

HUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 4TH JANUARY 2021 AT 7:30PM USING ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

PRESENT: Cllr D Heaton in the Chair, Cllrs T Stanbridge, H Ward, J Goddard, G Thomas and R Lee, and Mrs S Goodwin, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: Eight members of the public were in attendance.

OPEN SESSION:

A resident commented that the Reed Court Farm planning application (to be discussed at Item 5.1) has been called in to borough councillors, so it will be decided by committee rather than MBC Planning officers. There have been a lot of objections to the application, not all of which are on the MBC website yet.

Another resident asked whether there was any update on the parking at the top of Grove Lane. Cllr Heaton advised that this will be discussed at the next full council meeting. Cllr Goddard has been asking residents near the road end to park considerably, to ensure that there is enough width should emergency services need access. KCC Highways are against the use of bollards. It is unclear what the rights for residents are on an unadopted roads such as Grove Lane.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. FILMING AND RECORDING

The members of the public did not wish to record the meeting.

3. COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS

3.1 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

3.2 Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14TH DECEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting had been previously distributed and were agreed to be an accurate record. The Chairman will sign the official copy of the minutes at the next Planning Committee meeting held in person.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION

The following application was considered, and recommendation made:

5.1 Reed Court Farm, Hunton Road, Marden - 20/505751/EIFUL

Erection of a new free-range egg farm consisting of 3 no. hen houses with extensive outdoor ranges and fencing, formal vehicle access from Hunton Road and associated parking, landscaping, woodland and tree planting, drainage and other associated works.

Parish Council recommendation: Refuse. Members raised the following points to arrive at the recommendation:

- Some Members had no objections to a free-range chicken farm in principle but did have issues with this planning application.
- Concerned about the visual impact on the landscape which is understated in the application. There will be a 2.5m high wire mesh fencing around the whole site, including the roadways, access points and chicken houses which will completely spoil the view before any woodland matures, which would take many years. That aspect has been left out of the application.

- Concerned about the control of nitrates and phosphates, and their impact on the River Beult which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). How can we be sure that the water entering the run-off will only be from the roofs of the chicken houses and not foul water? The site could see 50-60 tonnes of chicken waste being deposited in a week. If there is a downpour it could enter the river. More detail is required from the applicant on how to stop it. The site also regularly floods. There is likely to be less run-off as the land consists of grass and trees, rather than arable, but when the chickens have been on site for a while the waste is likely to be trodden into the ground and hardened.
- The use of SuDS is to be decided in more detail when the development takes place. SuDS may hold back contaminants but will not remove them and they will find their way into the watercourse.
- According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 175, development should not be permitted within an SSI unless the benefits outweigh the impact, which they do not in this case. There is not a strong enough case to prevent run-off. The applicant could have commissioned an independent report using their Coombwell farm but have just commissioned ADAS, who did a desktop modelling exercise extrapolating figures from other types of livestock, not free-range poultry. The planning application for a development at Horsmonden was withdrawn by the applicant when Tunbridge Wells Borough Council asked for more technical information.
- The site has been over-exploited. The site is 94 hectares in area and the maximum number of chickens for that area will be located at the site, which is why the fencing reaches to the extreme edges of the site. If a smaller application had been submitted, leaving some of the site to meadow, it would have been preferable – for example, two chicken houses, further from the river with room for environmental protection.
- A number of ecology reports are incomplete/inadequate, for example the breeding birds survey. Great crested newts would need careful handling. Run-off would affect ponds on the site.
- The application states that there have been no fatalities on Hunton Road, but also states that vehicles would have to access the site from the A229 which is an accident hotspot. Only a small section of road near the site has been considered. KCC have objected to the entrance/exit at Underlyn Lane.
- HGVs would be routed via Underlyn Lane/Hunton Road but the road floods quite regularly and can get completely blocked – how would vehicles get out? Access from Redwall Lane and George Street is not suitable. The swept path analysis shows that HGVs can access and leave the site from Hunton. Why is this included if all HGVs are supposed come from the other direction? Why is the applicant not designing the entrance to ensure HGVs cannot go through Hunton?
- There are two footpaths across the site (KM229 and KM144). The applicant wants to divert the footpaths, but this will result in a 2.5m high fence on either side of the footpaths which destroys the point of a walk. According to Michelle Snodding at KCC PROW, no one has spoken to her about diversions. The process would take at least six months and the planning application would not be able to go ahead (and would be in breach of planning law if it did) until approval has been given. If people object it could take considerably longer.

These aspects will be included in the objection to the application which will be submitted to MBC.

6. REPORTED PLANNING DECISIONS

The following decision, made by Maidstone Borough Council, was **Noted**:

6.1 Wheelwrights, Hunton Hill - 20/505048/FULL

Erection of a detached garage/workshop.

Parish Council recommendation: No objection.

Maidstone Borough Council decision: Permitted.

There being no further planning matters to be discussed, the meeting closed at 8:34pm.