

Frittenden Parish Council

Planning meeting held at St Mary's Church Upper Room, Frittenden on Thursday 9th August at 7.30pm.

Minutes

Present: Cllr Tony Staples (chair), Cllr Rosalind Riley (minutes), Cllr Lester Gosbee, Cllr James Tuke, Cllr Heather Cullingworth, Cllr Janet Croucher; three members of the public.

1. Apologies: Cllr Richard Vernon
2. Planning Application 18/503844/FULL Provision of mobile home unit and utility block/day room with associated parking and facilities for one family under Gypsy status. The Three Sons, Park Wood Lane Parallel Track, Staplehurst, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 0DF

Cllr Staples invited comment from the Parish Council members.

Cllr Riley drew attention to the points made by Cllr Vernon in an email and these were generally endorsed by the other councillors present. The following is a summary of those points with some comments added during the meeting:

1. The application refers to one family under 'Gypsy status'. There is no evidence that the applicant can rely on planning policy for traveller sites (PPTS). No mention is made about this in the supporting planning statement and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) should verify the position.
2. If like many previous applications on this site development has already occurred then unauthorised development should be a material consideration for refusing this application. Pre-emptively starting unapproved building work should be held against further applications.
3. The proposed development is out of character for beautiful countryside and will adversely impact on the rural character and appearance of the landscape.
4. The site is not designated in the Local Plan and is therefore not policy compliant.
5. The proposed development is not sustainable or suitable.
6. Although a buffer zone is proposed, the proposed development will impact on the adjoining ancient woodland.
7. No evidence has been supplied to determine the impact on ecology and the environment. It was noted that there was no report from the Environment Agency. Concern was expressed by the meeting that untreated effluent may be running straight into the ditches, and in any case a simple cess pit is not in itself adequate, as no new regular housing would be permitted to rely on one. A member of the public stated that there were outfall pipes going straight into the ditch in Maplehurst Wood.
8. No consideration has been given to road safety in terms of highway access. Additional traffic on the narrow Park Wood Lane is not safe together with the junction of the Lane with Staplehurst Road. The very bad state of this junction was also noted, as it has a great deal of loose material on it.

9. Added to all the other adjoining development this amounts to over-intensification of the development and density in the open countryside.

The existence of responses in writing from local residents was noted.

It was suggested that Cllr Tuke arrange if possible to have an aerial photograph taken of the site to determine if the site is indeed currently “clear” as stated in the application.

It was also noted that seven enforcement notices are outstanding against this site, therefore no more new development should occur until these notices had been enforced. There is great disappointment with the lack of action by the enforcement department at MBC.

Comments by members of the public present at the meeting stated that approaches had been made to Helen Grant MP, who has stated that she would be in touch with the Maidstone Planning Department.

A previous judicial review, won by Mr Maurice Armitage of Maplehurst, stated that the whole site should be taken into consideration with regard to planning applications, and that applications should not be taken on a case-by-case basis.

The residents present also gave details of the level of nuisance happening around the site, including an abandoned pony and extensive fly tipping, causing unsightliness and considerable expense. It is feared that further development would increase the nuisance level.

It was decided that the Parish Council should make representations to the Environmental Agency concerning the sewerage aspect of the site, and ask for a proper examination of the water flowing through/around the site to test for potential pollution.

Cllr Staples made a request that local residents make known to the Parish Council any adverse events and any unheralded additions to the site.

It was proposed that the Parish Council make an objection to the planning application based on Cllr Vernon’s list and the matters brought forward in the meeting. Proposer: Cllr Croucher; seconder: Cllr Tuke. The proposal was passed unanimously.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm