

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

Tel: 07534 959772

E-mail: clerk@fletching-pc.org

Website www.fletching-pc.org



9th October 2024

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - Monday 14th October 2024

To Members of the Fletching Parish Council: You are summoned to attend a meeting of Fletching Parish Council on Monday 14th October 2024, 6.30pm at the Pavilion, Fletching Recreation Ground, Church Street, Fletching.

Signed: *Gabriella Paterson-Griggs*, Clerk and RFO

Public Questions

The first ten minutes, before the start of the meeting, are available for public participation. Members of the public may ask questions or make representations, in respect of the business on the agenda. They may only speak at other points during the meeting, at the Chairman's discretion, if they have knowledge or information that will aid the discussion.

This meeting may be audio recorded for the purpose of minute taking

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence as reported at the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of items on the agenda, as required by the Members' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTES

To resolve that the minutes of the meetings held on 9th September 2024 as circulated on the agenda are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. - [attached](#)

4. MATTERS ARISING

Update on any matters arising from the last meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda. To note any action taken or agree further action to be taken. - [attached](#)

5. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

To receive a report from the County Councillor Roy Galley.

6. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

To receive a report from District Councillor Christina Coleman.

7. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

To receive reports/updates from the Working Groups and External Bodies:

- i. Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Councillor Hannay
- ii. Planning Working Group – [see attached recommendation re membership](#)
- iii. Fletching Recreation Ground Committee – Clerk

8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

To note any correspondence received since the last meeting and agreed any actions arising.

- i. Nature Recovery Strategy for Sussex – survey for local organisations
- ii. Wealden District Council: Members Allowances and Remuneration 2025/26 – [request from Wealden DC Independent Remuneration Panel to provide any feedback on the current scheme and any concerns or issues you may have in respect of allowances for Members.](#)
Wealden District Council: Environmental Framework for Events and Licensed Businesses – [Wealden Council has launched a consultation on our Environmental Framework for Events and Licensed Businesses. Environmental Framework for Events and Licensed Businesses | Let's Talk Wealden. The deadline for responses is 1 December 2024.](#)

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9. FINANCE AND ASSETS

- i. To approve the invoices and payments for October 2024 and note the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation. - [attached](#)
- ii. External Audit 2023/24 – to note the External Auditor's Note and Certificate - [attached](#)

10. BURIAL GROUND

To approve any requests or permits for the Burial Ground.

- i. Memorial Application - [attached](#)

PLANNING AND LICENSING

11. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING AND DRAINAGE

To discuss any issues/updates raised related to suspected breaches of planning or other regulations.

12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED

To agree comments to be submitted to Wealden District Council for the following applications: - [attached](#)

- i. **WD/2023/1466/LB St Mary's House, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS**
Re-tiling of roof. (Comments to be submitted by 16 October 2024)
- ii. **WD/2024/0103/F Malling Farm, Down Street, Piltdown TN22 3XU**
Replacement of a lawful park home with a new dwelling (Amended Plans). (Comments to be submitted by 15 October 2024)
- iii. **WD/2024/1874/F Old Spot Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XN**
Demolition of existing farm shop and outbuildings and erection of six semi-detached dwellings with associated landscaping and infrastructure. (Comments to be submitted by 15 October 2024)
- iv. **WD/2024/1875/F Old Spot Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XN**
Erection of one self-build two storey dwelling with associated landscaping and infrastructure. (Comments to be submitted by 15 October 2024)
- v. **WD/2024/1980/LBR Shortbridge Mill, Shortbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XA**
Removal of existing weatherboard to front elevation, repair of the timber frame construction to the upper floors and reinstatement of existing weatherboard (where sound). Any deficit made up of new timber to match existing on a like for like basis (part retrospective). (Comments to be submitted by 15 October 2024).
- vi. **WD/2024/2088/FR Pond Cottage, North Hall Lane, Splaynes Green, Fletching TN22 3**
Part retrospective application to retain existing building for continued use as residential annex and occasional use as a holiday let. No increase in footprint, bulk or volume, no external material changes. (Comments to be submitted by 28 October 2024)
- vii. **WD/2024/2163/F Piltdown Lodge, Lodge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3YP**
Erection of single storey extension, installation of rooflight. (Comments to be submitted by 18 October 2024)
- viii. **WD/2024/2197/FA Little Wild, Sharpsbridge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3XG**
Variation of conditions 2 & 6 of WD/2024/0629/F to enable omission of 6 no. dormer windows to be replaced with standard velux skylights, alterations to internal layout, new catslide roof to accommodate taller sliding doors to the rear and enlargement of existing window openings on each side elevation. (Comments to be submitted by 24 October 2024)

13. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS

To note the planning application decisions from Wealden District Council received since the last meeting(s):

Applications Approved

- i. **WD/2023/2345/F Splaynes Green Farm, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3SA**

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Construction of an outbuilding garden store for the secure storage of garden machinery and pond maintenance equipment/materials. (APPROVED 26 September 2024)

Response to Parish Council: The PC comments are noted. Concerns were expressed by the case office in terms of the original proposal, which was amended, several times, to a scheme that is considered acceptable. The scheme now proposed is significantly scaled down, and details altered to give a more utilitarian feel to the building.

ii. **WD/2024/1232/F Vaughans, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3TJ**

Demolition of single storey sunroom and erection of a two-storey extension to south eastern elevation. (APPROVED 1 October 2024)

iii. **WD/2024/1366/LB Churchgate House, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS**

Repair of timber windows and replacement timber windows. (APPROVED 7 October 2024)

Applications Refused – none since the last meeting

Applications Withdrawn – none since the last meeting

14. PARISH IN BLOOM 2024

To note the results of this year's competition

15. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE

To agree any items to be included in future editions of the Parish Magazine

16. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

To discuss and note any future agenda items

17. TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

To agree the time and dates of the next meeting of the Parish Council.

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MINUTES of the Meeting of **FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL** held on Monday 9th September 2024 in The West End, Fletching Church, Fletching (6.30 – 7.30pm).

PRESENT: Councillors R Hannay (Chair), R Borton, N Collum and S De St Croix.

Also in attendance: Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Clerk and RFO) and Councillors C Coleman (WDC) and R Galley (ESCC)

Members of the Public in Attendance: 2

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Abraham, W Constantinou, D Greenish and K Minch.

24/140. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

24/141. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 8th July 2024 were a correct record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

24/142. MATTERS ARISING

The Actions List as prepared and circulated by the Clerk was noted. The following items were discussed.

