

**PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL**

**PLANNING & HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
HELD AT EASTON METHODIST CHURCH HALL, EASTON  
ON WEDNESDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 7.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Charlie Flack (Chairman), Susan Cocking, Jim Draper, Lucy Grieve, Ray Nowak (from 7.10 pm), Dave Symes, David Thurston and Rod Wild

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ian Looker (Town Clerk), Andy Matthews (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group) and eight members of the public

**2620 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Jo Atwell, Chris Gover and Sue Lees.

**2621 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Matthews declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 and 9A – Neighbourhood Plan as a trustee of the MEMO project.

**2622 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST 2017**

The minutes were formally agreed and signed as a correct record.

**2623 – CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND OTHER MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr. Flack reported progress on the applications outstanding as follows:-

<b>Application No</b>	<b>Town Decision</b>	<b>Borough Decision</b>
15/767/FUL	Objection	Pending
16/142/FUL	Objection	Pending
16/501/VOC	Objection	Pending
17/037/OFF	No Objection	Pending
17/082/FUL	Objection	Approved
17/083/ADV	Objection	Approved
17/323/FUL	Objection	Pending
17/270/OUT	No Objection	Pending
17/017/RES	Objection	Approved
17/371/OUT	Objection	Pending
17/372/FUL	No Objection	Approved
17/419/FUL	No Objection	Approved
17/387/FUL	Objection	Pending
17/427/RES	Objection	Pending
17/451/FUL	Objection	Pending
17/552/FUL	No Objection	Approved
17/410/FUL	No Objection	Refused
17/421/FUL	No Objection	Approved
17/485/FUL	No Objection	Approved
17/501/FUL	Objection	Pending
17/537/FUL	Objection	Pending

He next advised on the progress of applications that had been brought to the meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017:-

17/385/COU	No Comment	Approved
17/535/FUL	Objection	Approved
17/538/FUL	No Objection	Approved
17/578/FUL	No Objection	Approved
17/658/DOM	No Comment	Pending
Commons Act, s38	No Objection	Pending

#### **2624 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Julian Andrews said he understood there was a covenant on the Brackenbury Infants site (Minute 2617), because it had previously been allotments. Cllr. Grieve said that from her own checks this did not appear to be the case.

(Cllr. Nowak joined the meeting.)

Another gentleman raised the issue of a Wessex Water report on Underhill Junior. This said there were issues of the site having poor drainage that affected neighbouring properties.

#### **2625 – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Mr Matthews referred first to the Development and Growth Policies Report, previously approved at the last Planning Committee meeting. Two amendments had been suggested at the subsequent Plan Management Committee meeting, that community use be also considered for the redundant school sites. Consequently a new draft paragraph 40 had been added and new wording applied in para 53 regarding the Hardy Complex if the current planning consent lapsed.

**RESOLVED** – that the two amendments to the Policies Report specified above be approved.

Next Mr Matthews raised the Green Space Review. Policies had been provided for all the sites listed to protect their status.

**RESOLVED** – that the Review be published on the Plan website and the Council write to the landowners involved to make them aware.

Mr Matthews thought they would be ready to circulate Plan information to the public in late October. The planners at the Borough would require at least six weeks to analyse and comment on the Plan. There was therefore some doubt whether a referendum could be held as soon as May to reach a final decision.

About £7,000 grant could still be accessed, possibly more from a new sum of £22m. the Government had recently made available.

**RESOLVED** – that the Council seek the remaining funding and reappoint Paul Weston to carry out further consultancy work under Financial Regulation 11.1(ii).

**RESOLVED** – that the current beach hut policy be incorporated in the Plan.

Members then turned their attention to the Local Plan reviews, in particular comments by the Town Council on two subjects, the landscape south of Southwell and coastal erosion. Mr Matthews thought what was recorded in the Local Plan, nothing in the case of coastal erosion, did not adequately represent the Council's view.

**RESOLVED** – that the Council write to the Borough asking for a more accurate record in both cases.

### **2626 – CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED BY WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Having considered each application in turn, the Advisory Committee agreed the following observations:-

a) 17/323/FUL – Underhill Community Junior School – Partial demolition of the existing school buildings (class D1), conversion of the remaining school building into dwellings (class C3) and the construction of new dwellings, associated access, parking and landscaping; to form a total of 20 no. new dwellings – Amended Plans

**OBJECTION**, on the following grounds:-

#### **Flood risk and drainage issues** (photograph attached)

1. Dorset Flood Risk Management Team, 15/9/17, raise matters of serious concern, particularly given the position of the site relative to Cove Cottages, Three Yards Close and the cliff edge (see below). The Town Council strongly urges that their (Holding) Objection be implemented.
2. Wessex Water, 29/8/2017, also raise serious issues regarding drainage and sewers. These must be fully addressed and resolved in co-operation with Wessex Water before approval is granted.
3. The photograph shows the effect of flooding from the site into a property on Three Yards Close and its destructive potential. Overdevelopment of the site as currently proposed would compound the problem.

