



LAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on

8th April 2024 at 7.30pm at Laughton Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Sally Huggett, Cllr Holly Hallam, Cllr Rob Bishopp, Cllr Steve Whiting

This meeting was Chaired by Cllr Sally Huggett

Twenty members of the public attended

The Clerk was also in attendance

Cllr Huggett welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the absence of Cllr Alison Wilson.

1. PUBLIC SESSION

COMMENTS REGARDING APPLICATION WD/2024/0099/O

A member of the public spoke regarding agenda item 5a) i – the site only ever came forward as a rural exception site. The status of Laughton has not changed, there is no development boundary and the NPPF only allows housing in the countryside in exceptional circumstances such as rural workers, exceptional design or re-use of redundant buildings. This application is none of those. The latest SHELLA states that the land is unsuitable for development because of landscape and access ownership. The comments of the latest appeal planning inspector were quoted. Laughton has seen 60 windfall dwellings from 2012 to Sept 2023. Since the start date of the new draft Local Plan, October 2023 (and runs until 2039), Laughton has already had 9 windfall dwellings approved. It was only pencilled in for 8 for the entire 16.5 year life of next local plan. There are errors in the Transport Study, Shortgate Lane is a single-track lane, so cars turning south will impede cars turning off the B2124, causing slowing and stopping of traffic. The visibility is poor looking north from the site access and relies on a neighbour cutting a hedge. The bus service in Laughton is reliant upon a government grant which will only last another 18 months or so. There is no bus service to the north towards Uckfield. Vehicle movements are massively understated, the application is compared to Ringmer, Rochester Road in Chatham, which is at the edge of densely populated town with lots of employment adjacent, and Wosbrough which is part of metropolitan Barnsley with schools, plenty of different bus services and only 11% of households with access to a car against 31% for the part of Wealden. The applicant “enhanced” the access to the field without permission of ESCC Rights of Way. It had previously just been a small gate. Sewage into biodiversity gain area – previous refused applications were going to have a package treatment plant as at the time it was understood there was no capacity, there have been no improvements in Laughton since then. The situation is worse due to a number of annexes and house extensions in the sewered area. At times there is foul water bubbling up from the sewer outside the village shop and again in Church Lane. It is difficult to see how there will not be conflict between the houses and the very popular pub garden in the summer or if the PTP is situated close to the boundary. There is a further impact on residents due to the loss of the layby forcing cars to park on Shortgate Lane where it is narrow making it very difficult for vehicles, cyclists and horse riders on the lower 100m section of the lane. It is already a difficult spot for horse riders coming off the bridleway onto the lane, having lots more vehicle movements is going to make it even more difficult. WDC has a register for self-build plots, what local need is there on the register?

A second member of the public spoke regarding the same application. Stating their objection to the application and wholeheartedly agreeing with the previous speaker. As a neighbour of the proposed application site, they have read very thoroughly the application documentation and considered there were some “untruths.” Access to the site is not possible as it crosses his land and permissions will not be given. The sewerage system and drainage ditches are only just coping now.

A third member of the public, again a neighbour, stated their objection to the application, due to several factors, including loss of privacy – the trees do not provide coverage all year, any additional landscaping will block natural light. Light pollution from the proposed site and more noise. The wildlife survey is incorrect, they have seen many wild animals that have not been mentioned in the survey. There would be a visual impact as the bin store is not sufficient for the 21 bins that would be needed by the houses and could therefore attract vermin. There is not enough parking provided. There is a risk of flooding. Highways issues - Shortgate Lane is getting busier, and the lane is very narrow, and no pavement for pedestrians.

The fourth member of the public spoke of Shortgate Lane being a “rat run” and very dangerous. Not sufficient for 2 vehicles to pass. Again, concerns of light pollution, flood risk as there are two springs on the field. There are concerns regarding the slowness of a self-build development, and possibility of non-completion. Many wildlife species have been seen and there are rare fungi on the site.

A fifth member of the public acknowledged that reasonable points have been made, however councillors should recall that a resolution was passed for 12 affordable houses on this site. Highways raised no objections, the parish supported the application, considered close to the village centre, footpaths were considered adequate, and many of the reports given at this meeting were covered last time. Regarding this application, the Design and Access Statement is in line with the Local Plan regarding self-build housing. This site has rainwater retention proposed. If plans such as this are refused there will be more similar to those passed in Church Lane. More housing is needed to meet Government targets.

A sixth member of the public, a resident of Laughton for 4.5 years and had supported the application in Church Lane but felt these should have been affordable houses. Concerns regarding the application under discussion and it being self-build. There will be appalling disturbance for neighbours and there is no mention of time limits for the build. There would need to be a cohesive design for the houses.

A seventh member of the public stated that a permeable surface would not address the issues as the site is waterlogged all year.

Speaker number two commented that neighbours of the site had not been contacted by Wealden District Council.

The applicant informed the meeting that there would be time limits on construction, there would be a design manual for all houses, and each design would be subject to WDC approval. Each property would have its own rainwater retention system. Rain would be stored and then gradually dissipate.

A member of the public spoke regarding agenda item 5a) ii) Virginia Cottage, Lewes Road – several applications have been submitted regarding this property. The last application was refused as the proposal was not appropriate for the design of the property, however photographs have now been found showing that prior to 1911 the footprint was of a long linear design, this application would re-establish the original design.

A member of the public spoke regarding 5a) iii) the proposed timber studio and store has now been moved further back on the site and replaces an existing garage.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Wilson and Alford

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. TO RECEIVE NOTICES OF DECLARATIONS, PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL, IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

None

4. MEMBERS TO AGREE CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA FOR THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no confidential items on the agenda

5. Planning and Licence Applications

a) Planning applications received

i. WD/2024/0099/O Land to the east of Shortgate Lane and north of The Roebuck Inn Public House, Laughton.

Construction of 7 No. detached self-building dwellings with associated access and infrastructure.

*Following discussion it was agreed that Laughton Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this application.*

- Not in keeping with the amenity of the village.*
- Neighbours will be subject to light pollution, considerable loss of privacy and tranquillity.*
- Flooding is an issue, it is stated that each self-build plot will be covenanted to make the necessary arrangements however the plot is already boggy and dissipation of stored rainwater is unlikely to occur.*
- Disturbance to neighbouring properties by the extended period of construction that may result due to self-build construction.*
- The site was detailed as unsuitable for housing in the SHELLA of February 2024.*
- The Traffic Study shows unrealistically low traffic movement, traffic from the site would emerge onto a single-track lane which is known to be dangerous for vulnerable road users.*
- Impact on wildlife, including protected species.*
- The sewers are unable to cope at times currently, further properties will add to this problem*
- There will be significant impact on the adjacent public house.*
- Issues with access to the site.*

- ii. **WD/2024/0562/F** Virginia Cottage, Lewes Road, Laughton BN8 6BQ
New 2 bay attached garage with secure store.
*Laughton Parish Council **SUPPORTS** this application the photos in the Heritage Statement show the property was of a longitudinal design in 1911, and the proposal reinstates that footprint.*
- iii. **WD/2024/0445/LB** Virginia Cottage, Lewes Road, Laughton BN8 6BQ
New 2 bay attached garage with secure store.
*Laughton Parish Council **SUPPORTS** this application the photos in the Heritage Statement show the property was of a longitudinal design in 1911, and the proposal reinstates that footprint.*
- iv. **WD/2024/0380/F** 1 Woodside, Lewes Road, Laughton, BN8 6BL
Demolition of existing garage and replace with a timber studio and store
*Laughton Parish Council **SUPPORTS** this application but would request assurance that the proposed building is the same height as existing.*

b) Other planning matters

None

10. REPORTS (by leave) NOT FOR DECISION:

The meeting closed at 9pm