

Berwick Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council held on Thursday 13th August 2020 at 7:00pm. This was a virtual meeting held on Zoom.

16. Present

Cllrs K Winter (Chairman), B Smith, S Carnie and D Robinson.

Mr Deighton from Firle Estates, Alison Stevens (Clerk) and three members of the public were also in attendance.

17. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Burrough. The reasons for her apology were accepted by the Full Council.

18. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Robinson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the planning application for the land at Station Farm and did not take part in discussions or the vote.

The meeting was then suspended.

19. Public Question Time

Mr Bristow asked why the hedges next to the solar farm are being cut when they are supposed to be left to hide the solar panels. The Clerk said she will ask Wealden.

The meeting was then re-opened.

20. Planning Applications

Councillors considered the following planning application;

WD/2016/1659/MAO - Land at Station Farm, Station Road, Berwick, BN26 6TA - Erection of 33 dwellings, 3 shops and 2 offices and associated works – Revised description of works and amended plans/documents. Removal of PV panels, alterations to siting of units 18-21 and revision to highway arrangements. Plans dated 27/9/19.

Berwick Parish Council still strongly objects to this application;

1. Whilst Councillors accept the need for more housing in the Parish this application is for 33 houses, far more than they accepted in the 2013 Local Plan.
2. Units 14 to 21 are affordable housing and are not spread within the rest of the development. They will have a significant impact on the existing houses near them, they will overlook the back of the houses and gardens and there may be disruption from cars using parking spaces (particularly at night). Unit 33 (the house at the far north of the development) is unnecessary and will have a significant impact on the existing house at 14 Downsway in that it will overlook the garden and block the existing view.
3. Whilst it is accepted there is a need for a shop, new build offices are not required because almost all surrounding farms have offices in converted farm buildings.

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4. Traffic is still a concern. Access is onto a busy road and is potentially dangerous. Access is too close to the level crossing, traffic will build up, block junctions and delay the emergency services. Pollution will also increase and affect the nitrogen levels on the Ashdown Forest and the Lewes Special Area of Conservation, both of which are protected by British and European Law.
5. Security. Whilst accepting that security is not a valid planning criteria, gates from the new properties will be a security risk for new residents. There should not be any entrances from the gardens onto farmland at the rear of the site, as this is a potential hazard for the farmer when keeping animals on the land.
6. Sewage. Berwick Parish Council understands the existing system is already at full capacity and cannot cope with any more development.
7. Flooding. The drainage of the development will impact on the already high water table onto a field which is subject to flooding. The water and flood management is insufficient.
8. Screening. More screening needs to be afforded to number 1 Meadow View.
9. The proposed application is out of keeping with the nature of development along Station Road. Since Wealden considered this grounds for rejection of a planning application for 18 dwellings in the same location in 2014, the Parish Council feels that this is even more valid grounds for rejection of the current application. The Parish Council feels that consistency in planning applications is extremely important.

21. Questions from Parish Councillors

There were no further questions and this meeting closed at 7.25pm

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____

Initial _____