

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
 PLANNING COMMITTEE
 South Hall, Village Centre
 Monday 4th October 2021 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillors, Buller, Bowden, Riordan, Smith and Sharp who was in the Chair and Parish Clerk, Miss A Smith.

APOLOGIES:

No apologies.

PUBLIC FORUM

Seven residents attended the meeting. Presentations were made by residents in respect of the following: 21/504380 46 Stanley Close, 21/504975 Land Adjacent to West View Maidstone Road, 21/504554 Land at Station Approach, 20/505296 Whiteacres.

APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES:

Minute Pages 1560P-1563P of 13th September 2021 were approved and signed by Councillor Sharp and are available at <http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/planning-committee/>.

URGENT ITEMS:

No Urgent Items

COUNCILLOR DECLARATIONS:

1. Declarations of Lobbying – Councillors Buller declared that she had been lobbied in respect of application 20/505296. Councillors Bowden and Riordan declared that they had been lobbied in respect of application 21/504380, Councillors Bowden, Riordan, Smith and Sharp declared that they had been lobbied in respect of application 21/504832, Councillors Riordan, Smith and Sharp declared that they had been lobbied in respect of applications 21/504554 and 21/505021 and Councillors Smith and Sharp declared that they had been lobbied in respect of application 21/504975.
2. Declarations of Changes to the Register of Interests – None declared.
3. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda – None declared.
4. Requests for Dispensation – None requested

APPEALS LODGED:

- 20/505296 **1 Whiteacres, Marden Road TN12 0JG** - Creation of new access and hardstanding. SPC had recommended Refusal (Min 1525P, 1539P). Any additional or modified comments to be submitted in writing to the Planning Inspectorate by 20th October 2021. Councillors commented that their views remained as submitted for the original application and that they agreed with the reasons given in the decision by MBC. They further commented that evidence had now been received from a member of the public, also witnessed by a Councillor, indicating that the

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data supplied by the applicant regarding traffic speed survey in their grounds for appeal document may not be valid. During the period of the road survey, 30mph road signs were placed temporarily in advance of the survey points, which they believe were specifically to influence the behaviour of drivers. Councillors feel this would have therefore affected the results. They requested this information be sent to the Inspector.

- 21/500679 **Faith Cottage, Clapper Lane TN12 0JT** - Insertion of replacement pitched roof with insertion of 2no. side windows at first floor level and 3no. front dormer windows to garage building, creating first floor office, including removal of 1no. side window. SPC had recommended Approval (Min 1538P, 1547P). Any additional or modified comments to be submitted in writing to the Planning Inspectorate by 20th October 2021. Councillors made no further comments.

FULL PLANNING APPLICATIONS: (for recommendation)

- 21/504380 **46 Stanley Close TN12 0TA** - Erection of a two-bedroom attached dwelling. Following considerable discussion, Councillors RESOLVED by majority to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer with a recommendation that the mature trees and removal thereof be considered by MBC Tree Officer in respect of impact on biodiversity and impact on the street scene prior to any approval being granted, should the Planning Officer be minded to approve the application. Councillor Buller requested that her vote against recommending approval be recorded.
- 21/504591 **Hodges Place, High Street TN12 0AU** - Installation of 2no. external heat pumps, 14no. photovoltaic panels and repairs to Eastern and Northern boundary fencing. Councillors RESOLVED to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.
- 21/504744 **Woodford Farm, Maidstone Road TN12 0RH** - Section 73 - Application for minor material amendment to the approved plans condition pursuant to 19/503170/FULL - which was for the "Minor Material Amendment to condition 3 of 15/506037/FULL (Demolition of existing commercial buildings, hardstanding and Woodford Coach House and the erection of a replacement dwelling for Woodford Coach House and 9 dwellings with parking and landscaping) (allowed on appeal)" to allow minor alterations to the approved plans in relation to Plot 10. Councillors RESOLVED to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.
- 21/504832 **Iden Grange, Cranbrook Road TN12 0ET** - Demolition of 19no. storage buildings and erection of 5no. detached dwellings and 4 bay car barn, conversion of a timber framed Kentish barn to form a single dwelling house together with associated parking, landscaping, amenity areas and infrastructure. Councillors RESOLVED to recommend REFUSAL and requested the application be referred to the MBC Planning Committee, were the Planning Officer minded to approve the application. Councillors recommended that the application be refused on the following grounds; that it is contrary to policy PW2 of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan in that it is outside the village envelope. It is contrary to policies DM1 and SP17 of the MBC local plan in that the design does not enhance the local, natural area and it fails to fully address concerns about surface water flooding or provision of foul water discharge. In respect of Policy SP17 (page 71 of the Local Plan), the site is part of the Low Weald Special Landscape area, and as