- PCSO – Concern was raised that there was still no PCSO designated for the area and Cllr Galley was asked to see whether he could investigate whether it would be possible to have one appointed to provide some continuity.
- CIL Funds – the Clerk reported at the meeting that the quotes for the replacement handrail at the village hall had just been received and it was **AGREED** that the contractor be asked whether it would be possible to have the handrail powder coated rather than a plastic coating.

24/143. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Councillor Galley reported that the weight restriction had now been removed from Goldbridge but there were still some repair works to be undertaken but these were not as extensive as had been previously thought.

With regards to the Piltdown village gates he reported that, following the disappointing response from ESCC about the signage and its position in relation to the gates, he had visited the site and felt that there was not much that could be done.

Note: Councillor De St Croix arrived at the meeting at 6.42pm during this item.

24/144. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Councillor Coleman reported that Wealden District Council would be responding to the latest NPPF consultation. It was noted that as a result of the new government's proposals the housing targets for the District would increase by 211 per year but there would be no changes to the sustainability assessment other than a slight tweak relating to traffic.

Councillor Coleman stated that the Council had achieved a gold 'wellbeing at work' award and that the planning department was now fully staffed. She reported that a grant of £3.5m had been received for the Community Sports Hub in Hailsham which was due to be completed by 2026.

The Clerk confirmed that she had received an email in respect of the Nature Recovery Strategy which Councillor Coleman had sent and that a response would be considered.

The issue of fly tipping on private land had been raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) as the onus was on the owner of the land to deal with this when it was on private land not the council. However, support had been offered by the Council to track down the fly tippers in this particular case.

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In respect of the Local Plan it was noted that there had been a long debate at O&S as to the best way forward and that the Council was edging towards delaying the plan to take into account the government's changes and give consideration to the additional sites that have come forward for the SHEELA. If this were the case there would be a further Regulation 18 consultation.

24/145. PLANNING APPLICATION RECEIVED

The following application was discussed. See Minute 24/153 (iii) below for further information.

WD/2024/1950/F 6 New Cottages, Batts Bridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XR

24/146. WORKING GROUPS / EXTERNAL GROUPS

- i. *Neighbourhood Plan*: Councillor Hannay reported that the Steering Group had taken a break over the summer but were meeting the following week to put together a plan of work for those areas that were not dependent on the Local Plan.
- ii. *Fletching Recreation Ground Committee (FRGC)*: The Clerk reported that there was a meeting of the FRGC taking place on 24 September where the budget for next year would be discussed.

24/147. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Framfield Parish Council – Invitation to a meeting: Councillors considered the email received from Framfield Parish Council inviting representatives from the parishes to attend an informal meeting to share frustrations being experienced with ESCC Highways. It was **AGREED** that Fletching Parish be represented at the meeting if possible.

Hedgehog Highway Project: the email received from Hedgehogs R Us was discussed but it was considered that the project was for more urban settings as within a rural parish the hedgehogs had the ability to roam wherever they wished. It was **AGREED** not to participate in the project.

24/148. FINANCE AND ASSETS

- i. The invoices and payments for September 2024 were **AUTHORISED** and the Council's current financial position and bank reconciliation were noted. The payments made in August 2024 were noted.
- ii. Budget Monitoring 2024/25 – the Q1 budget monitoring report was noted.
- iii. Internal Auditor 2024/25 to 2026/27 – Councillors **RESOLVED** that Mulberry LAS be appointed as the internal auditor for the next three years.

24/149. CIL FUNDS - PROJECTS

- i. *Replacement Litter Bins – Fletching Village*: The Clerk reported that since the last meeting it had come to her attention that the agreed replacement bins would not be suitable as the refuse bags would still show. Councillors **AGREED** the alternative bin being proposed. The Clerk to contact the contractor direct and arrange installation.

24/150. GRANT APPLICATION

The Grant application from Wealden Citizens Advice for £350 for the purchase of noise cancelling headphones was considered and it was **RESOLVED** that the grant be awarded in full.

24/151. BURIAL GROUND

- i. Councillors noted the memorial applications that had been approved by the Chairman.
- ii. The Burial Ground Regulations 2024 were **APPROVED**. It was noted that there were no changes from the 2023 version.

24/152. ENFORCEMENT – PLANNING

- i. *Flitteridge Farm*: the update from Wealden District Council enforcement, circulated to councillors prior to the meeting, was noted.

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24/153. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - RECEIVED

It was **RESOLVED** to make the comments as set out after each application in respect of the following:

i. **WD/2024/1862/LB The Griffin, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS**

Replacement of the existing dilapidated trade kitchen cookline extract flue and air intake, forming new lobby into trade kitchen, repositioning of stud walling within second floor laundry/boiler room, entrance plaque signage.

ii. **WD/2024/1864/F The Griffin, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS**

Replacement of the existing dilapidated trade kitchen cookline extract flue and air intake, 2 no entrance plaque signs, 2 no electric charging bays and improvement to disabled customer parking.

This is a listed property in a conservation village, so the visual architectural impact is an important consideration in any planning application. The Griffin occupies a vital position in this historic village. Obviously modern facilities are necessary but do require sensitive management. As such, an effective extractor fan for the kitchen is necessary and the new version should be quieter than the existing, however the tall steel chimney is very prominent from the garden side of the inn, although it cannot be seen from the street, and some form of screening set below the top where the air comes out would be helpful.

In addition, the Parish Council is concerned that the disabled parking bays would be visually disturbing. They are to have contrasting colours, a non-slip ground surface is necessary but different colours would be inappropriate.

*The internal alterations to modern partition walls do not have an impact on the historic fabric, but the two external alterations would be detrimental. Therefore, the Parish Council **OBJETS** to these applications.*

iii. **WD/2024/1950/F 6 New Cottages, Batts Bridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XR**

Proposed part single, part two-storey rear extensions, internal alterations and all associated works.

This property is a modest terraced house fronting the A272 on Batts Bridge Road. It is the middle house in a terrace of three cottage-style houses. Both of the adjoining houses have in the past built rear extensions. There is already an existing ground floor extension at the subject property but it is in poor condition. Also, the overall accommodation generally requires improvement. The proposal is for replacement and lengthening of the existing ground floor extension and for a part two storey rear extension above. It is not considered that the proposed works will have any material adverse impact on the adjoining properties.

*The Parish Council **SUPPORTS** the application.*

The comments previously submitted to Wealden District Council were **NOTED** in respect of:

iv. **WD/2024/1792/TD Piltdown Lodge, Lodge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3YP**

Erection of 2 no dwellings. Technical details consent to permission in principle WD/2022/2643/PIP

On 19th December 2022 planning permission in principle (PIP) was granted for a residential development of 2 x dwellings on this site. The application for that permission was accompanied by two illustrative site plans showing potential layouts for such a development; plans A and B. This technical details application is supported by a Design and Access Statement which states that: "6.3 The application proposal has been refined following the indicative proposals which were submitted under the PiP stage 1. The two plots have been further considered to make best and most efficient use of the land whilst preserving the character of the area. This application is based on Illustrative Site Plan A. In the Parish Council's view, any development of this site should be based on Illustrative Site Plan B. In any event, it is apparent that the development now being proposed is even more intensive (with the buildings being both larger, closer together and semi-

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urban in size and design) than those indicated on Illustrative Site Plan A and thus fail to preserve the character of the area.

