

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Notice is hereby given that the meeting of the Much Hadham Parish Council **Planning Committee** will be held on **Tuesday, 5th April 2022**, in the **Much Hadham Village Hall**, following the closure of the Much Hadham Parish Council meeting, for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below, and you are hereby summoned to attend.

F M Forth

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Clerk of the Council

31st March 2022

A G E N D A

22/34. Apologies for absence

22/35. Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations

22/36. Chair's announcements

22/37. Minutes of the last meeting held on 1st March 2022

22/38. Reports on outstanding matters

22/39. Decisions issued by East Herts Council

(i) Permissions granted:

3/21/1629/HH - Demolition of attached rear garden room; construction of replacement single storey rear extension at The Old Post Office High Street Much Hadham

3/21/1759/HH - Extension to outbuilding to create double car port; alterations to fenestration and openings; additional roof light to north elevation and additional windows to north, south and west elevations at Gable House Church Lane Much Hadham

3/21/2752/HH & 3/21/2753/LBC - Demolition of garage and outbuildings; erection of a single storey rear extension and garage; alterations to landscaping; internal alterations to include, creation of W.C. at ground floor; creation of bathrooms on first floor, erection of internal wall and door and creation of internal stairs and creation of bathroom in attic at The White House High Street Much Hadham

3/21/3197/HH - Two storey rear and side extensions with a side juliet balcony; ground floor front bay window; loft conversion with 2 front dormers, 1 rear dormer and 1 first floor side window; external alterations to fenestration and to the facade at 1 Danebridge Lane Much Hadham

(ii) Permissions refused:

3/22/0229/AGPN - Erection of a new building for agricultural or forestry use (retain an existing container; new polytunnel): Length 4.6 metres, Eaves height 2.4 metres, Breadth 2.4 metres, Ridge height 2.4 metres at Plots 4 And 7 Kettle Green Lane Much Hadham
[Note – actual decision is "Prior Approval Refused"]

(iii) Applications withdrawn:

None

22/40. Planning enforcement

22/41. Residents' comments on current planning applications and appeals

22/42. Planning appeals

No planning appeals to consider nor any planning appeal decisions to note.

22/43. Current Planning Application for Committee to consider:

3/22/0304/LBC - Re-consultation: Regularisation for the erection of conservatory at The Bank House High Street Much Hadham

3/22/0366/HH - Erection of a two storey and first floor front extension; alterations to roof, alteration and insertion of doors and windows; conversion of Garage to annexe with alterations to fenestration at Plunge Widford Road Much Hadham

3/22/0393/HH - Demolition of conservatory; replacement of timber frame of bungalow of non-standard construction with brick built cavities; single storey side and rear extensions; and alterations to fenestration at Beausite Widford Road Much Hadham

3/22/0553/FUL - Demolition of public house and construction of 4 detached dwellings with garages, new access and associated landscaping at The Jolly Waggoners Widford Road Much Hadham

3/22/0618/FUL - Change of use of land from agricultural to residential garden, together with hard and soft landscaping at Uffords Barn Green Tye

22/44. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 26th April 2022 – Much Hadham Village Hall

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Much Hadham Parish Council Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 5th April 2022, in the Much Hadham Village Hall, at 9:12 pm.

Members: *Cllr I Hunt (Committee Chair) *Cllr S Smith
 *Cllr D McDonald *Cllr K Twort
 *Cllr B O'Neill

*Denotes present.

In attendance: F Forth, Clerk and no members of the public.

22/34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

22/35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr B O'Neill declared an interest in the following planning application:

3/22/0366/HH - Erection of a two storey and first floor front extension; alterations to roof, alteration and insertion of doors and windows; conversion of Garage to annexe with alterations to fenestration at Plunge Widford Road Much Hadham

22/36. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

22/37. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 1st March 2022 be accepted as a correct record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

22/38. REPORTS ON OUTSTANDING MATTERS

The report on outstanding matters was circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr D McDonald provided the following update in relation to the pursuit of effective planning enforcement action from East Herts Council (EHC):

- a "workshop" with other rural Parish Councils that expressed dissatisfaction with the EHC's planning enforcement has been arranged. The objective of this is to agree a common approach to EHC to seek improvements in planning enforcement; [attendees will represent 11 of the 40 rural Parish Councils]

- EHC's Head of Planning has offered to meet to discuss concerns about the apparent lack of care by Planning in the drafting of planning conditions. This meeting will be arranged for after the "workshop"; and
- the Chair attended EHC's half yearly "Planning Forum" (24th March 2022) and expressed the Parish Council's disappointment in their lack of proactivity in enforcement matters, including making reference to the "workshop" with other disaffected Parish Councils.

Cllr D McDonald also reported that the details of the enforcement action for Plot 12A Moor Place Park are still being sought from EHC.

Note – the nature reserve at Moor Place Park had been discussed at the preceding Parish Council meeting. [Parish Council Minute ref: 22/59]

22/39. DECISIONS ISSUED BY EAST HERTS COUNCIL

(i) Permissions granted:

3/21/1629/HH - Demolition of attached rear garden room; construction of replacement single storey rear extension at The Old Post Office High Street Much Hadham

3/21/1759/HH - Extension to outbuilding to create double car port; alterations to fenestration and openings; additional roof light to north elevation and additional windows to north, south and west elevations at Gable House Church Lane Much Hadham

3/21/2752/HH & 3/21/2753/LBC - Demolition of garage and outbuildings; erection of a single storey rear extension and garage; alterations to landscaping; internal alterations to include, creation of W.C. at ground floor; creation of bathrooms on first floor, erection of internal wall and door and creation of internal stairs and creation of bathroom in attic at The White House High Street Much Hadham

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(ii) Permissions refused:

3/22/0229/AGPN - Erection of a new building for agricultural or forestry use (retain an existing container; new polytunnel): Length 4.6 metres, Eaves height 2.4 metres, Breadth 2.4 metres, Ridge height 2.4 metres at Plots 4 And 7 Kettle Green Lane Much Hadham

[Note – actual decision is "Prior Approval Refused"]

(iii) Applications withdrawn

None

22/40. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Covered as part of outstanding matters (Minute ref: 22/38).

22/41. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS ON CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS

None.

22/42. PLANNING APPEALS

There were no new appeals to consider nor any planning appeal decisions to note.

22/43. CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

(i) Support given to the following application:

3/22/0304/LBC - Re-consultation: Regularisation for the erection of conservatory at The Bank House High Street Much Hadham

Vote: all Cllrs present voted to support this application.

3/22/0393/HH - Demolition of conservatory; replacement of timber frame of bungalow of non-standard construction with brick built cavities; single storey side and rear extensions; and alterations to fenestration at Beausite Widford Road Much Hadham

Vote: all Cllrs present voted to support this application.

(ii) Objections raised on the following application:

3/22/0366/HH - Erection of a two storey and first floor front extension; alterations to roof, alteration and insertion of doors and windows; conversion of Garage to annexe with alterations to fenestration at Plunge Widford Road Much Hadham

Objection on the basis that:

- the garage conversion is not functionally linked to the main house; and
- the extensions are not subservient to the main dwelling.

Vote: excluding Cllr B O'Neill who had declared an interest in this planning application, all Cllrs present voted to object to this application.

3/22/0553/FUL - Demolition of public house and construction of 4 detached dwellings with garages, new access and associated landscaping at The Jolly Waggoners Widford Road Much Hadham

The basis of the objection is detailed in Appendix A.

Vote: all Cllrs present voted to object to this application.

3/22/0618/FUL - Change of use of land from agricultural to residential garden, together with hard and soft landscaping at Uffords Barn Green Tye

Objection on the basis that the change of use does not comply with policy HOU12.

Vote: all Cllrs present voted to object to this application.

(iii) Neutral view on the following application:

None.

22/44. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 26th April 2022 at 7:30 pm at the Much Hadham Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:45 pm

3/22/0553/FUL | Demolition of public house and construction of 4 detached dwellings with garages, new access and associated landscaping at The Jolly Waggoners Widford Road Much Hadham

Much Hadham Parish Council objects to this planning application. The basis of the objection is set out below:

This rural site is poorly related to the existing village and future residents would be dependent on private vehicles to access services and facilities. To the extent that there remains any brownfield component to the site, the proposal extends considerably beyond it. It is therefore unsustainable as a location for residential development.

