not be acceptable.”</i> As noted above, Plot 13 is proposed to face directly onto the side of the shared garage.</li> <li><i>“Younger people and those on lower incomes are priced out of the market in Balcombe. Evidence shows that affordable housing and smaller units are in demand and under provided in the village.”</i> Increasing the floor area will increase the cost of the houses, whereas it is clearly stated that smaller units are in demand for those on lower incomes.</li> <li><i>“Evidence of housing need using the housing needs survey and the District Council Register, combined with local peoples’ preferences, indicate that <u>smaller, lower cost units are the most preferred housing for new development.</u>”</i> Again, increasing the floor area is against this principle.</li> </ul> <p>We wish to highlight that this is not the first application to split semis, previous application having been approved.</p>			

BPC would also raise the question as to whether an original planning application with a greater number of detached properties would have been approved as being in line with our Neighbourhood Plan and other planning criteria.			
DM/23/1809	Balcombe Rifle Club Stockcroft Road RH17 6LL	Felling to ground level of 2 no. Thuja plicata (western red cedar) conifers growing at North Eastern corner and 1 no. Fraxinus excelsior (Ash) on easter end building.	PW
Balcombe Parish Council do not object to the application, however note that the location of the proposed trees are incorrectly shown on the location plan. BPC would like to see the trees replaced with alternative landscaping.			
DM/23/1659	Highley Manor Hotel Crawley Lane RH17 6LA	The use of land for the stationing of portakabins providing offices (retrospective)	HC
<p>The Parish Council object to this application, whether for the requested 4-year period, which is considered excessive, or for any period. It is clear there has been no consideration to the visual impact despite the applicant acknowledging there are extensive views to the south, it is in the High Weald AONB and an area for 'Protection as Enhancement of the Countryside'.</p> <p>It cannot be considered to be well designed nor respecting the character of the countryside. The applicants own planning statement includes extracts from the National Planning Policy Framework, the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 and the Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan 2016, all of which include design requirements which this application does not even attempt to meet. Some extracts from the planning statement are included below to highlight these.</p> <p>Additionally, the application broadly refers to economic benefits, although no specific benefits for this development have been stated; it is noted that there are no additional proposed employees.</p> <p><b>National Planning Policy Framework: (The application does not meet this criteria)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 6. Paragraph 84 states that decisions should enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"1. the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and <u>well-designed new buildings</u>..</i></li> <li><i>3. sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments <u>which respect the character of the countryside</u>"</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Paragraph 85: <i>"<u>development is sensitive to its surroundings</u> ..."</i></li> <li>Chapter 12, paragraph 130 informs that decisions should ensure that developments <i>"are <u>visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping</u>"</i>.</li> <li>Chapter 15 - paragraph 176 states that <i>"<u>Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues</u>"</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (The application does not meet this criteria)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy DP12: <i>"Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, <u>provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District</u></i></li> <li>Policy DP16 'High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' states that development <u>will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the AONB Management Plan.</u></li> <li>Policy DP19: <i>"Tourism related development in the countryside (defined as the area outside of the built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map), including extensions to existing facilities, visitor accommodation and the re-use of rural buildings will be permitted provided... [it] <u>maintains or where</u></i></li> </ul>			

*possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, in accordance with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside.”*

Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan 2016 **(The application does not meet this criteria)**

- Policy 3 ‘Design’ sets out a requirement to avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and natural beauty of the High Weald AONB and the significance.

*The application does not meet this criteria*

DM/23/1781	Cuckmere Stockcroft Road RH17 6LL	T1 Maple, T2 and T3 Beech, T4 and T5 Lime – raise canopy to 4 meters above ground level and reduce height by 2 meters. Crown thin all five trees by 5%.	PW
Balcombe Parish Council have no objections to the planning application, however the application description doesn’t match the Parish consultation stating crown thin all five trees by 5%.			

**728. To consider Planning Applications received after publication of Agenda.**

Number	Site/Address	Proposal
DM/23/1980	Rose Cottage, Haywards Heath Road.	Proposed side extension, loft conversion with rear dormer and front and side roof light windows. Removal of existing chimney and installation of new flue.
As this application had only come in on the day of the meeting, it was deemed appropriate to request an extension to comment at the next full Parish Council Meeting.		

**729. Correspondence**

Residents from the London Road are in the process of submitting a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and Community Highway Scheme (CHS), the Parish Clerk has requested copies of all documents submitted to enable BPC to decide whether to support the application. BPC’s support is required and a meeting is to be scheduled with a representative from the London Road to fully understand the details put forward to West Sussex County Council Highways.

**730. Exchange of Information.**

The Fete after being postponed will now be taking place on 9<sup>th</sup> September - Cllrs to confirm rota for BPC Fete stand and to email any printing requests to the Clerk.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 9:34pm.

**THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL WILL BE Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – at 8:00pm - Bramble Hall**

**Signed Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....