The two appeal decisions (Appeal A and Appeal B) on Little Barkham Farm, Goldbridge Road dated 23rd August 2023 give useful background to consideration of any proposed development within the rural settlement of Piltdown.

"5. There is no defined development boundary for Piltdown, which is a rural settlement characterised by ribbon development along Goldbridge Road, the A272, between Haywards Heath and Uckfield. It is therefore in the countryside for the purposes of planning policy".

Although the applicant acknowledges in the Design and Access Statement that WDC has prepared a new draft Local Plan, it suggests that, since it has not yet been presented for Examination, it should be given no weight. The Parish Council does not accept that it should be wholly ignored although it is agreed that, at this stage, any weight to be attributed to it will be limited. However, consistent with the rural character of Piltdown, emerging policy HO4 states that smaller sites of less than 1 hectare should provide a mix of smaller homes of 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms. This is consistent with the findings of the WDC Local Housing Needs Assessment. The two houses being proposed by this application are 4-bed; the need within WDC and particularly the Parish of Fletching is for smaller houses. This development will not meet local housing needs.

In addition the design and layout of the buildings does not reflect the site constraints nor the appearance and character of the rural settlement. The buildings are not consistent with the mass, height, density or style of the adjoining houses. The parts of each of the buildings described on the floor plans/elevations as "Garden Storage" are presumably the "integral garages" referred to in the Design and Access Statement. They add (according to the floor plans/elevations) over 17% additional building m² to each house. That is excessive. It is not clear from the drawings whether these garages are intended to be in place of or in addition to the 5x parking spaces referred to in the PIP application.

It is also noted on the plans submitted that the properties will each have solar panels on the one hand but a wood burner flue on the other. It is the Parish Council's view that, a new-build with solar panels should not provide for a wood burner.

The Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this application

24/154. PLANNING APPLICATIONS - DECISIONS

Planning decisions **RECEIVED** from Wealden District Council since the last meeting:

Applications Approved

i. **WD/2023/2741/F The Old Archery, North Hall Lane, Fletching TN22 3SA**

Proposed extension works to existing dwelling house including, remodelling of front elevation with small corner extension, attached garage and works to first floor accommodation including new roof structure. (APPROVED 4 July 2024)

ii. **WD/2024/0917/F + 0918/LB Moons Farm, Sharpsbridge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3XG**

Conversion of parts of outbuildings to ancillary living accommodation, installation of solar panels, replacement of oil tank and associated work. (APPROVED 12 July 2024)

iii. **WD/2024/0629/F Little Wild, Sharpsbridge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3XG**

Conversion of former pool house to dwellinghouse with associated extension and biodiversity enhancement. (APPROVED 16 July 2024)

Response to Parish Council: A condition is proposed to ensure the materials match the existing building, as this is what is proposed. The submitted block plan shows proposed landscaping, and this is a similar landscaping plan to that which was approved under the condition discharge application pertaining to the previous application, WD/2019/2439/F. Conditions would also be imposed relating to no felling of existing trees and hedgerows, and the bat mitigation measures

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as set out in the application being adhered to. The proposal is of a small scale and drainage would be covered under any subsequent Building Regulations application.

iv. **WD/2024/1266/LB Sheffield Park Garden, Sheffield Park TN22 3QX**

Removal of non historic felt flat roof covering insulation to then replace with new insulation of the same thickness and a renewed felt roof covering. (APPROVED 18 July 2024)

v. **WD/2024/0726/F Woolpack Farm Barn, Bell Lane, Fletching TN22 3YB**

Single storey extension to link existing dwelling with existing barns to increase habitable accommodation of main dwelling together with fenestration alterations and addition of 4 x rooflights. (APPROVED 31 July 2024)

Applications Refused

i. **WD/2024/1425/LB The Griffin, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS**

Replacement of existing dilapidated trade kitchen cookline extract flue and air intake, forming new lobby into trade kitchen. Repositioning of stud walling within second floor laundry/boiler room, entrance plaque signage, 2 no electric charging bays and improvements to disabled customer parking. (REFUSED 9 August 2024)

Applications Withdrawn – none since the last meeting

24/155. ITEMS FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE

It was noted that the deadline for the October magazine had already passed. It was agreed that the following items be included for the next edition of the Parish Magazine:

- Replacement litter bins
- Replacement Handrail

24/156. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was requested that Councillors contact the Clerk with any other items they wish to be considered at the next meeting.

24/157. TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Parish Council is due to be held on Monday 14th October at 6.30pm in the Church.

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FPC Meetings Actions List – October 2024

Date	Action	Who By	Notes
05/02/24	CIL Funds: obtain quotes for path in burial ground; replacement public litter bins; new handrail beside village hall	RH & Clerk	Bins and Handrail completed. Path in burial ground outstanding
04/03/24	Resilience Plan: Identify team members from each area of the Parish and add in any additional resources to Appendix D	KM & Clerk	Ongoing. KM waiting for response from prospective team members. Due to go to September FPC as Cllr Minch away.
09/09/24	Handrail: request for the new handrail to be powder coated and place order.	Clerk	Completed – installation date awaited
09/09/24	Framfield Parish Council: attend informal meeting if possible re: ESCC Highways	Clerk	Completed – unfortunately Clerk was unable to attend due to sickness. Notes have been requested.
09/09/24	Replacement Litter Bins: notify contractor of change of bin and place order	Clerk	Completed – installation date awaited
09/09/24	Grant award: notify and pay Wealden CAB Grant	Clerk	Completed. CAB very grateful for the award of the grant
09/09/24	Appoint Mulberry LAS as external auditors for three years	Clerk	Completed

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Planning Working Group - Membership

The Fletching Parish Working Group is set up to review the planning applications and to agree comments on behalf of the Council when a deadline for comments falls outside of the date for the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council and when an extension of time cannot be agreed with Wealden District Council.

The membership of the group is reviewed every year at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and is published on the Parish Council website.

The current membership is:

Councillor Damian Greenish

Councillor Noel Collum

Councillor Leighton Snelgrove

Councillor Ross Borton

Due to work commitments, it has been very difficult for both councillors Snelgrove and Borton to attend site visits as these tend to be held during the working day/week to fit in with the applicants and agents. This has, therefore, left the bulk of the workload to Councillors Greenish and Collum to undertake.

