

# WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES 219

### Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023

The meeting started at 7.00 pm.

#### **In attendance:**

Cllrs Wade Nash (Acting Chair), Catherine Sales, Robert Woods, Neil McKay and Gina McKay.

Also in attendance were Ian Philo Clerk and 12 members of the public.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Lucy Quinn and Julian West sent their apologies, and the absences were approved.

County Councillor David Robey, Borough Councillors David Ledger and Aline Hicks had sent their apologies.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

##### **2.1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None.

##### **2.2. Other Significant Interests**

Councillor Rob Woods declared an interest in item 4.4 (planning application PA/2023/2051 - Land south-east of Bridge Close).

##### **2.3. Other Interests**

None

#### **3. Acceptance of Minutes:**

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 26th of October 2023 were agreed as a true record after Councillor Rob Woods requested a revision to the Play Area (item 5) by removing the wording 'in the meantime' and replacing it with 'in the event that no other volunteer comes forward'.

Proposed by Councillor Neil McKay, seconded by Councillor Catherine Sales. Motion carried 5-0

#### **Meeting adjourned for public participation 7.08 pm**

There was a request that Southern Water attend a parish council meeting to explain how the sewage system would cope to prevent flooding in the lower part of the village and query why the holding tank that was proposed in 2013 has never been installed.

A member of the public highlighted that there was some safety concern around the access point of the pedestrian and cycle on the proposed CALA Home development, given the difference in elevation from the site down to Front Road.

There was a reminder that the lights on the Christmas tree would be switched on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

A representative for Bridge Close residents raised concerns about the proposed adjacent development:

- The risk of flooding: the drainage system may not be adequate to take the increase from the development. Local ditches are regularly full to the brim.
- The mix of housing: the village doesn't need more executive homes. Affordable/rented properties would be preferable.
- Site traffic access: the proposed access from Appledore Road was dangerous because of poor visibility due to parked vehicles and high-speed traffic.
- Play area location: this is adjacent to a road with high-speed traffic.
- Self-build Plot 23: concern over the design not being in keeping.
- Ecology report: concern that it had been overlooked.

There was a question as to when the surface in the play area would be repaired. The council explained that several other essential maintenance items had been highlighted in a recent inspection report. The aim is to have all these issues dealt with at the same time.

Some villagers are concerned about the level of dog waste around the village, and if the council can assist.

### **Meeting reconvened at 7:40 pm**

## **4. Planning applications**

### **4.1. NOT/2023/2063 (Notification only)**

No comment

### **4.2. OTH/2023/2079**

82, Shirkoak Park, Woodchurch, TN26 3RR. T40-Oak – Fell. Ganoderma Resinaceum fungus is present. Tree at risk of falling. Replanting with Field Maple. Proposed Councillor Rob Woods and seconded Councillor Neil McKay.

The council voted 5-0 to support the application.

### **4.3. PA/2023/2114**

Odden Farm, Appledore Road, Woodchurch, TN26 3TQ. Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission PA/2023/0830 for change of use 2 non-agricultural buildings to business use, and formation of parking and turning area; widening of access to allow for change to doors, parking layout and splitting 1 non unit into 2 non units. Proposed Councillor Rob Woods and seconded Councillor Neil McKay.

The council voted 5-0 to support the application.

### **4.4. PA/2023/2051**

Land south-east of Bridge Close, Appledore Road, Woodchurch.

Hybrid planning application comprising a full application for the erection of 22 dwellings, new access from Bridge Close, parking, and associated landscaping, together with outline permission for one self/custom-build dwelling (with all matters reserved for future consideration except access).

See Appendix 1 for the comment by the council. Proposed Councillor Neil McKay and seconded Councillor Wade Nash.

The Council voted 4-0 to object to the application.

#### **4.5. PA/2023/2064**

Gower House, Susans Hill, Woodchurch, TN26 3RE. Erection of garden shed.

Proposed Councillor Neil McKay and seconded Councillor Rob Woods

The council voted 5-0 to support the application.

## **5. Policies**

### **5.1 Health & Safety Policy**

A draft policy had been circulated and there were no comments. Proposed Councillor Wade and seconded Councillor Gina McKay.

The council voted 5-0 to agree to the revised Health & Safety Policy.

### **5.2 Safeguarding Policy**

A draft policy had been circulated and there were no comments. Proposed Councillor Rob Woods and seconded Councillor Gina McKay.

