West Itchenor Parish Council

Minutes of a Planning Meeting of the West Itchenor Parish Council held on Monday 28 September 2015 in The Itchenor Memorial Hall.

Present: Mr J Dunn, Mr C Mead-Briggs, Mr A Spencer (Chairman)
Mr C Watson

In attendance: Mrs C Smith (Clerk), Mr G Barrett (CDC),
Mr B Hull, Mr M Trundle (Henry Adams), 13 members of public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Colbourne and Cllr Trevelyan.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

Cllr Mead-Briggs declared a personal interest in the applications for Pilgrims as a neighbour and close friend of the applicant.

3. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING HELD ON 24 August 2015.

The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the Planning Meeting held 24 August 2015. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed the Minutes as being a true record of the meeting.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

It was agreed to discuss the application at Watermead first as the applicant had attended the meeting.

4.2 WI/15/02726/DOM – Watermead, Spinney Lane, Itchenor
Timber cycle shed

The plans were reviewed and it was noted that there would be planting between the proposed shed and the boundary fence. The plans also showed planting on the road side of the fence which had not yet taken place. The applicant confirmed that Spinney Lane was due to be resurfaced soon and the planting would take place once this had been completed.

AGREED RESPONSE: No objection

4.1 WI/15/02618/COU – Chichester Harbour Marine Park , The Street, Itchenor
Use of Units 1, 2 and 3 for Class B8 - Storage and distribution.

The Chairman welcomed Bob Hull, Director of Planning at Henry Adams and invited him to comment of the application.

Mr Hull referred to the Planning Statement that accompanied the application. The Applicant had held a public exhibition on 31 July to outline the proposals before the planning application was submitted. The application relates to 3 buildings at the southern end of the site. Planning permission for these buildings in 2003/2007 served to preserve boat building and is restricted to Marine engineering use. These buildings have been empty for over a year. The northern end of the site remains active with boat repairs and refits taking place.

Unit 1 was marketed in February 2014 and Units 2 and 3 in September 2014, details of this are provided within the Planning Statement. Only one enquiry had been from a company who might be considered to comply with the existing use, however, this fell through as their staff were not willing to relocate to the area. Other enquiries were from non-marine related businesses.

Marketing of the site has been discussed with the District Council Planning Officer and a supplementary report on this had been submitted.

The change of use application seeks to allow the use as a storage and distribution site. The owners have been in negotiations since the spring to let the site to Hectic Ltd (Unit 1) and O'Neill (Units 2/3). Both companies would operate as distribution centres with limited deliveries coming in. Unit 1 average incoming deliveries, two a month. Units 2/3 average incoming deliveries 10 a month. There would be single daily collections from each unit from 7.5 tonne vehicles. There will be no retail sales on the site and open hours would be from 8.30 to 5.30 weekdays only.

Vehicle movements will be reduced as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Planning Statement and no objection had been raised from West Sussex County Council highways department. This reduction in vehicle movements was attributed to the reduction in employees on the site.

The application seeks approval for change of use that would be limited solely to the two businesses leasing the buildings. If these businesses left the site then further approval would be required from the District Council for any future tenants. The application would maintain local employment opportunities. Currently the empty buildings are drain on the current owner.

A number of questions relating to the application form were raised with Mr Hull. Mr Hull explained that the online application process was set by the District Council and that the ambiguities that were pointed out should be dealt with by the District Council. In relation to section 7 of the application form there had been no mention of the packaging waste and its removal which would require additional vehicle movements not mentioned in the traffic statement. Further queries were raised about the number of vehicle parking spaces on the site. This led to further debate on the vehicle movements. It appeared that the traffic statement did not include vehicle movements for the existing business at the northern end of the site. It was pointed out that the comparisons being made related to the entire site when it was operating as a boat building site but only to Units 1,2 and 3 in the planning application. Given that there were clearly vehicle movements on the site for the existing business this was considered misleading. It was also pointed out that the recommendation for staff to use the local bus service was inappropriate as the service to Itchenor only ran twice a day, three days a week.

Mr Hull was asked about the current planning infringements on the site and he responded that they were currently in discussions with the Planning Enforcement team on the issue of the boat moulds.

Mr Hull had commented that the new Local Plan did not offer protection for marine use in the form of a specific Policy. It was pointed out that Para 16.8 made reference to preserving marine related employment sites where there was direct access to water.

The question of whether there would have been greater interest if the site had been put up for sale was raised. Mr Trundle responded, possibly but the owner was not looking to sell the site.

The issue of incoming vehicle movements was raised. It was pointed out that information from O'Neill revealed that there were two periods in the year where most deliveries to the distribution centre were made. These were January/February for the spring collections and July/August for the autumn collections. Mr Hull was asked if it was fair to use averages for traffic movements in the knowledge that there were two periods in the year where traffic movements would be significantly higher. It was suggested that averaging out traffic movements could be seen as misleading. In conjunction with this it was pointed out that Itchenor's peak time for visitors was July and August.

Mr Hull was asked to establish more detailed information relating to deliveries during the year with particular emphasis on deliveries in July and August.

Both Hectic Ltd and O'Neill Wetsuits are local companies and Councillors questioned why relocation to Itchenor was considered appropriate. There was surprise as to why companies operating a UK and European distribution depot would want to relocate to a site that was 8 miles from a main trunk road and accessible via a narrow country lane. In response, Councillors were told that the building was considered fit for purpose and would allow the two companies to be on the same site. It was pointed out that within the Chichester District there were currently 17 warehouses on the market. Mr Hull responded that many of these were up for sale and not for rent. The site in Itchenor was being offered at a competitive price and was deemed appropriate by the two companies looking to rent the buildings on the site.

Further concerns were expressed about the size and frequency of delivery vehicles as well as how the companies would manage deliveries turning up outside of the prescribed hours of operation.

Mr Hull was asked how many people were currently employed by O'Neill in Midhurst and whether this number would increase at the Itchenor site. There were currently around 25 employees and this number may increase as the operation expands.

Mr Hull was asked where the units were advertised. This was done through the Henry Adams website as well as through Property Link, Rightmove and EACH (Estate Agents Clearing House). There had been around 40 enquiries, none of these were from overseas.

It was noted that there was desire to see the site remain as marine use and for this only to be removed if it can be clearly established that there is no demand for this type of use. The issue of ownership of the site was important. The question was put that if there was short term rental of part of the site to non-marine related businesses would the existing marine business still be viable. Simply because the existing owners could not make their boat building business viable that did not mean that other boat builders would have problems. There was a good deal of support from the village to keep a boat building business on the site.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hull and Mr Trundle for their time. The Planning Committee agreed to defer any decision on the application to a meeting on 12 October 2015 to enable further information to be provided. This information included:

- Clarification on vehicle movements to include the existing business on the northern part of the site.
- Clarification on the frequency of vehicle movements in regards to the two known busy periods; January/February and July/August.
- Clarification on vehicle movements in relation to the disposal of the trade waste (packaging).
- Clarification on how the businesses will ensure that deliveries will only take place within working hours given that there is unrestricted access to the site.

Mr Hull, Mr Trundle and seven residents then left the meeting.

4.3 WI/15/03059/TCA – Cedar House, Itchenor Road, Itchenor
Notification of intention to fell 1 no. Black Poplar Tree (T1)

It was noted that there had been an application to fell the Poplar Tree in 2014 which had been withdrawn. Councillors agreed that the Poplar Tree formed an important part of the street scene. Although the proposal was to replace the Poplar with an Ash tree there was concern about Ash dieback disease and it was felt that this was not a suitable alternative.

AGREED RESPONSE: The Parish Council considers the black Poplar Tree (T1) to be an important part of the street scene which may predate the adjoining cottage. Furthermore the proposal to replace this tree with an Ash tree is not considered appropriate because of the possibility of Ash dieback disease. The Parish Council objects to this application.

4.4 WI/15/02816/TPA – Pilgrims, The Street, Itchenor
Crown raise by up to 4.5m (above ground level) on 1 no. Scotts Pine (quoted as D) TPO nos T1 and crown thin by 20% on 1 no. Scots Pine (quoted as H) TPO no's T2. Both subject to WI/93/01088/TPO

It was noted that there were two applications at the same property and these were considered together.

4.5 WI/15/02960/TCA - Pilgrims, The Street, Itchenor
Notification of intention to crown raise by up to 4m (above ground level) on 1 no. Cherry tree (A), crown raise by up to 5m on 2 no. Whitebeam trees (B and C). Crown reduce by 2m (all round) on 1 no. Silver Birch tree (E), crown reduce by 3m (all round) on 1 no. Silver Birch tree (F), crown reduce by 10% (all round) and crown raise by up to 4m (above ground level) on, 1 no. Judas tree (G), crown raise by up to 3m (above ground level) on 1 no. Cherry tree (I), crown thin by 10% on 1 no. Tulip tree (J), crown reduce by 2m (all round) 1 no. Cherry tree (K) and 1 no. Plane tree (M), fell 1 no. Whitebeam tree (L) and 2 no. Yew trees (N and O), crown thin by 10% on 1 no. Sycamore tree (P).

Councillors noted that there were many unusual trees within this property and that the owners had taken great care in managing these trees. Although this was a comprehensive application it was believed that this would be properly managed to maintain the life of the trees.

AGREED RESPONSE: The Parish Council has no objection to these applications.

5. PLANNING DECISIONS

WI/15/02224/FUL - Creek House, Shore Road, Itchenor
Demolition of an existing three storey detached house and the erection of a new two storey dwelling.

PERMIT

WI/15/02624/TCA - Anchor Cottage, Itchenor Road, West Itchenor
Notification of intention to crown reduce by 20% on 1 no. Silver Birch tree (T1). Crown reduce by 20% and remove 1 no lower limb (leaning on fence) and remove (eastern sector) majority back from neighbour's side on 1 no. Holm Oak tree (T2).

NOT TO PREPARE A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

6. ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

An update on the situation relating to the moulds at Northshore was given. The owners of the site have given notice to the current occupiers to have the moulds removed. This has been delayed because it is currently the adder breeding season.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 9am on Monday 12 October 2015.

Signature _____ Date: _____
Chairman