



# Maresfield Parish Council

## REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP



### Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 at 7.30pm in Nutley War Memorial Hall

**Present:** Cllr M Craddock (Chair), Cllr Mrs L Reeves, Cllr A Strevens, Cllr Dr E Worrell, Cllr D Watson, Cllr T Lewin, Cllr Mrs S Cumming, Cllr Dr B Smith, Cllr Dr P Handley, DCllr P Roundell, CCllr R Galley, Mrs C Goossens (Clerk) and Mrs N O'Hanlon (Assistant Clerk)

#### **A. Public session – There were four members of the public in attendance.**

It was noted that the NDP SG is currently looking at sites put forward in the recent SHLAA and considering with a view to forming an objective assessment as to whether there are any sites suitable for development in Maresfield.

The Local Plan allocated 50 dwellings to Maresfield in 2013 for a 10-year period, of which to date about 100 have received planning permission. We await Wealden District Council's Draft Local Plan which is anticipated next Spring. This document is likely to include housing numbers for Maresfield, as it seems unlikely that there will be no allocation for the Parish. Once the NDP SG is in receipt of housing numbers it will then put forward details of preferred sites.

The application for 49 houses to be discussed under item 3700.2.ii has pre-empted the Draft Local Plan.

It is expected that there will be a future requirement of 1200 homes per year to satisfy the Government's target for Wealden. Due to the lack of a 5-year housing land supply the planning balance is tilted towards approving applications unless there are very good planning reasons.

It was noted by two members of the public that they and a number of other individuals have registered their objections with reference to application no. WD/2021/1068/MAO. The following points were noted:

- There are already five accesses on the 43 metre stretch of road between Budlett's roundabout and the first traffic calming build out serving approximately 30 houses. The addition of a further 49 dwellings would potentially create serious safety concerns.
- The owners of the land to the North of Mr Flittner have engaged a consultant to create a "Masterplan" of up to 200 houses with access from the A22. It is understood that Mr Flittner has not yet "bought into" this plan.

Mrs Angie Welton made the following representation to the Parish Council reference item 3700.1.ii:

- The funding request is for money towards alterations in the South transept of the church which would then be hived off to create a small kitchen, toilet and disabled toilet.
- The upgraded facilities would provide a more suitable space for activities particularly those related to Youth and would enhance what the Church is able to offer.
- Reverend Ben is very keen to run a work experience role for youth activities like that which he fulfilled 13 years ago.

*CCllr Galley joined the meeting.*

- The project would be split into two phases. The second phase would be to block off the North transept with a glass screen, facilitating the creation of a meeting room. Phase 2 is currently on hold.
- The total anticipated cost of Phase one of the project excluding fees already paid is £94,000 plus VAT, which can be reclaimed. £25,000 has already been spent on professional fees, surveys and planning. The management fee is included in the £94,000 budget.
- £65,000 has been raised and there is now £39,000 remaining towards the £94,000 project.
- Five grant applications have been submitted and the outcome is awaited.
- Any contribution agreed by the Parish Council could be funded with CIL monies. WDC has confirmed this project is an acceptable use of CIL monies.

There are no conditions attached to the use of CIL monies, but funds must be used for Community related projects and on fully inclusive facilities.

- The proposals would doubtless open the church to the community and would complement rather than compete with the other facilities such as Maresfield Village Hall.
- The Church of England is not contributing financially towards the project.
- There is a borrowing facility available from the Church of England.
- The work can be carried out in stages and St Bartholomew's is confident that it will be successful in raising the requisite amount of money and is therefore happy to proceed on this basis. They currently have sufficient funds to carry out the first phase i.e., drainage works.

*The Public Session closed.*

**Apologies for absence were noted:**

Cllr Mrs L Stevens-Smith, Cllr R Hunter and Cllr J Lewis.

**Declarations of Interest were noted:**

Cllr Dr B Smith – Governor Nutley Primary School

Cllr D Watson – Trustee Nutley War Memorial Hall

Cllrs T Lewin & Mrs Cumming – Maresfield Conservation Group

**Written requests for new DPI dispensations:** None.

**3695. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021: -**

1. For adoption. The minutes as circulated with the meeting papers were **Agreed** unanimously.
2. Matters arising from these minutes not elsewhere on the agenda. None.

**3696. Co-Option of Dr Emma Worrell to fill Councillor Vacancy in Fairwarp Ward.**

Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Mrs Reeves and **Agreed** unanimously.

**3697. To consider placement of Co-Opted Member onto Committees.**

It was proposed by the Chairman that Cllr Dr Worrell be co-opted onto the Planning and Environment Committees. This was seconded by Cllr Dr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.

*It was **Agreed** to consider item 3700.2.ii at this point in the agenda:*

**Application No. WD/2021/1068/MAO**

ApplicationType: Major Application - Outline

Expiry date for comments: 23 June 2021

Location: MILL HOUSE FARM, MARESFIELD, TN22 2ED

Description: PHASED DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 49 NO. HOUSES. ALL MATTERS RESERVED APART FROM THE ACCESS, WHICH WILL USE THE EXISTING APPROVED ACCESS AND EXISTING INTERNAL ROAD.

Applicant: Messrs S J, N M, P A & R P Flittner

Link to documents on web: <http://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=153820>

The following points were noted in discussion:

- “Approved access” refers to that as already approved for up to 9 houses (WD/2019/1499/RM)
- Cllr Lewin considers the access to be completely inappropriate because this stretch of road is already dangerous with numerous driveways serving many dwellings. Despite living in the village, he uses the bypass to access Uckfield for this reason.
- Access for a further 49 at this location was considered to be untenable.
- This stretch of road has recently become even more hazardous with the volume of large construction traffic entering “Rabbity Lane”.
- The last traffic calming “build out” continues to be a cause for concern.
- Since 2011/12 when Wellington Gate was constructed, there have been some 180 homes built in Maresfield village. The approval of an application of this size would further change the character of the village many have chosen to live in.
- Phased development makes the construction prolonged and untenable for those living in close proximity to the site.
- ES Highways seem to pay little attention to concerns raised by the Parish Council with regards to the questionable safety of the traffic calming measure at the bottom of School Hill and in immediate proximity of the proposed access for up to 49 houses.

- CCllr Galley stated that he was entirely opposed to this development and would work with DCllr Roundell to oppose it.

The Chairman proposed recommending refusal, this was seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously citing the following:

*Maresfield Parish Council is strongly opposed to this Application.*

*Maresfield Parish Council very much regrets that the Landowners have not held any discussions or consultations about this Application prior to its submission.*

*Maresfield Parish Council recommends Refusal of this Application for the following reasons:*

- 1 *In the 2013 Core strategy Maresfield was allocated 50 new homes – planning applications have subsequently been approved for nearly double this amount. There is no evidence of a need for further new houses in Maresfield.*
- 2 *The red-lined application site area is given as 2.08 hectares. