

Birling Parish Council

Minutes of the MEETING of BIRLING PARISH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 25th October 2022

Birling Church at 8pm

Present: Councillors Mrs J Westwood (Chair)
Mr N Hewett
Mr G Nevill
Mrs H Walker

Also in attendance: One member of the public.

93. Apologies for Absence

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and accept apologies from Cllrs Wright, Yates and the clerk.

94. Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

Cllr Nevill declared an interest in the planning item and any discussion on the Local Plan that covered potential development in Birling.

95. Open Forum

TM/22/01982/FL Badgells Wood Camping application was discussed, and the following points were raised:

- a) Traffic and impact of application on traffic. The applicant does not think any impact will be seen as an increase in cabins will correlate to a decrease in campsites so no overall increase.
- b) Nature conservation. The applicant advised Kent Wildlife Trust to have been involved in a 5-year plan to ensure any negative impacts are monitored and issues revisited.
- c) Neighbours any concerns? The applicant has contacted immediate neighbour and they do not intend to object.
- d) Size of cabins (large) and permanence of them. The applicant has no intention of the cabins becoming permanent residences.

96. Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

(a) To agree response to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

It was **RESOLVED** to submit the following responses to the consultation on the Local Plan:

Q1. Please tick "all equally important"

Q2. Please tick "no" and in the comments box include the following "Other Rural Settlements needs an extra category to provide differentiation between larger more urban settlements e.g. (East Malling Village) and villages (e.g., Ryarsh, Birling etc.)."

Q3. Please tick option 3.

Q4. Option 3 would spread development across different parts of the borough, rather than concentrating it in just one or two corners. It also seems to be the most sustainable option because it would focus new development in accessible locations near to existing service hubs and would provide the greatest opportunities for contributions from more than one development to combine towards investment in new infrastructure. However, we also consider that there should be leeway for some minor or modest

development in smaller settlements so long as this respects the character of the village, does not harm the community and amenity, and maintains green space around and between different villages.

Q5. Please tick Option A.

Q6. Please include "Lack of Brownfield sites and lack of infrastructure to meet needs of existing population."

Q7. Skip

Q8. This question relates to specific sites, reference numbers and comments as follows:

"59708

Questions posed are not relevant to small developments (this is for three houses) and therefore the assessment is not helpful. In principle a small development may work in this area however there are significant access issues (private land) and safety concerns due to close proximity to a successful preschool and well utilized footpath."

"59840

The Parish Council does not agree that the whole of this site qualifies as brownfield land. The eastern part of the site has derelict buildings and structures, and we agree that this is brownfield and appropriate development might be considered here. Although parts of the remainder of the site were subject to landfill, this has to a certain extent now blended into the landscape and the previous use of the site should not be used to justify extensive built development over the whole site. Development of this site would also be highly visible within the AONB.

"59691

Agree with assessment, not a sustainable site"

"59863

Agree with assessment, not a sustainable site"

"59864 and 59866

Part of this site is in the parish of Birling however this is not acknowledged in the consultation. The site is adjacent to an area of Special Scientific Interest, highly visible from AONB and is Grade 2 farmland."

Q9. Tick yes and in the explanation please include "Infrastructure is essential. Existing infrastructure does not support current housing.

Q10. please tick "Built and historic environment", "community facilities and Infrastructure" and "natural environment".

Q11. please include "Built and historic environment selected to protect the quality and character of the built environment."

"Infrastructure, as previously highlighted, is woefully inadequate and problems will be exacerbated unless infrastructure is given priority". "Natural environment is essential when facing an ecological crisis".

Q12. please tick "No". Include following as explanation "We consider the housing requirement to be a maximum and not a minimum".

Q13, 14, 15 and 16. Please tick "Yes".

Q17. Skip

- Q18. Please tick "Infrastructure", "Distribution of housing", "First time buyers" and Tenure of housing".
- Q19. Skip
- Q20. please tick "yes" and include following in explanation "Supporting rural based business is important".
- Q21. Please tick "yes" and include following in explanation "all essential".
- Q22. Please tick "bus", "pedestrian infrastructure", "roads".
- Q23. Please include the following in explanation "All issues have an impact on our residents.
- Q24. Skip.
- Q25 to Q31 inclusive Skip.
- Q32. Please tick "yes" no explanation to be given.
- Q33. Skip
- Q34. Skip
- Q35. Please tick "yes".
- Q36. Please tick "Yes".
- Q37. Please tick the following "All equally important".
- Q38. Please include the following " Whilst all are important, Birling Parish Council are particularly concerned that developments are sympathetic to the local character, history and landscape and are safe and inclusive places that promote wellbeing and have good facilities".
- Q39. Please tick "yes". In explanation, please include "Birling Parish is concerned to ensure that West Malling Abbey and environs are included within the category of historic sites and as such are protected."
- Q40. Please tick "Yes" In explanation please include "We have assumed that, in this question, "altering" the boundaries effectively means removing land from the Green Belt. If this does not happen it seems likely that most new development would have to be in the north-east of the borough. This would not only create an imbalance but would also have harmful knock-on effects for nearby rural communities; for example, the road infrastructure would not be able to cope, leading to even greater levels of rat-running through villages."
- Q41 Please tick "NO". In explanation, please include "An additional factor should be included: The need to maintain the separate identity of communities by ensuring physical space between them is retained and protected."
- Q42 Please tick "Option 1".
- Q43. Please include the following in explanation "Option 1 is more robust and resilient."
- Q44. Please tick "Yes". In explanation, please include following "Aids innovation and improves quality."
- Q45. Please tick "Yes". In explanation, please include "Essential to offset urban heat island effect and for health and wellbeing".

Q46. Please tick "yes".

Q47. Please tick "Passive design", "decentralized renewable", and "energy efficient".

Q48. Skip.

Q49. Skip.

Q50. Skip.

Cllr Nevill left the meeting.

97. Planning Applications to be considered

(b)Birling (Downs And Mereworth) TM/22/01982/FL Badgells Wood Camping White Horse Road Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0UF Replacement of existing camp site reception and shop facilities with a new site reception hub; replacement of site manager's mobile home with a permanent dwelling house; erection of a timber dining canopy structure; erection of new ablution block and upgrading of existing facilities, erection of open sided education space shelter; installation of six timber holiday cabins; associated alterations to parking facilities and services infrastructure and The variation of Conditions 1 and 3 Of TM/17/00760/FL to enable all year round occupation of the new site manager's house and use of reception hub and timber holiday cabins all year round (camping to remain seasonal)

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council recognises the potential economic, educational and recreational benefits of these proposals and does not object to the application. We consider that the impact of any additional traffic is likely to be insignificant. However, there are a number of issues we would like the Borough Council to consider carefully. The size of the buildings and amount of accommodation proposed for both the wardens' accommodation and the holiday cabins seem quite large, and we ask that the Borough Council assures itself that the size is justified. There should be a mechanism to ensure that the holiday accommodation does not become general residential accommodation by default. External lighting should be controlled to ensure that it does not cause visual harm or adversely affect wildlife and habitats, and there should be a long-term management plan and review mechanism concerning the ecological impacts.

98. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 8th November 2022

Meeting closed at 21:00pm

Signed..... Date.....