

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Planning Committee

Monday 1st July 2024

Present: Cllr Watkins (Chair), Cllr Monteath-Wilson, Cllr Rabagliati, Cllr Daw, Cllr Spring, Cllr Harris

Apologies: No apologies

In Attendance:

Mrs Suzanna Dry – Clerk & RFO

Approximately 65 members of the public in attendance.

The Parish Council has received advice of Planning Applications for the properties listed below.

These were considered by the Planning Committee at a meeting on **Monday 1st July 2024 at 6.45pm, held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall.**

Ref. No: SDNP/24/02380/FUL & SDNP/24/02381/LIS

Six Bells, High Street, Alfriston, BN26 5TD

Addition of new internally accessible toilet to improve facilities within the public house and replace existing toilet which is accessible only from beer garden.

APC Planning Committee met to discuss this application. No objection.

Ref. No: SNDP/24/02440/FUL

Former Allotment Site, North Street, Alfriston

Erection of 5 houses together with revisions to access and parking.

APC Planning Committee met to discuss this application and decided to defer a decision to the next meeting to be held on 15th July, in order to consider points discussed at the Q&A session by Domusea Developments, minuted below.

The Chair mentioned how important it is that residents log their comments direct to SDNPA on the planning website and also on Domusea's consultation page of their website. Links to both are shown below:

<https://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/>

www.domusea.com Link: 'Consultations'

Presentation by Domusea Developments on Proposed Housing Development

Edward Rees of Domusea Developments gave a short presentation to the meeting followed by a question and answer session for Cllrs, which was then opened up to the public.

Mr Rees confirmed the former allotment site had been allocated by SDNPA (South Downs National Park Authority) for housing and Domusea Development has spent the last year working with SDNPA to present this application, consisting of four three-bed houses and one two-bed bungalow to be handed back as affordable housing.

Question from Cllr Spring – What will be done to mitigate flood risk and access? Mr Rees replied all the site is on flood zone 1 and they saw what happened here this winter. The site is 1.5-2m above climate change allowances so shouldn't be any

concern for the development itself. Regarding access, there is some restriction to turning and visibility however the plan does meet with SDNPA criteria. Originally intended for construction traffic to access the site via River Lane, local farmer not entirely happy with this and conversations are on going.

Question from the Chair – If permission is granted, how long will it take to build ? Mr Rees replied build programme is expected to be 8 months.

Question from Cllr Rabagliati – there are two blocks of garages but no on street parking. We already have parking issues in the village. Mr Rees advised Domusea have been battling against SDNPA on this, SDNPA didn't want any parking provision. There are 7 spaces in the planning application, but no visitor spaces. Domusea would like to provide more, however SDNPA do not want to see any parking on the site. Cllr Rabagliati did not see how SDNPA could consider this sympathetic to the village.

Question from Cllr Daw - concerned at construction traffic as there is already an awful traffic problem. Mr Rees replied there will be a construction plan and will look to minimise the disruption as much as possible.

Question from Cllr Monteath-Wilson – if River Lane cannot be used, how will construction traffic come on site, Mr Rees replied Wealden Council land can be used i.e. via Willows car park although this has not been agreed yet.

Question from the Chair – If public only have access from North Street this will cause chaos with traffic and Cllr Harris asked if East Sussex County Council Highways are happy with this access, Mr Rees replied ESCCH have been consulted and are happy with proposals. Cllr Monteath-Wilson asked if ESCCH will carry out their own safety audit and have the final say, Mr Rees confirmed ESCCH will have the final say.

Public questions: Nathan Pope asked if there is a target price for units and has the land been bought from the current landowners. Mr Rees advised not yet, as they are entirely focused on the planning process at this stage. The land does have a subject to planning agreement, this means it is still owned by the current landowners but once planning permission is agreed Domusea will purchase the site.

Nick White felt it was disingenuous to say no prices had been set and pointed out that affordable housing is very important in the village. Mr Rees advised the planning process can take several years with a number of alterations to plans and proposals, which is why pricing has not been decide on. Cllr Monteath-Wilson noted that this is the only site allocated for housing and once it is used, there will be no site available for social housing.

Judith Byrne made mention to comments made where outside bodies are being consulted, is there anything on paper regarding this – Mr Rees replied Domusea happy to share these documents, particularly with regard to the parking issues as we share your concerns. Now that the planning application is live these comments will be registered on SDNPA website.