Objections based on:

EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN 2018

Development Strategy

1. Policy DPS2 sets out a development hierarchy of land which can be considered for development. This leads with “sustainable brownfield sites” and further down comes “limited development in the villages”. As will be shown later in these comments, neither status applies to this site, which falls outside the hierarchy and therefore out of scope for development.
2. The site is within the Rural Area Beyond The Green Belt, outside the Category 1 Much Hadham village boundary. Policy GBR2 seeks to maintain the district’s considerable and significant countryside resource by concentrating development within existing settlements. This will help to prevent coalescence of villages. Linear development such as that proposed here undermines this objective and opens up the possibility of land either side of this site being subject to development.
3. To maintain the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt as a valued countryside resource, GBR2 prohibits inappropriate development in a rural area such as this unless one of the exception criteria applies. The application is relying on the exception for:

(e)..... complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use..... in sustainable locations, where appropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the site and/or surrounding area;

The proposal implies that an application has been made for the site to be entered on the district’s Brownfield Register and presumes this will be accepted, in which case it then further presumes to qualify for the exception (e) above.

However, the site does not qualify for the register as it does not meet all the criteria necessary for inclusion, specifically the requirement that it be “**Suitable**- Sites must be appropriate for residential-led development, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policies.” No attempt has been made to quantify the area that is considered previously developed and could legitimately be described as such.

The remainder of this submission demonstrates that residential use is inappropriate having regard to local development plan policies and the NPPF.

District Plan Policies - Development

4. The current Use Class is A4 Drinking Establishment. No attempt is made in the planning application to argue why a change of use should be authorised, nor why the change should be to Class C3 Housing rather than an alternative that, for example, would create employment opportunities.
5. The proposal is said to contribute to meeting the policy objective in VILL1 Group 1 villages of a minimum 10% increase in the no. of dwellings in Much Hadham. This is not true. The site is well beyond the village development boundary, so any units built would not count towards the objective. The policies in VILL1 are irrelevant to this application.
6. The application para 4.3 claims there has been an under delivery of housing in the area, without justifying this statement. At both village and district level, housing supply in recent years has met any implied run rate targets. This application cannot rely for support on an arbitrary claim of a supply shortfall.
7. The application appears to misunderstand the meaning of windfall allowance in seeking to justify the development. Windfall allowance does not mean housing built outside the areas defined in the development hierarchy but housing within the hierarchy on sites as yet unidentified.

District Plan Policies - Landscape Character

8. The site falls within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 87 Middle Ash Valley, characterised by a flat narrow valley floor and wetland vegetation. The views in the area are small scale, contained by vegetation and landform and the view across this site from the B1004 is exactly typical (ignoring the derelict building and detritus dumped there). The landscape elements are “unified, tranquil and coherent” – everything that an estate of large executive homes is not. “This is one of the most traditional and picturesque river valleys in Hertfordshire... with a wooded farmland character that differentiates it....” (LCA)
9. The strategy for this LCA is to conserve and restore – not build. In particular, to “resist any development which could permanently damage the local landscape character. In essence, this means any development, as this is an unsettled area.”
10. The proposal makes no mention of the landscape character, how it will be conserved, enhanced or strengthened, and makes no contribution to the strategy for managing change within this LCA, all of which is required under DES2 Landscape Character. In that it fails to respect the rural character of the locality, it is considered to be harmful to it.

District Plan Policies – Design and Housing

11. DES 4 Design of Development requires a high standard of design and layout to reflect and promote local distinctiveness. In the application, comparison is made with other housing in the vicinity, seeking to draw parallels e.g.

“The surrounding area is characterised by open rural agricultural land interspersed with two storey domestic dwellings and farm buildings..... Many of the houses in the surrounding area are clustered with trees and are accessible via Widford road. Our proposal follows suit.”

The reality is that no new housing (other than replacements) has been built in the vicinity either to the north or south of this site for very many decades, which has ensured the preservation of a rural ambience approaching the village from the south, rather than the suburbanisation that this proposed mini- estate of car-dominated executive housing would introduce.