The council voted 5-0 to agree to the revised Safeguarding Policy.

### **5.3 Code of Conduct, Training & Development, and Dignity & Respect**

The existing Woodchurch Code of Conduct was superseded when the Council signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge in November 2022. The Pledge comprises three main commitments: A Code of Conduct, Dignity & Respect, and Training & Development.

1. The council was asked if they had any comments regarding the Pledge's Code of Conduct Policy. There were no comments. Proposed Councillor Rob Woods and seconded Councillor Gina McKay.

The council voted 5-0 to agree to the Civility and Respect Code of Conduct.

2. The council was asked if they had any comments regarding the Pledge's Dignity and Respect Policy. There were no comments. Proposed Councillor Rob Woods and seconded Councillor Neil McKay.

The council voted 5-0 to agree to the Pledge's Dignity and Respect.

3. The council was asked if they had any comments regarding the Pledge's Training and Development Policy. Councillor Neil McKay expressed frustration that several KALC training courses for councillors have been cancelled at the last minute, and

the clerk to inform KALC of the councillors' displeasure over this. The Clerk to investigate the possibility of Woodchurch Parish Council hosting some training courses instead. There were no further comments. Proposed Councillor Catherine Sales seconded Councillor Rob Woods.

The council voted 5-0 to agree to the Training and Development Policy.

## **6. Resilience Plan**

A Village Resilience Plan aims to assist residents following a disaster until the emergency services can get to the village. A disaster event would include; extreme weather events, pandemics, water disruption and electricity failure. Proposed Councillor Wade Nash and seconded Councillor Catherine Sales.

The council voted 5-0 to draw up a plan.

## **7. Dog Waste Bin Posters.**

The posters, designed by local school children, were reviewed and agreed in principle to allow posters to be displayed on bins at 9 locations around the village, and to cover the cost of printing (estimated £62). Proposed Councillor Wade Nash and seconded Councillor Rob Woods.

The council voted 5-0 to support this proposal.

## **8. Flooding on the Lower Part of The Village.**

The council voted to support the proposal to write a letter from the Parish Council to MP Damien Green and to the CEO of Southern Water, regarding the persistent flooding in the lower part of the village. The council would like to include concerns about additional wastewater from the two proposed new developments on Front Road and Bridge Close and would like to know if the current sewerage would be suitably upgraded. Proposed Councillor Wade Nash and seconded Councillor Rob Woods.

The council voted 5-0 to support this proposal.

## **9. IT and Website**

The council agreed to adopt the .gov.uk email addresses for all parish council email correspondence. Proposed Councillor Wade Nash and seconded Councillor Neil McKay.

The council voted 5-0 to support this motion.

## **10. Finance**

### **10.1. Items for Payment and Bank Reconciliation**

The parish council agreed to the items of payment and the bank reconciliation.

Payments Made Since Last Meeting	Total Payable	VAT
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Direct Debit	EDF	£66.00
Direct Debit	Castle Water	£00.00

Items For Approval
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Bacs	Salaries	£1071.12	
Bacs	HMRC	£72.20	
TBC	RBLI (Wreath & Donation)	£50.00	
Bacs	ESALC (Clerk Training)	£90.00	£15.00
Bacs	AMJ (Annual Domain Mgmt)	£591.82	£98.64
Bacs	AMJ (7xM365bb & 1xBS)	£102.00	£17.00
Bacs	Maiden Accountancy (PAYE)	£36.00	£6.00
Bacs	Mazars (External Audit)	£252.00	£42.00
Bacs	I.Philo (Petrol)	£32.40	
Total		£2297.54	£178.64

### Bank Reconciliation For October 2023

<b>Bank Opening Balance</b>	<b>£37,160.13</b>
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Precept	£0.00
Salary	£3,127.86
HMRC	£201.60

Pavillion Utilities	£66.00
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Running Costs	£609.89
Income in Transit	£0.00
Outstanding Payments	£0.00
Bank Charges	£0.00

Interest Income	£0.00
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Income	£0.00
Expenditure	£4,005.35

<b>Cashbook Balance</b>	<b>£33,154.78</b>
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<b>Bank Statement Balance</b>	<b>£37,160.13</b>
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Income	£500.00
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Expenditure	£4,505.35
<b>Bank Closing Balance</b>	<b>£33,154.78</b>
Difference	0
<b>Saver Account</b>	
<b>Bank Opening Balance</b>	<b>£48,230.99</b>
Income	£44.40
Expenditure	£0.00
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£48,275.39</b>

#### Payments Received

Bacs	Interest	£53.30
	Total	£53.30

### **10.2. Finance Working Group**

Following Ashford Borough Council's agreement to extend the deadline for the request of precept to January 26th 2024. The Finance Working Group will meet at a mutually agreed time and place, once the details of the village survey have been studied.

### **10.3. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022-2023**

The council noted the extensive comments on the report from the external auditor and will be working on those for the next one in 2024.

## **11. Correspondence and Information**

Correspondence from a resident concerned that there is an increasing number of dogs off-lead on the Village Green. They would like to remind others to keep their dogs under control, clean up faeces and deposit the waste in one of the dog bins around the village

Several complaints over very large "converted mobile library camper van" parking on Lower Road. On some occasions, it was deemed a potential obstruction to emergency vehicles accessing some properties on Green Lane. Ashford Borough Council and the Police were made aware, but there is very little that can be done as no law is broken and the vehicle is taxed, insured, and MOTD.

## **12. Items for information and items to be included on the next agenda**

**Information** – none.

### **Items for the next meeting agenda**

To consider residents to be nominated for the KALC Community Awards Scheme, and who should write the nomination report.

Council to discuss and finalise The Hub lease.

## **13. Date and venue of next meeting**

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024 starting at 7.00 pm in the Memorial Hall Annexe

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8:40 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1**

PA/2023/2051

Bridge Close, Appledore Road, Woodchurch.

Woodchurch Parish Council (WPC) resolved to object to this application on the grounds the benefit to the village is outweighed by the harm.

The WPC considered several aspects of this application that were harmful to the village.

1. The decision notice on the previous appeal Para 36 says, "With regard to the tenure mix ... the specific range and mix of dwellings to be provided should be informed by proportionate evidence that is robust, up to date and provides assessment of needs."

This application includes 10 4/5 bedroom houses or 45% of the total for this site.

The WPC view is that the developer has not provided us with evidence that the village needs more 4/5 bedroom houses. We can point to evidence from 2 sources

that says larger market homes are not a priority in this village. The developer has increased the number of 4/5 bedroom houses (Previously mentioned) and significantly made a massive reduction in smaller houses, by almost 50%.

a.)The first: The survey undertaken for the Gladman proposal on Front Road concluded that the overwhelming desire in the village was for 2 to 3 bedroom properties. Only a very small number of people felt more larger/luxury homes were required.

b.)The second: an interpretation of the last census data which tells us that only 5% of our demographic is in the 30 – 39 age group compared to an average of 12% in the other three Parishes in the Weald South Ward. By contrast the number in the 80 plus age group is more than double that of our neighboring parishes.

These figures indicate that the harm to the village's sustainability may already be evident with the key factor being the ongoing supply of the large, high priced homes on the market when the need is for small single story properties.

2. The larger footprints of the 4/5 bedroom homes is inconsistent with the form and rhythm of the surrounding Bridge Close and Brattle which are both tighter and simpler in design and layout.

3. It appears that the design of some of the dwellings still include weatherboarding and dormer style windows which were criticized both by ABC's (Ashford Borough Council) and the Appeal Inspector for being inconsistent with the existing development of the area.

4. The affordable housing component is welcomed (Although much reduced see point 1) but the omission of any S106 contributions for Community facilities in this outlying part of Woodchurch is unacceptable, especially as this development would create a block of around 100 homes. The general feeling is that the current area, very small, is in a dangerous position and needs to be relocated.

5.It is pleasing to see that the design of the site includes provision for the dealing with excess water to mitigate the impact on the homes on the opposite side of Appledore Road.

However, given the very serious ongoing problems with flooding in this part of the village we should emphasize the need for a thorough examination and correction of the existing infrastructure (Both fresh water and waste) by South Water (SW) and Kent County Council (KCC) before any building is permitted to start.

WPC will be writing to their local MP asking him to contact SW regarding this matter.

The Council agrees with residents' comments that the bat survey would appear to be at odds with their experiences. The Council considers that more bats are likely to exist in that area and that the developer's report requires review and further validation

If this application is approved, the proposed design and layout of the roads and dwellings would suggest a further phase of development on the land immediately to the south of the application site which is in different ownership. The Council shares residents' concerns about the danger created by the added number of traffic



movements in and out of Bridge Close which can only be exacerbated if a second phase is planned.