It has been requested that the Parish Council consider appointing non-councillors to the Planning Working Group who could support the councillors on the group to reduce the burden. The proposed appointees would be taken from the membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to ensure an understanding of the planning considerations within the parish and the wider area.

Under Paragraph 4(b) of the Parish Council's Standing Orders it is possible for a committee or advisory group to include non-councillors unless it is a committee or group that regulates and controls finances of the Council.

The Planning Working Group does not deal with finances, so it would be permissible to appoint additional non-councillors as members.

Any non-councillors would be bound by the Council's Code of Conduct and Standing Orders as they would be 'co-opted' to the Working Group.

Consideration has been given to adding additional parish councillors to the group but discounted.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Parish Council appoint up to two non-councillors to the Planning Working Group with immediate;
2. The non-councillor appointees to be existing members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group;
3. The Planning Protocol be amended to:
 - a. reflect the new membership arrangements;
 - b. state that at least one councillor must attend a site meeting; and
 - c. that at least two councillors must be involved in agreeing the comments when submitting them on behalf of the Council.

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PLANNING PROTOCOL

This protocol should be used in conjunction with the current Code of Conduct and the Standing Orders of Fletching Parish Council.

The role of Parish Councils as a Statutory Consultee for Planning Applications

Fletching Parish Council is a statutory consultee of Wealden District Council and as such is asked to comment on planning applications during the consultation period. Fletching Parish Council cannot determine applications, but any views expressed by the Parish Council will be taken into account by the Planning Authority (Wealden District Council), before a decision is made, providing the points are relevant to the determination of the planning application.

The final decision is made by the Planning Authority and **NOT** the Parish Council.

Fletching Parish Council will only comment on what are known as 'material planning considerations'

Fletching Parish Council will provide comments on all applications it is consulted on (including those submitted by current parish councillors) which are relevant and appropriate with a clear recommendation whether it supports, objects or remains neutral.

Fletching Parish Council Planning Working Group

A Planning Working Group has been established for the review of planning applications and for agreeing comments on behalf of the Council when a deadline for comments falls outside of the date for the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council and when an extension of time cannot be agreed with Wealden District Council.

The membership of the Planning Working Group can consist of up to two non-councillors who must also be existing members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Members of the planning working group are listed on the Fletching Parish Council website and membership is reviewed yearly at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Receipt of a Planning Application

Planning application notices are received electronically from Wealden District Council by the Clerk and contain hyperlinks to full documentation held on the District Authority website.

The Clerk is responsible for requesting extensions to deadlines where appropriate.

Notices are emailed to all Fletching Parish Council Members as soon as possible after receipt.

Extra-ordinary meetings of the Parish Council will be scheduled, as and when required, to discuss applications where deadlines for comments fall outside of ordinary Parish Council meetings timetable and comments cannot be delegated to Councillors on the Planning Working Group.

Site Visits

If Members of Fletching Parish Council wish to make a site visit, they can do so, but only using public vantage points (land with public access, public highways, or rights of way).

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Members of the Parish Council have no special rights of entry to private land without the owner's consent.

If members of the Fletching Parish Council Planning Working Group agree that access to the site is beneficial to the consideration of the application, this must be done with the owner's consent and the Clerk informed.

Such arranged site visits should be for the sole purpose of understanding the application proposals and their relationship to the wider environment.

Site visits should only be arranged when the Planning Working Group considers it appropriate or necessary for the understanding of the application proposals.

All Councillors must keep an open mind when considering applications.

Those making a site visit should endeavour to limit its duration to no more than 20 minutes.

Communication with the Applicant

Site visits will be co-ordinated by one councillor from the Planning Working Group.

Applicants must be advised that site visits are optional for the Parish Councillors.

Applicants must be advised that Members attending a site visit are not able to make any decisions and that Fletching Parish Council is only a consultee in the planning process.

Applicants must be advised of the date and time of the Parish Council meeting at which their planning application will be discussed. Applicants and agents are welcome to attend meetings.

If an applicant refuses to allow a site visit, Members may view the site from the public highway or other public land but must not trespass on private land. The application will still be discussed and voted upon at a Parish Council meeting.

Attending a Site Visit

A minimum of 2 ~~Members~~members of the Working Group must attend a site meeting, at least one to be a councillor.

Up to a maximum of 4 Members may attend a site visit, although more Members may attend if a major application.

Members must ensure they are familiar with the relevant planning application before attending a site visit.

All ~~Members~~members of the Working Group should attend a site visit at the same time except in exceptional circumstances and not cause the applicant inconvenience.

Members of the Working Group deemed to have a personal or pecuniary interest in the application should not attend a site visit. Other Members of the Parish Council can be appointed to attend a site visit in their place, if appropriate.

Members should not attend a site visit with a pre-determined view of the application.

Members are permitted to ask questions about the planning application in question but cannot discuss any other matters or ask to view any other part of the property which is not in the application site.

FLETCHING PARISH COUNCIL

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Members should make no comments to indicate support or otherwise for the application.

Commenting on Applications

The Planning Working Group will prepare its recommended comments in advance of the Parish Council meeting. These will be sent to the Clerk in writing in advance of the meeting for circulation to the full council.

The comments and decision of the full council will be agreed at ordinary meetings of Fletching Parish Council by vote.

If the deadline for comments prevents comments from being agreed at an ordinary meeting, an extra-ordinary meeting may be called, or comments can be delegated to a minimum of two councillors who are members of the Planning Working Group.

Where comments and decisions are delegated, they should be agreed by a majority of the members of the Planning Working Group and sent to the Clerk in writing in advance of the Parish Council meeting and the due date for submission to Wealden.

In the event that the Planning Working Group is not able to agree comments and a decision, the Clerk will be so advised. The Planning Working Group with either call an extra-ordinary meeting to agree comments or a neutral response will be submitted to Wealden DC.

Comments should be recorded and submitted using one of the following formats:

- No objection or support or no comments (neutral)
- Support with reasons set out as clearly as possible (positive)
- Object with reasons set out as clearly as possible (negative)

The Parish Council is under obligation to give reasons for its decisions.

Declarations of Interest

A Register of Interests is held by Wealden District Council, where disclosable pecuniary interests are recorded, following election or appointment.

Where a planning matter occurs, which is related to previously registered, or other personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest, it should be declared by the councillor at the meeting where it is being discussed.

Following such declaration, the councillor should play no part in the discussion, debate or vote unless it is not considered to be prejudicial by the councillor and full council. The councillor may leave the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed or if the code of conduct permits, remain in the room.