#### **Negative impact on key views, viewsheds, streetscape and panoramic roofscape in highly sensitive location** (photograph attached)

4. It is clear from Model View 8 that not only house nos 9 and 13 but the whole west-facing terrace, nos 9-16, would be significantly higher than the 1913 school building. This would have a highly negative effect on panoramic views across to Portland Harbour, Chesil Bank and the Fleet from the South West Coast Path, on the view up from Chesil Cove – a key location on Portland for locals and tourists alike (see photograph) and on the streetscape looking up from Chesil.
5. It would also be out of keeping with the neighbouring roofscape, for example from Fortuneswell looking west over Hambro (see photograph). The roofscape of Underhill is characterised by a graded stepping downwards. The height of the terrace, nos 9-16, would be completely out of line with this grading. The importance of this roofscape is highlighted in the Isle of Portland Heritage and Character Assessment from the progressing Portland Neighbourhood Plan.

6. All this contravenes Local Plan ENV10, “i) All development proposals should contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness. Development should be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings. ii) Development will provide for the future retention and protection of ... other features that contribute to an area’s distinctive character. Such features may not always be designated or otherwise formally recognised.”
7. It also contravenes ENV12, “Development will ... only be permitted ... where the siting, alignment, design, scale, mass, and materials used complements and respects (sic) the character of the surrounding area or would actively improve legibility or reinforce the sense of place. This means that:
  - The general design should be in harmony with the adjoining buildings and the area as a whole;
  - The position of the building on its site should relate positively to adjoining buildings, routes, open areas...and other features that contribute to the character of the area ...”
8. It also conflicts with the Strategic Objective of the Local Plan to “protect and enhance the outstanding natural and built environment – this will be the over-riding objective in those areas of the plan which are particularly sensitive to change.”

#### **Overdevelopment and overshadowing of multiple homes**

9. The revised plans still pack too many homes into the site. This has led to the west-facing terrace being located much closer to the cliff edge (see below) and the eastern terrace being close to the backs of Three Yards Close. The removal of one of these terraces and reduction of the maximum height of the new homes below that of the 1913 school would overcome many the objections to the current plans.
10. As they stand the plans contravene ENV11, “Within and adjoining existing settlements, development should ensure that: • Places are ... not dominated by the road layout and parking,” ENV12, “siting, alignment, design, scale, mass” as quoted above, ENV15, “Development should optimise the potential of the site and make efficient use of land, **subject to the limitations inherent in the site and impact on local character**” (our emphasis), and ENV16, “Proposals for development should be designed to minimize their impact on the amenity and quiet enjoyment of both existing residents and future residents within the development and close to it. As such, development proposals will only be permitted provided: They do not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the occupiers of properties through inadequate daylight or excessive overshadowing, overbearing impact.”

#### **Threat to stability of cliff** (photograph attached)

11. The section of the 1913 school building to be demolished stands directly above the section of eroded cliff shown in the submitted photograph. The revised plans position the replacement buildings **further forward and closer to this cliff.**
12. The local resident who maintains the grass at West Weares just below the cliff told the Town Council that rock and other material had fallen

down from the cliff recently and he is happy to point this out at a site visit.

13. Inaccuracies remain in the revised Stability Report, which refers to the eroded cliff as being viewed only from a drone. It states twice that the walls and steps in this area will be retained. This is not the case. The demolition of a large section of the western side of the 1913 building and the excavation for foundations for the new buildings nearer to the cliff edge risk destabilising of the ground in this critical area. This jeopardises a stretch of the South West Coast Path, the key location of Chesil Cove and possibly even the site itself. It also contravenes ENV7, “New development will be directed away from areas vulnerable to coastal erosion and land instability to avoid putting people at risk unless it can be demonstrated that the site is stable or could be made stable, and that the development is unlikely to trigger landsliding, subsidence, or exacerbate erosion within or beyond the boundaries of the site.”

**Inappropriate materials that clash with the vernacular, particularly viewed from the Jurassic Coast / South West Coast Path**

14. The wall materials proposed, brick, reconstituted Portland stone, do not fit with the vernacular of the immediate coastal area, predominantly solid Portland stone facades and / or render. As such this contravenes ENV10, “All development proposals should contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness. Development should be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings” and ENV12 as quoted above.