MBC has an excess of its 5 year housing supply so this windfall site it not necessary. The application is also contrary to section 9 of the NPFF as the site is not in a sustainable location, with no safe cycle or pedestrian passageways and no safe access to public transport; it would be reliant on the use of a car. It is at an extremely dangerous point to cross the busy and fast A229, close to the Chittenden bends an accident blackspot, with the inability to install a pedestrian crossing as it falls in the 50mph zone. Additionally traffic attempting to access or exit the entrance to the site would be a hazard to oncoming traffic.

- 21/504955 **Mistley, Maidstone Road TN12 ORG** - Erection of extensions to the front and a single storey rear extension to include assisted bedroom, assisted wet room with live-in carer's accommodation to provide disabled accessibility for a disabled person. Councillors RESOLVED to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.
- 21/505072 **1 Newtown Cottages, George Street TN12 ORA** - Erection of a two-storey side extension with rooms within the roof space, including alterations to the existing dwelling. Councillors RESOLVED to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.
- 21/505151 **28 Butcher Close TN12 OTJ** - Conversion of existing integral garage into living accommodation to provide study/bedroom with en-suite shower room, including creation of new pitched roof. Councillors RESOLVED to recommend APPROVAL to the MBC Planning Officer.

OUTLINE APPLICATIONS: - (for comment/recommendation)

- 21/504554 **Land at Station Approach, Station Road TN12 OQL** - with all matters reserved except for access for residential development of 10no. units and up to 288 sq.m of Use Class E, together with car parking, public realm and associated works. Councillors RESOLVED to recommend REFUSAL and request that the application be referred to the MBC Planning Committee were the Planning Officer minded to approve it. Councillors recommended refusal on the following grounds. The application is contrary to DM1 (ii) of the MBC Local Plan and GW1 of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan in that it will cause harm to the local historic character of the area especially the Grade II listed Railway Tavern and other nearby heritage buildings. Additionally Councillors agreed with Kent Police design out crime report and they felt the application was deficient in creating a safe and secure environment to prevent crime, particularly given its location so close to the Station. It is against policy DM23 of the Local Plan in that it fails to provide sufficient parking spaces for the proposed accommodation. Significantly Councillors felt that the scale of the proposed building was extremely obtrusive and excessive. It would tower above all other buildings including the new Sainsbury's whose height was restricted. Given the location in the line of sight on entry into the village from the North, Councillors felt the design to be completely out of keeping with a rural village. Councillors commented that the proposal fails to take into account the existing road layout, in particular the new roundabout for Sainsbury's and they felt that the increased traffic flow onto the A229 (the most dangerous rural road in the UK) at this already extremely busy junction opposite Market Street to be incompatible with DM1 of the Local Plan by not providing safe vehicular or pedestrian movement. Finally Councillors felt that the inclusion of the balconies failed to meet the requirement for suitable amenity space as they face outward onto the busy A229 or corner of Station Approach.

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21/504975 **Land Adjacent to West View, Maidstone Road TN12 ORE** - for the erection of up to 4no. detached dwellings and creation of new vehicular and pedestrian access. (Access and Layout being sought). Councillors RESOLVED to recommend REFUSAL and request that the application be referred to the MBC Planning Committee were the Planning Officer minded to approve it. They recommended refusal on the following grounds; that the application is against policies SP17 of the MBC Local Plan, and the NPFF and PW2 section 4.16 of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan in that the site is outside the village envelope and does not meet the requirements for development in the countryside. Councillors believe that every effort should be made to protect the open countryside and landscapes of local value such as the Staplehurst Low Weald. It is also contrary to DM1 & DM4 of the Local Plan in that the visual impact is damaging to setting the 15th Century Grade II listed Peartrees Cottage (formally Brigadoon). Councillors commented that the site and surrounding fields flood regularly and this will only add to the surface water flooding of the area. Councillors believe that retaining the open countryside is essential for the biodiversity and absorbing the surface water from the Wealden Clay. The site is contrary to the NPFF section 9 in that it is not sustainable, there is no footpath from the site into the village and despite the proposal for a dropped curb, crossing the A229 at that point (the most dangerous rural road in the UK) is neither safe or sensible. Councillors also commented that MBC has an excess of it's 5 year housing supply so this windfall site it not necessary.