If the interest is minor or has only a tenuous link to the matter under discussion, the councillor should raise the matter with the Clerk and seek guidance on whether it is sufficient to be declared and affect participation.

Planning Enforcement

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Parish Councils do not have any formal statutory role in planning enforcement.

However, members of Fletching Parish Council can report information if they feel there has been development without the necessary permissions.

If a councillor feels there is a matter to be reported to Wealden District Council Planning Enforcement, this should be brought to the attention of the full council at an ordinary meeting.

In the event that the full council decides that the matter should be referred to Wealden DC then reasonable measures will be taken to notify the land-owner that the matter has been so referred.

If the matter is considered urgent, it should be reported to the Clerk with a request to call for an extra-ordinary meeting made in accordance with the Fletching Parish Council Standing Orders.

Councillors should not enter a site under investigation nor confront persons alleged to be in breach of planning control, or their contractors.

Request for comments or a site visit prior to an application being submitted to Wealden District Council

Councillors will not visit a site or make any comments about a proposed application site until a formal application has been received by the Planning Authority and the Parish Council has been consulted officially.

Applicants are advised to contact Wealden District Council, as the Planning Authority, for pre-application advice if they want information before submitting an application.

Fletching Parish Council Finances 30 September 2024

Payments made by Direct Debit/Debit Card/BACS in September 2024

Payee	For	Amount	Method
HSBC	Bank Charge	£ 5.00	DD
EE Ltd	Mobile Phone bill	£ 17.76	DD
Hugofox Ltd	FPC Website	£ 11.99	DD
Wealden Citizen Advice	Grant Payment	£ 350.00	BACS
Amazon	Supplies for Pavilion (FRGC)	£ 35.98	DC
Amazon	Union Flag for Pavilion (FRGC)	£ 21.99	DC
	TOTAL	£ 442.72	

Payments Received in September 2024

From	For	Amount
Wealden District Council	Precept - 2nd Payment	£ 17,307.50
HSBC	Interest on accounts	£ 357.71
	Total	£ 17,665.21

Payments for Approval – October 2024

Payee	For	Amount	Method
Knill James	Payroll Provider	£ 48.44	BACS
Countrymans Contractors Ltd	Grass Cutting	£1,011.44	BACS
HMRC	PAYE and National Insurance - Q2	£ 335.04	BACS
SLCC	Annual Subscription	£ 183.00	BACS
PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit	£ 378.00	BACS
G Paterson-Griggs	Clerk Expenses	£ 4.50	BACS
ESCC Pension Fund	Clerk Pension	£ 301.19	BACS
G Paterson-Griggs	Clerk Salary	£1,026.11	BACS

Fletching Parish Council Bank Reconciliation		30-Sep-24		
Balance per bank statements as at		30-Sep-24	Cashbook	
FPC Current Account	£	31,102.12	Opening balance	£ 56,377.57
FPC Savings Account	£	72,556.99	Add receipts in year	£ 77,286.89
FPC War Memorial Account	£	436.89	Less payments in year	-£ 29,051.90
FPC Maryon-Wilson Account	£	516.56		
Net Balance	£	104,612.56	Balance	£ 104,612.56

APPROVED at a Parish Council Meeting on 14 October 2024:

Signed:

Chair of Fletching Parish Council

Date: 14 October 2024

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of **Fletching Parish Council – ES0037**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

15/09/2024

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Fletching Burial Ground - Applications Received

The following applications have been received:

Grant of Burial Rights

Applicant	Burial Plot / Cremated Remains Plot	Plot No	Parishioner / Non- Parishioner

Notice of Interment

Deceased	Plot No	Date	Burial / Cremated Remains	Parishioner / Non-Parishioner

Consent to erect a monument (proposed design attached)

Applicant	Plot No	Name of person(s) interred in plot	First inscription / 2 nd inscription	Parishioner / Non-Parishioner
Nicholas Waterhouse	1119	David and Jessie Waterhouse	2 nd inscription	Non-Parishioner

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FPC Meeting 14 October 2024 – Proposed Comments for Planning Applications

WD/2023/1466/LB St Mary's House, High Street, Fletching TN22 3SS

Re-tiling of roof.

This is for a repair to the roof and the external tiles will be the same. Some concern is raised about using felt in an old roof because this reduces the air flow and will encourage rot of the timber and reduce the life of the roof. The Parish Council SUPPORTS this application.

WD/2024/0103/F Malling Farm, Down Street, Piltdown TN22 3XU

Replacement of a lawful park home with a new dwelling (Amended Plans).

The revision to the "red site area" really just reflects land ownership boundaries and has no material impact on the application. Therefore, the Parish Council has NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS to make.

WD/2024/1874 + 1875 Old Spot Farm

- See separate report
-

WD/2024/1980/LBR Shortbridge Mill, Shortbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XA

Removal of existing weatherboard to front elevation, repair of the timber frame construction to the upper floors and reinstatement of existing weatherboard (where sound). Any deficit made up of new timber to match existing on a like for like basis (part retrospective).

Obviously, repairs are necessary as photographs of the rot show and the Parish Council is pleased that they are using oak throughout which is important and are not using any felt. The repairs seem to be appropriate and the Parish Council SUPPORTS the application.

Note: Cllr Greenish declared an interest in this application as the owner is a friend and he took no part in the consideration of the application.

WD/2024/2088/FR Pond Cottage, North Hall Lane, Splaynes Green TN22

Part retrospective application to retain existing building for continued use as residential annex and occasional use as a holiday let. No increase in footprint, bulk or volume, no external material changes.

Planning consent was given in 2021 for "demolition of the existing garage and store, erection of new garage and store with accommodation in the roof void; new link from garage from house; new garden wall". Condition 4 of that consent was in the following terms:

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"The garage extension hereby permitted shall be regarded and used as an integral part of the existing dwelling, Pond Cottage, and shall not be used for nor in connection with any commercial trade or business purposes. The ground floor garage space shall not be converted into habitable accommodation, including domestic workshop, study, games room and similar uses, without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To protect the visual and residential amenities of the site and to ensure the retention of parking/storage provision to obviate the need for further outbuildings having regard to SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policies EN6, EN19, EN27 and TR16 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998 coupled with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021."

The applicants are in breach of this condition. The ground floor garage space has been "converted" into habitable accommodation, originally for the applicant's father and more recently for the occasional Airbnb letting. This application is to retain that unauthorised use as habitable accommodation.

