

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee of the Parish Council of Ashburnham with Penhurst held on Wednesday 21st February 2024 at 7.15 pm in the Ashburnham Sports Pavilion**

**Parish Councillors present:** Cllrs Ron King, Chris Sinden, Paul Spicer, Richard White (Chairman), Fraser Williamson.

**Parish Councillors absent:** Cllr Jay Ashworth

**In attendance:** Brian Holdstock, Clerk to the Council  
4 members of the public.

**1. Apologies for absence**  
Cll Jay Ashworth

**2. Disclosures of interest**  
None

**3. Additional agenda items**  
At 5) a) ii) additional new planning application RR/2024/6/P.

**4. Open Forum**

- a) Mr Daniel Applegate spoke to voice his objections to the Ash Tree Inn planning application. His principle objection is that the hedgerow which it is proposed to sacrifice in part is an Ancient Hedgerow in the meaning of the term used by conservationists. Using the standard method of determining age of a hedgerow it is probably 300 years old. The hedge also provides an effective screen not only visually by hiding an unsightly carpark but also as a noise barrier protecting the houses directly opposite from the noise of people and cars entering and leaving the carpark. He sees no justification for degrading the historic and ecological importance of the hedgerow. Finally, he challenges the claim that the development would enhance road safety. On the contrary, he said that the necessarily steep ramp required to exit from the proposed opening plus the poor visibility splays would make it much more dangerous.
- b) Mr and Mrs Philip Snyman, who live directly opposite the proposed new entrance to the carpark, voiced their objections to the Ash Tree Inn application. It is clear that if the new entrance were constructed then the front of their house would be intensely illuminated by the headlights of cars exiting. Given the large difference in levels between the road and the car park the ramp necessary would have the effect of bathing their house in intense light from the top down to the bottom as the car moved from the incline angle to the level of the road. The noise from vehicles exiting a steep incline would further serve to make continued habitation of his property untenable.
- c) Mr Brian Walker, once a licensee of The Ash Tree Inn, supported the other objections voiced and gave some historical context to the construction of the carpark.

**5. Planning**

- a) **RR/2023/2637/P** - Ash Tree Inn, Brownbread Street, Ashburnham TN33 9NX - Blocking off existing carpark entrance and erecting of picket fence. New relocated entrance into car park.

Members viewed the plans of the proposed changes to the carpark and were unanimous in their resolve to oppose the application. The following wording was agreed -  
The Parish Council is unable to support this application despite its default position of always being supportive of The Ash Treen Inn enterprise. At a planning committee meeting held on 21st February, to which several members of the public came, the council unanimously resolved to object on the following grounds. The environmental and ecological harm is quite

unacceptable. The impact on the immediate neighbours would be intolerable. The claim that road safety would be improved does not withstand even cursory inspection given the steepness of a new exit and the poor visibility splays.

- b) **RR/2024/6/P** - Honeyland Farm - Land at, Honey Lane, Ashburnham TN33 9FA - Erection of replacement barn for agricultural use.

Members viewed the plans and compared them with a similar application which was refused and appealed with the appeal being dismissed. Their objection remains broadly the same that this attempt to construct a new building on a piece of land which has never been properly farmed has no business justification leading them to conclude that there must be ulterior motives for the application. They were unanimous in resolving to oppose and delegated to the Clerk the task of drafting a statement of their objection. The text of the Clerk's draft, subsequently posted to the RDC portal, is as follows -

“The Parish Council Planning Committee met on 21st February 2024 and unanimously resolved to object to this proposal. The proposal follows on from RR/2022/1296/P which was refused and appealed. The appeal was dismissed and this new application seeks to address the single reason for that appeal. Specifically, the inspector concluded 'the harm I have found to highway safety is determinative'. No other matters were of concern.

Therefore, the applicant has detailed the vehicle movements to which this application would give rise and claims they represent a significant reduction. The Parish Council contests this on two grounds.

First, in this application there are no figures for existing movements but in the previous application the assertion was made - at present there are at least 150 movements on average per year with 50 large (tractor and equipment) and some 100 land rover movements. The Inspector found no evidence for this and none has yet been presented.

Secondly the claim that the forecast vehicle moments represent a huge reduction are entirely specious. In fact they represent an increase in traffic as the applicant does not and never has carried out any agricultural activities on this land. The movements forecast may represent a reduction in what would otherwise be generated if agricultural management was carried out without the barn, but that is all.

Additionally, the Rights of Way Officer was consulted and his response is included in full in the Design and Access Statement. Far from the applicant's claim that concerns have been addressed, the officer simply states where responsibilities lie and concludes, Whether the proposed building would result in a reduction in the vehicular movements over the byway obviously depends substantially on the vehicular access currently required for the management of the land.

Finally, the Parish Council wishes to reiterate its original objection which is that the needs of agricultural management do not justify the scale of the proposed development and still do not."

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

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Signed (Chair)

Date .....