Housing further south along the B1004 is largely characterised by an eclectic mix of smaller cottages and dormer bungalows, with the occasional larger property, all sited along a building line close to the road. A linear frontage of four identikit houses set back from the road and crammed together with little separation does not complement the existing pattern and grain of development. Suburban housing does not contribute to local distinctiveness in a traditional rural environment so the standard required by DES 4 has not been met.

District Plan Policies – Sustainability

12. Table 2 at para 3.1.1 implies access to a bus network. The reality is that there is only one bus service through Much Hadham: 351 to Bishops Stortford and Hertford, with 9 daytime services on weekdays (4 on Saturdays and none on Sundays). This frequency is unlikely to be sufficiently convenient for most workers. The rest of the Table lists random bus services elsewhere in the county, none within 6 miles of Much Hadham.
13. This is not a sustainable location from the perspective of access to public transport. The Village Hierarchy Study 2016 scored Much Hadham at 58, well below other Group 1 villages such as Standon and Puckeridge (80) and Stansted Abbots (128). It scored particularly poorly for accessibility. Railway stations in all likelihood would be accessed by private car. The limitations of public transport impede the social credentials of the proposal and impact negatively on the environmental dimension, by requiring car usage.
14. The proposed development can only promote car usage, in breach of policy TRA1 Sustainable Transport (a) whereby development proposals should primarily be located in places which enable sustainable journeys to be made to key services and facilities to help aid carbon emission reduction. This site is too remote from the facilities and services of the village e.g. village school and recreation ground 1.33km, village hall and Bull Inn 1.63km, health centre 1.15km, all beyond the 800m comfortable walking distance cited in the Manual for Streets. The first 425m is a narrow, unlit footway directly adjacent to the highway, for part of which the speed limit remains at 40mph. Consequently, in practice, journeys to use local facilities and drop off / pick up children at the school would be made by car, exacerbating the existing congestion and parking issues along the B1004 through the village.

Objections based on:

NPPF 2021

1. It can be shown that the adverse impacts from the application of policies in the framework would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the framework taken as a whole, primarily because of the development's unsustainable location and its impact on the landscape. In particular section 5, para 78-80 support rural affordable housing and sustainable development but this proposal fails both those tests and, generally, other rural development as a category is not given any support in the NPPF.
2. NPPF para 78 is quoted in the proposal: "In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs." The application makes no attempt to identify local needs and respond to them (and goes on to misunderstand the village housing need, as stated above).

It is not stated who is the intended market for these houses but the forthcoming examined neighbourhood plan makes it clear that the local need is for 1,2 and 3-bed properties at the more affordable end of the spectrum. The intended selling price for these is not stated but over £1m is realistic.

3. NPPF para 79: "To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities." It goes on to make clear that this means development in villages so that they can "grow and thrive". This proposal is well beyond the village settlement boundary and is not therefore supported by the NPPF.
4. The proposal references an element within NPPF para 80 (e) but takes it completely out of context in an attempt to justify development. NPPF para 80 (e) refers to isolated homes and how one might be potentially acceptable if it were of such exceptional quality that it "would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area." This is a development of 4 homes, not 1, and it is not an isolated site.
5. The proposal goes on to claim that the new development would be an improvement on the existing "eyesore" without recognising that it is an eyesore because the applicant has neglected the property for many years since acquiring it! We should not be rewarding a failure to maintain the property by granting development permission – what policy signal does that send? The applicant failed to fulfil promises made to parish councillors that the site would be kept presentable and has not followed through on the previous permission granted to replace the existing building with a more modern pub.

Finally, the NPPF is no more than guidance and cannot 'displace the primacy' of the statutory development plan of EHC in determining planning applications. "Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not

be followed.” There are no such material considerations. The adverse impacts of granting planning permission outweigh the benefits when assessed against not only the policies of the NPPF but also the development plan policies.

Conclusion

Whilst we are anxious to see a resolution to the long-standing problem of this derelict site, better, more sustainable options should be considered. This proposal does not comply with strategic policies DPS2 The Development Strategy 2011-2033, GBR2 Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, DES4 Design of Development and TRA1 Sustainable Transport. It is inappropriate for the rural area.

Decision made at the Much Hadham Parish Council Planning Committee held on 5th April 2022.