The 2021 planning consent is very recent. The Design and Access Statement suggests that the provision of habitable accommodation on the ground floor was made "at the time of the original construction". If that is right, the extension wasn't even built as a garage so the breach was pretty much "ab initio". The Parish Council does not have any great objection in principle to an Airbnb use (it is understood there is significant demand for it in the area) but it is conscious of the reasons given for the prohibition on conversion into habitable accommodation which were: "To protect the visual and residential amenities of the site and to ensure the retention of parking/storage provision to obviate the need for further outbuildings etc.....". This has not been addressed by the applicants and it is a pretty flagrant breach of planning control. The Parish Council OBJECTS to this application. If the District Council was minded to approve the application, the Parish Council would request that the extension could only ever be used as ancillary accommodation to the main house.

WD/2024/2163/F Piltdown Lodge, Lodge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3YP

Erection of single storey extension, installation of rooflight.

This is a very modest alteration in keeping with the main house. It is also not going to be visible as it is on the rear side of the building. The Parish Council SUPPORTS the application.

WD/2024/2197/FA Little Wild, Sharpsbridge Lane, Piltdown TN22 3XG

Variation of conditions 2 & 6 of WD/2024/0629/F to enable omission of 6 no. dormer windows to be replaced with standard velux skylights, alterations to internal layout, new catslide roof to accommodate taller sliding doors to the rear and enlargement of existing window openings on each side elevation. (Comments to be submitted by 24 October 2024)

The proposed variations (particularly the replacement of the dormers with skylights) are an improvement to the scheme and the Parish Council SUPPORTS the application.

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FPC Meeting 14 October 2024 – Proposed Comments for Planning Applications

WD/2024/1874/F Old Spot Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XN

Demolition of existing farm shop and outbuildings and erection of six semi-detached dwellings with associated landscaping and infrastructure.

WD/2024/1875/F Old Spot Farm, Goldbridge Road, Piltdown TN22 3XN

Erection of one self-build two storey dwelling with associated landscaping and infrastructure.

The site covered by Application WD/2024/1874/F (**Site A**) comprises a former farm shop (now closed) set back from the road with at the front a parking/access area between the building and the public highway. The land to the rear of the shop (to the extent within the site) comprises part of an agricultural holding with a number of agricultural buildings.

The site covered by WD/2024/1875/F (**Site B**) comprises vacant undeveloped land, formerly the over-spill car park for the farm shop.

Unless otherwise stated, this is a combined response to both applications.

1. Loss of Agricultural Use (Site A)

- a. This application creates an artificial planning unit that does not exist. If it is argued that the shop is general Class E retail, then the land to the north is undeveloped greenfield land that does not form part of the planning unit since it clearly forms a part of the agricultural holding planning unit. If it is argued that the shop is an ancillary use to the agricultural holding planning unit, then the application would entail a loss of agricultural use and buildings.
- b. Thus, whichever analysis is adopted, the application would result in the loss of an agricultural use. The development as proposed would not support the rural character and function of Wealden. The Core Strategy only encourages the re-use of suitable redundant rural buildings for tourism and visitor purposes; to meet an essential rural need, support rural diversification and sustainability of the countryside, promote tourism or enhance the countryside.

2. Retention of Local Services and Community Facilities

- a. National Policy supports retention of such services (NPPF paragraph 88, d) in order to support a prosperous rural economy. Local Development policy seeks the protection of local services and community facilities such as the local shop function in communities.
- b. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the relevant criteria for the loss of the existing use have been met (draft Policy INF7, paragraph 5). No evidence of marketing or lack of need or lack of viability has been put forward. The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan is now of moderate weight¹ which is enhanced in respect of those policies to which there has been limited, if any, objection such as INF7.

¹ https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201164/local_plan/3175/local_plan_guidance

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3. Spatial Strategy

- a. Adopted and Emerging Development Plan policy both set a clear spatial strategy for the sustainable future of the predominantly rural District. The recent Appeal Decision² in Piltdown (**Piltdown Appeal Decision**), has clarified that application of national and local policy to the specific circumstances of Piltdown.
- b. This Piltdown Appeal Decision (August 2023) in respect of Little Barkham Farm, only some 300m from the application sites, proposed four dwellings each on two sites referred to as Upper Field and Lower Field. The appeals addressed fully not just the site-specific factors of Little Barkham Farm but more importantly the generic issues of the 5-year land supply and the overarching principles of sustainable settlement patterns, of which Piltdown does not form a constituent element. We have added emphasis and commentary where particularly relevant.
- c. The Piltdown Appeal Decision found that:
 5. *There is no defined development boundary for Piltdown, which is a rural settlement characterised by ribbon development along Goldbridge Road, the A272, between Haywards Heath and Uckfield. It is therefore in the countryside for the purposes of planning policy.*
 6. *Saved Policy GD2 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 (Local Plan) seeks to resist all development beyond settlement boundaries. Saved Policy DC17 of the Local Plan specifically resists residential development in the countryside, although the supporting text sets out a series of exceptional circumstances where housing may be acceptable. It has not been suggested that any of these exceptions apply in this case.*
 7. *Policy SPO3 of the Core Strategy seeks to focus development primarily around Hailsham/Hellingly, Polegate/Willingdon/Stone Cross and Uckfield and the district's secondary towns of Crowborough and Hailsham rather than in the rural areas. Policy SPO8 of the Core Strategy supports some additional growth in the district's villages. Policy SPO7 seeks to reduce the need to travel by car. To achieve this aim development will be directed to places where there are opportunities to use public transport and improve the quality of journeys that can be made on foot or by bike.*
 8. *Piltdown has a convenience store associated with the petrol station, a pub and a farm shop (this has now closed, being the subject of the current applications). However, there is no primary school; the nearest is at Fletching and it would be necessary to go to Newick to see a doctor. Piltdown therefore lacks the characteristic facilities of a village. To reach employment opportunities, secondary education, leisure activities and a wide range of shops residents would have to travel several miles to Uckfield, Haywards Heath or further afield.*
 9. *..... To reach most facilities and services it would be easier, quicker, and more convenient for future occupants to do so by car, notwithstanding the bus services along the A272. Using a car would almost certainly be the default choice of travel mode for anyone who has access to private transport*

² Little Barkham Farm, Piltdown - Ref APP/C1435/W/22/3297438 and APP/C1435/W/22/3297916