Shirley Everleigh asked how deliveries will access both the site and the village and the impact on traffic flow from the proposed access. Mr Rees replied that in a development of this size the increase in trip movement on a daily basis would be fairly small, we understand your concerns with delivery vehicles and are happy to look at ways to address this, such as off-site delivery lockers etc. Can only reiterate that this site has been allocated for development, we are listening to your concerns and are open to feedback on how the situation can be addressed.

Jilly Byford asked with regard to the Lewis & Co document, River Lane is one way only as is North street. Willows car park regularly floods, with trees being taken down how are Domusea going to mitigate this. Mr Rees reiterated that this site has already been allocated by SDNPA for development and Domusea are listening to feedback from the community to make their proposals as good as it can be. There are certainly ways in which deliveries and visitor parking can be addressed. This site is not at risk of flooding and a sustainable drainage system is being put in place to capture surface water from the site.

John Boxall asked about drainage as in winter water seeps out of the bank onto the footpath of Willows car park. Mr Rees replied that every bit of surface water from the development, will be captured and held in underground tanks and this will in fact improve the flooding currently experienced during the winter. The drainage document goes into detail on this.

Matthew Jackson asked a question to the planning committee – is there any possibility that social housing might be an opportunity on allocated land. Cllr Monteath-Wilson replied that some years ago when looking at social housing, no sites were identified, if we were to look at social housing again the only site allocated for development will have been taken up with private housing.

Cllr Neil Parkinson felt the issue with traffic was not fully addressed in the transport report. North Street is barely a two way carriageway, resulting in congestion backed up in Market Square and drivers getting stuck right at the access point to the development. Mr Rees asked what the community's preference would be - do you want parking on the new site, or no cars to help with congestion. Cllr Rabaliati commented that no parking would exacerbate current parking issues, whilst additional traffic in and out of the site would add to congestion, so we are caught between the two. Mr Rees mentioned that Domusea could potentially look at using S106 payments towards traffic calming measures. Hilary Rawlins asked if cars could go out from River Lane. Mr Rees replied that SDNPA didn't want this when Domusea proposed it and SDNPA shut down this option.

Christine Dunce had issues with access, parking and trees as previously discussed. Mr Rees mentioned that as a developer they have to ensure a 10% bio-diversity net gain, which will be achieved through off site credits.

Bridget O'Dell asked about the possibility of solar panels, M Rees replied that Domusea had hoped to include solar panels in their design but SDNPA are not in favour of these being used in Alfriston. Domusea would like to include them. Kate Edmonds mentioned that her neighbour has solar panels, Mr Rees reiterated that Domusea do not have complete control over the design, if Domusea do not provide exactly what SDNPA want to see they will not get the planning permission.

Judith Byrne asked the planning committee if there are any other sites allocated for development. Cllr Monteath-Wilson confirmed this is now the only site allocated – Kings Ride has been used and Pleasant Rise is not an allocated site.

Michael Woods asked would you be able to get SDNPA Design Officer to come to Alfriston and discuss design policy and if the development goes ahead, how long will it take and when will construction start. Mr Rees replied getting SDNPA Design officer to agree to a visit is not something Domusea have the power to do, but are happy to share documents. With regard to construction this will take approximately 8 months and as you say, due to flooding in the winter this is likely to take place in the summer. There will be a construction management plan. Domusea will look at ways to mitigate the disruption and work with the local community. We will do our best to manage it, but there will of course be an impact. Cllr Monteath-Wilson added that access through Willows car park will prove difficult as this gets very busy in the summer months. The Chair commented that any disruption during the summer months will affect local businesses who rely on summer trade.

Cllr Rabagliati asked if there is a date for SDNPA to make their decision, Mr Rees replied the date set is 23rd August, however he would not be surprised if the decision was delayed anywhere between 6-18 months and would expect it to go before a planning committee. Anyone logging comments on the Domusea website will be kept informed of developments.

Hilary Rawlins asked if there were any images from the riverside of the development. Mr Rees advised there isn't a computer generated image for this as yet but confirmed the plan is for a public right of way down to River Lane and a seating area.

Cllr Spring asked if the development will be a private road and maintained by the developers and who will maintain the trees, Mr Rees replied that physical features will be maintained by the developers.

The Chair advised the meeting that the Planning Committee will consider all the information given tonight and will discuss and make a decision at the next meeting to be held on Monday 15th July. The Chair thanked Mr Edward Rees for coming and answering all the questions tonight. Mr Rees confirmed that Domusea are happy to listen to any suggestions and all suggestions logged on their website will be answered.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.