

BERWICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting of Berwick Parish Council held on Friday 26th April 2024 at 6.30pm

This meeting took place in Berwick Village Hall

85. Present

Cllrs K Winter (Chairman), V Burrough, B Smith, and T Mills

District Councillor A Wilson, L Kemp (Parish Clerk). There were six members of the public present.

86. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Carnie and Barham

87. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

88. Public Question Time

Mr Cooper provided a report on sections of the Draft Local Plan Consultation Document and stated the following:

- Drainage has not yet been agreed regarding the 33 dwellings shown as committed in the Draft Local Plan, and a decision notice has yet to be granted, there is an additional 5 dwellings.
- Regarding the Sustainability Assessment Report, can Berwick Parish Council remember the information submitted in the Settlement Study of March 2024?
- The addition of 79 dwellings at Berwick Station virtually doubles the size of the settlement.
- An expensive to use hourly rail service to reach some services seems incompatible with the aim to achieve '20 Minute Neighbourhoods' in new local plans.
- The scoring method used in the Sustainable Settlement Study unfairly skews the data for settlements with a railway station. The rail service cannot be used for taking children to school, there is not a school in Berwick. It would be impossible to do a weekly shop by train. Rail services were cut back in 2019, trains no longer stop at neighbouring villages. Residents would not be able to attend doctors, dentists, pharmacies etc without a car.
- Increased car journeys will force commuting on to the already very busy C39 and A27, further diminishing our rural amenity
- The new development boundary is unpopular with residents.
- The Berwick Station Policies Map indicates the proposed new Development Boundary, sites BE1 and BE2 are green field sites and are waterlogged for much of the year. Essentially the plan proposes building on a flood plain and large clay pit. Getting the drainage wrong will push the surface water onward to the next fields then onwards to the Cuckmere River and Alfriston.
- Site BE1 overlaps "Biodiversity Opportunity Areas", BE2 abuts a "Priority Habitat". Housing should clearly be buffered from such areas to prevent predation by household pets and disturbance from development.
- This proposed overdevelopment at Berwick Station will diminish the setting of the SDNP and further spoil the countryside and openness at Berwick Station that generations of residents and visitors have enjoyed.

A resident commented on the problems of surface water drainage in the area of Cornfield Crescent/Station Road, other planning applications have been refused because of this issue.

Wealden District Councillor Alison Wilson stated that:

- responses to the consultation on the Draft Local Plan can only be made via the portal, emails etc will not be taken into account.
- “Grampian Conditions” can be imposed with restrictions on occupation of dwellings until the sewerage infrastructure is improved to the satisfaction of the District Council.

The meeting was then re-opened

89. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 27th March 2024

The draft minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 27th March 2024 were read by all, confirmed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

90. Planning Applications

WD/2024/0793/F Pound Place, Pound Lane, Berwick, BN26 6SS – Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of detached family annexe.
Berwick Parish Council has no objection to this application.

91. Clerk’s Report on Matters Arising from the Minutes.

Nothing to report.

92. Wealden Local Plan

Following discussion it was agreed that the following responses to the consultation on the draft Local Plan should be made:

- Evidence is required regarding the indicators of sustainability, particularly the scoring method in relation to travel.
- Clarification on the number of dwellings shown as committed as of 1st October 2023, application number WD/2016/1659/MAJ has not been approved, however it appears to be included in the number of dwellings committed.
- Assurances that the sewerage infrastructure has capacity for the proposed developments. Dwellings shown as committed (but still subject to approval) have raised considerable concerns regarding drainage, the housing numbers detailed as Local Plan Allocated Dwellings and Windfall Allowance doubles the demand on the sewerage system that, at times, is at capacity already.
- The need for a buffer zone to lessen the impact on Priority Habitat and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

93. Cllr Smith asked that the replacement of the bench on the Berwick Way is investigated. The hedges alongside the Berwick Way are overgrown. It was agreed that the Clerk would provide information regarding the replacement of the seat at the next meeting, and would ask that the hedge is cut after the 31st August.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____