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10. *(The appeal site) lies immediately to the rear of existing development on the A272, a busy road with a speed limit of 40mph. Nevertheless, it is within a few minutes' walk of the garage/convenience store, pub and bus stops, all of which are less than 300m away. This suggests that there are realistic opportunities for future occupants to meet some of their day-to-day needs on foot. However, it would not be such an attractive proposition to walk to the farm shop (now closed) as the footway does not extend sufficiently far along the A272. To access other facilities and services residents could also choose to catch a bus into the nearby towns, although it would be easier and more convenient to travel by car. Therefore, although Upper Field, provides the possibility for residents to make a limited number of journeys on foot and by bus, it is still likely that they would predominantly choose to use a car to meet most of their off-site needs.*
- d. The Inspector therefore concluded that
 11. *Lower Field is not a suitable location for new housing as future residents would be over reliant on the private car to access most of the facilities and services that they would need. The proposal would be contrary to the Council's spatial strategy set out in the above policies, which seek to locate development within identified settlements and where a genuine choice of travel mode is available.*
 12. *Upper Field is not a suitable location for new housing. It would be contrary to the Council's spatial strategy and policies for the same reasons that apply to Lower Field.*
- e. The Inspector gave specific consideration to housing land supply and the tilted balance:-
 25. *The Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites; the position set out in its appeal statement was that the supply stood at 3.66 years, which is a significant shortfall. Therefore paragraph 11 d) of the Framework is engaged.*
 26. *The Framework advocates strategic policies which maximise the use of previously developed land and manage growth by locating development where there is access to a wide range of facilities, thus limiting the need to travel and providing genuine travel choice. In rural areas it states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities whilst recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The Framework also promotes good design by ensuring the developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.*
 27. *The Council's policies, although adopted 1998 and 2013, are broadly consistent with this approach and therefore carry significant weight in the assessment of the proposals. They recognise that development beyond settlement boundaries will be necessary in view of the shortage of housing land in the District. However, paragraph 80 of the Framework does not imply that housing must be 'isolated' for restrictive policies to apply. Furthermore, there is nothing in the Framework to indicate that the definition of settlement boundaries is no longer a suitable policy to direct development towards the most appropriate locations, having regard to other objectives in the development plan. Although neither of the appeal sites could be described as isolated, neither of them is close to any development defined by a*

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settlement boundary. There are therefore no policies in the development plan that offer support for either of the schemes. As the proposals would be contrary to all the policies referred to above, both would conflict with the development plan as a whole.

28. As each of the schemes would provide four new homes, this would be a public benefit of moderate weight which weighs in their favour particularly given the acute shortage of housing land in the district.

f. The Inspector further concluded:

29. (As regards Lower Field) Notwithstanding the Frameworks objective of significantly improving the supply of housing, the proposal would conflict with its policies relating to the location of development and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

30. Consequently, the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considered against the Framework as a whole. The presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore did not apply

31. In respect of the proposal for the Upper Field, I find that the site would not be suitable for new housing, even though future occupants could choose to walk to the limited facilities nearby, and could catch a bus to the nearest towns to meet some of their needs. However, the scheme would make a minimal contribution to the vitality of the rural community and, to reach most of the services and facilities they would need, residents would be highly likely to rely on the private car.

g. Thus, the Piltdown Appeal Decision, as a matter of principle, is on all fours in its applicability and relevance to the current applications.

h. Indeed, since the Piltdown Appeal Decision, WDC has completed public consultation on the Reg 18 Draft Local Plan. The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan is now of moderate weight and should be given greater weight in respect of those policies to which there has been limited, if any, objection such as SS1.

i. Draft Policy SS1 sets a clear spatial strategy based on typology of settlement by reference to overall suitability for development including based on a wholistic assessment of sustainability. The village of Fletching (the lowest order Type 6 settlement) has no housing land allocation at all and is currently expected to see 14 net additional windfall dwellings over the full life of the plan. The scattered hamlet of Piltdown, separated from the village, is not categorised as any type of settlement within the hierarchy. This is consistent with the longstanding strategy for the District and, on the evidence, recently acknowledged, accepted and upheld by the Inspector in the Piltdown Appeal Decision.

j. As found by the Inspector, Piltdown is situated in the countryside through which the A272 passes. Draft Policy INF2 supports draft Policy SS1 in seeking to secure concentrated development in existing settlements dependent on their population and services.

k. In preparing the Reg 18 Draft Local Plan, WDC examined the results of a call for sites in the SHELAA 2024. The subject application sites (Site Reference 1196/1630) were promoted and then assessed, albeit in advance of decisions on the planning strategy in the WLP. WDC rejected the location concluding that (emphasis added):-

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The site comprises of a farm shop and car park located to the west of Piltdown and to the north of the A272 (Goldbridge Road). The southeastern and southwestern boundaries of the site are bounded by a group Tree Protection Order (TPO). The site in its entirety is included within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The site is remote from existing services, amenities and public transport, and is visually and functionally separated from Piltdown to the east and the A272 has no footpaths at this juncture. Housing development in this location would be out of keeping with and would result in a detrimental impact upon this semi-rural landscape. In addition, it is likely that a vehicular access may prove difficult to achieve, given the speed of the road (50 mph speed limit) and visibility.

- l. It follows that the development of dwellings on these sites conflicts with adopted and emerging Development Plan Policy and would conflict with the clear spatial principles of National Policy endorsed by the Inspector in August 2023.
- m. It is suggested that the mere introduction of easier bus facilities (whether by additional bus- stops or provision of additional pavement) renders a site suitable in terms of sustainability. This represents a crude, simplistic and single-issue analysis of the many and complex factors required to render a settlement, of any form, sustainable.
- n. Thus, simply providing an additional bus-stop within a few hundred meters of an existing bus-stop does not “convert” Piltdown into a sustainable location as the Spatial Strategy, as applied to Piltdown by the Inspector in the Piltdown Appeal Decision, clearly demonstrates. Neither does the introduction of some pavement linking to other parts of Piltdown overcome the fundamental issue of spatial geography of the district and Piltdown’s location and character as a small, scattered hamlet.
- o. With particular reference to Site B, WDC recently refused an application for permission in principle to erect a detached three-bedroom single-storey dwelling with car port and associated works on the site of a former sand-school in Piltdown (Ref: WD/2023/3137/PIP). The principal grounds of refusal (consistent with the Piltdown Appeal Decision) were:
 - i. *The application site occupies an unsustainable rural location outside a development boundary where new housing is resisted and where there is very limited access to local and day-to-day services other than by private car. The provision of one dwelling would not significantly or demonstrably outweigh this harm. The site does not therefore constitute a sustainable location for housing contrary to policies GD2, EN1 and DC17 of Wealden Local Plan 1998; policies SPO7, SPO13, SPO14 and WCS6 of Wealden Core Strategy 2013; and paragraphs 83, 108, 114 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*
 - ii. *The proposed development and related residential use would have a harmful urbanising impact on the rural location contrary to policies EN1 and EN27 of Wealden Local Plan 1998; SPO1, SPO13 and WCS14 of Wealden Core Strategy 2013; and paragraphs 131, 135 and 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

4. Character and Appearance

- a. The general principle of the impact of concentrated residential development in the hamlet of Piltdown were specifically considered by the Inspector in the Piltdown Appeal Decision who concluded that (emphasis added):-