**Unjustified demolition of a locally treasured building of historic importance, architectural merit, referencing other key historic buildings in Underhill, mostly grade II listing**

15. The section of the 1913 school building which the plans propose to demolish is built in solid Portland stone. It is an imposing building with features of architectural merit that reference other monumental buildings of the same period in Fortuneswell, some of which are key listed buildings. As such it is a “non-designated heritage asset.”
16. Its destruction contravenes ENV4, “Applications affecting the significance of a heritage asset or its setting will be required to provide sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposals would **positively** contribute to the asset’s **conservation**” and “Any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage

b) 17/593/FUL – 3 Fortuneswell – Change of use from office to dwelling houses and associated works (12 flats)

**NO OBJECTION**

c) 17/597/FUL – 7 Bowers Road – Proposed extension and alterations

**NO OBJECTION**

d) 17/631/FUL – Plot M1B, Hamm Beach Road – Erection of 3 no. industrial and commercial buildings, and associated external works

**NO OBJECTION**

e) 17/658/DOM – 17 Weare Close – Erect single-storey extension to extend 5.3m beyond rear wall of the original dwellinghouse; maximum height 2.8m, height to eaves 2.8m

**OBJECTION**, on the grounds:-

1. To allow any further obtrusive development at this property would exacerbate its negative impact on a very sensitive location. This extension would be the third extension to the property. Application 14/795/CLE was for a Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing), which was granted because the works had been completed more than four years earlier and as such were no longer liable to planning enforcement action. That extension involved the installation of loft rooms with very intrusive storey-wide dormer windows. These are totally out of keeping and character with the streetscape and stepped nature of rooflines in a highly sensitive Jurassic Coast location only a few metres away from the South West Coast Path.
2. It infringes Local Plan, which states as a Strategic Objective to “protect and enhance the outstanding natural and built environment” and “this will be the over-riding (sic) objective in those areas of the plan which are particularly sensitive to change.” No area covered by the Local Plan can be more highly sensitive than this location that dominates the Jurassic Coast overlooking Chesil Cove and the West Weares cliffs. The extension would block aspects from the Coast Path and present an aspect of ugly overdevelopment within metres of a key location.
3. It would have an adverse effect on views from and towards the Coast Path, infringing ENV1, “development which would harm the **character, special qualities or natural beauty** of the ... Heritage Coast, including their **characteristic landscape quality** (our emphasis) and diversity, uninterrupted panoramic views, individual landmarks, and sense of tranquillity and remoteness, will not be permitted.” Also “development that significantly adversely affects the character or visual quality of the local landscape or seascape will not be permitted.”
4. The excessive development caused by the proposed extension in a confined space infringes ENV10, “i) All development proposals should contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness. **Development should be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings.**” (our emphasis) Similarly ENV12, “It will only be permitted where it complies with national technical standards and where the siting, alignment, design, scale, mass, and materials used complements and respects the character of the surrounding area or would actively improve legibility or reinforce the sense of place. This means that: • The general design should be in harmony with the adjoining buildings and the area as a whole; • The position of the building on its site should relate positively to adjoining buildings, routes, open areas.”
5. The negative impact on available light and outlook for several neighbours and overshadowing of their properties contravenes ENV16,

“Proposals for development should be designed to minimize their impact on the amenity and quiet enjoyment of both existing residents and future residents within the development and close to it. As such, development proposals will only be permitted provided: • They **do not have a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of occupiers of residential properties through loss of privacy**; • They **do not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the occupiers of properties through inadequate daylight or excessive overshadowing, overbearing impact.**” (our emphasis)

f) 17/637/FUL – 142 Wakeham – Loft conversion including two dormers, extend rear elevation roof to form gable end with inset covered areas around (additional item)

**OBJECTION**, on the grounds of overdevelopment and the scheme is out of character with the surrounding conservation area, contrary to Local Plan policy ENV 1.

#### **2627 – PLANNING CONTRAVENTION ISSUES**

None were raised.

#### **2628 – CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED BY DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL**

No applications had been received.

Cllr. Flack informed the meeting that the County had removed the bus stop at the higher end of Reap Lane on safety grounds.

He also referred to a highway issue raised by a resident concerning parking across a dropped kerb in Pennsylvania Way and Park Road. Cllr. Flack had reported this to the Police and was hopeful action would be taken. In connection with this Cllr. Thurston suggested the use of a Council form for car windscreens to suggest the owner cease anti-social parking.

#### **2629 – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: IMPLEMENTING A BROWN FIELD REGISTER** (additional item)

Mr Matthews explained that the register is a Borough proposal to accelerate the housing development process. The Plan Working Group were trying to install some safeguards through the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan Review.

#### **2630 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Committee’s next meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at Peter Trim Hall, St. George’s Centre, Reforne starting at 7.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

Signed .....  
(Chair)

Dated.....