21/505021 **Land at George Street TN12 ORA** - for development of 61no. residential units, car parking, public realm and associated works (Access being sought). Councillors RESOLVED to recommend REFUSAL and request the application be referred to the MBC Planning Committee were the Planning Officer minded to approve it. Councillors recommended refusal on the following grounds; as development north of the railway line the site is outside the village envelope and as such does not meet the requirements for development in the Countryside and is against policies SP17 of the MBC Local Plan, and the NPFF and PW2 section 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18 of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors strongly believe that every effort should be made to protect the open countryside and landscapes of local value such as the Staplehurst Low Weald. The site was not included in the 2020 call for sites, when MBC rejected all sites submitted that were north of the railway line and Councillors call upon MBC to maintain this hard landscape boundary. The site is also at the lowest point in the parish and regularly floods and remains permanently damp for most of the year. This has created a strong area for biodiversity which includes nightingales, wax wings and great crested newts. The access from the site onto George Street and ultimately onto the A229 is via a hill start causing a dangerous junction, adding traffic volume will only exacerbate this. This site, were it to be approved it will be isolated from the village by the railway line with no guarantee of footpaths south. The application is against DM1 for good design as it fails to offer EVC points for each property and is against the NPFF, particularly paragraph 130 in that it does not meet the requirement for well designed places, being primarily roads, housing and parking and represents significant over intensification.

REPORTED DECISIONS: (for noting)

21/503181 **Sweetlands Farm, Couchman Green Lane TN12 ORR** - Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to a flexible use. MBC WITHDRAWN. SPC had Noted (Min 1550P). Councillors NOTED the decision.

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- 21/503202 **Thorford Hall, Goudhurst Road TN12 0HQ** - Erection of a garage and associated works. MBC GRANTED with 5 conditions. SPC had recommended Approval (Min 1558P). Councillors NOTED the decision.
- 21/503226 **Faith Cottage, Clapper Lane TN12 0JT** -Part retrospective application for the erection of a replacement stable block and tack room/store. MBC GRANTED with 8 conditions. SPC had recommended Approval (Min 1554P). Councillors NOTED the decision.
- 21/503237 **49 Surrenden Road TN12 0LY** - Conversion of garage into habitable space. Erection of single storey front and two storey side extensions. Creation of first floor side and rear extensions, including internal alterations. MBC GRANTED with 7 conditions. SPC had recommended Refusal (Min 1549P, 1561P). Councillors NOTED the decision.
- 21/504030 **The Old Granary, Clapper Lane TN12 0JT** - Erection of an annexe incidental to the main house. MBC GRANTED with 5 conditions. SPC had recommended Approval (Min 1558P). Councillors NOTED the decision.
- 21/504070 **2 Myrtle Cottage, Station Road TN12 0PZ** -Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed loft conversion with a rear dormer and 2no. roof lights to the front. MBC APPROVED. SPC had Noted (Min 1561P). Councillors NOTED the decision.
- 21/504071 **2 Myrtle Cottage, Station Road TN12 0PZ** -Single storey rear extension (Resubmission of 21/501827/FULL). MBC GRANTED with 3 conditions. SPC had recommended Approval (Min 1558P). Councillors NOTED the decision.

PUBLIC FORUM – Residents spoke about the challenges of assessing each site on it's own merits and some of the disparities in decisions between SPC and MBC. Residents thanked Councillor Buller for her considerable contribution of analysis of the sites on the agenda in relation to planning policy.

Proceedings ended at 9.04pm.

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