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18. *"The proposal) would consolidate and intensify the looser and more dispersed pattern of built development in the locality. In addition to the significant bulk of the dwellings, the proposal would introduce hard-surfacing, boundary treatments, parking spaces and domestic paraphernalia. Any sense of the site being countryside would be displaced by a domestic character with all the activities and comings and goings associated with the use of permanent homes.*
19. *Furthermore, the proposed courtyard layout would have a regimented appearance with buildings close to and at right angles to each other. This would not reflect the more informal arrangement of existing buildings and the organic way in which the surrounding area has evolved over time. The two, large, detached dwellings would be mirror images of each other and their size and bulk would be out of keeping with the scale of other nearby dwellings. The design details with garages, dormer windows, balconies and chimneys would serve to emphasise the domestic appearance and suburban character of the development. The lack of space for effective landscaping within the courtyard and the need for parking spaces would result in a sterile appearance preventing the establishment an attractive place to live. Therefore, the proposal would fail to integrate effectively within this semi-rural environment.*
24. the proposal would harm the character and appearance of this semi-rural area, arising from its poor siting, design and layout. It would conflict with saved Policy EN27 of the Local Plan and Policy SPO13 of the Core Strategy. These policies, amongst other things, seek to promote good design, and require the scale, form and layout of development to respect its context.
- b. These applications would similarly conflict with the relevant national and local policy as applied by the Inspector in the Piltdown Appeal Decision and as applied by WDC in application no. WD/2023/3137/PIP, to the specific circumstances of the character and appearance of Piltdown.
- c. The Emerging Wealden Local Plan (2024) also sets down policy parameters for development which are not met in these applications. Policies HO1 (all proposed dwellings are 3 beds with no smaller units for which there is greater acute need), HO2 (in this case, the proposed density is excessive give the circumstances of Piltdown) and DE1 (the proposal conflicts with the context, identity and built form of the site and the lack of compact sustainable forms of development in Piltdown)
- d. The applicant's Design Statement refers to the use of red bricks and orange roofing tiles. These materials are typical of industrialised homebuilding at a scale for example at Ridgewood in Uckfield. Such materials are not part of the context or design of the more traditional housing in Piltdown. Brickwork in traditional hamlets and villages is darker and more subtle, for examples Sussex Dark Multi Stock Brick, Type: Soft Mud Sanded Texture, Colour: Red Blue Buff Grey Multi Tonal. Roof tiles are typically Traditional Antique & Sussex Colours such as Medium Antique, Dark Antique, Red Antique, Jubilee, Weathered Earth from the 'Traditional' range.

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- e. Tones of brickwork should emulate the prevailing character of the hamlet. It is a perennial issue that too much design of new housing is generic pattern book design unsupported by adequate analysis of context of rural historic context.
- f. The design fails to adopt any contextual approach to design. The overall heights of the buildings are excessive (8.5m and 7.9m) when compared with the character of dwellings in Piltdown. This unfortunate effect of excessive height and density is prevalent in too many proposals. It is important to recognise the excessively large and tall roof voids enable later loft conversion to add bedrooms which results in dwellings that are no longer 3-bedroom dwellings. Planning conditions should always be imposed to prevent such conversion.
- g. Drawings numbered 03/B and 04/C amply demonstrate the problem. We consider that the views of the Inspector in the Piltdown Appeal Decision could be applied equally to this proposal:
 - 11. It “..... would amount to a substantial and incongruous visual intrusion of suburban style development into the open countryside. Its separation from other nearby development would make this particularly harmful. It would not relate to, or integrate effectively with, any of the nearby buildings and would be completely at odds with the appearance of the surrounding rural area”

5. Case Law

The analysis set out in this objection is consistent, not only with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the policies of the Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Wealden Core Strategy (2013) but also with the emerging policies in the Draft Wealden Local Plan (2024). It also wholly consistent with the finding of the Inspector in the Piltdown Appeal Decision. The Inspector in that case would, when making his decision, have been fully familiar with the case law (handed down in 2017 and 2018) extensively cited by the applicant concerning the tilted balance; yet effectively dismissed in Piltdown Appeal Decision.

6. Planning Appeals

The applicant also cites appeal decisions elsewhere yet fails to make any mention of the Piltdown Appeal Decision which is within the immediate proximity of the application site (within 300m) and is of far greater relevance and of substantially greater weight.

7. Planning Histories

- a. The applicant also cites various other decisions in Piltdown. There is only one decision cited (WD/2022/2692/F) which was made after the Piltdown Appeal Decision. The other decisions relied upon by the applicant are historic and irrelevant. Even that one decision cited (The Wattles) is no more than a minor infill between existing dwellings for a new single dwelling, consistent with the Inspectors finding in the Appeals Decision that Piltdown “... is a rural settlement characterised by ribbon development”
- b. The applicant fails to make any reference to the recent refusal of planning permission in Piltdown (WD/2023/3137/PIP) discussed above. The refusal of planning permission in that case is consistent with the spatial principles established by the Inspector in the Piltdown Appeal Decision

8. Previously Development Land (Site B)

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The applicant is incorrect in arguing that Site B constitutes previously developed land. This is a common error of misconstruction of the meaning within the National Planning Policy Framework. The issue was specifically addressed in the case of a recent proposal in Piltdown³. The carpark is not land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, nor is it within the curtilage of developed land (NPPF, Annex2). Thus, it is not PDL/brownfield land.

9. Self-build (Site B)

The applicant appears to argue that, in some way, self-build justifies some other application of usual planning policy and practice. All the factors set out above apply with equal force to both applications.

10. Affordable housing

- a. Given the sites are less than 0.5 ha, no affordable housing is proposed. Yet it is evident that the application site boundaries are predominantly random and are reduced for the sake of the policy argument.
- b. Such application boundaries also leave open the clear possibility for later applications which would serve not only to intensify development but also would bypass normal affordable housing policy by disaggregating the 10-unit threshold over multiple applications to avoid that provision.

11. Conclusion

- a. For all the reasons set out above, the Parish Council OBJECTS to these applications and considers they should be refused. There are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this conclusion.
- b. The refusal of planning permission would be consistent with the principles of development within Piltdown established by the Piltdown Appeal Decision.
- c. The grant of planning permission would be inconsistent with the refusal in WD/2023/3137/PIP
- d. Historic grants of planning permission in Piltdown are now of no weight in the light of the appeal decisions.
- e. In applying the tilted balance to development in the specific case of Piltdown, the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considered against the Framework as a whole. The threshold for the presumption in favour of sustainable development is not therefore met and in consequence the presumption does not apply.

³ Little Barkham Farm WD/2023/3137/PIP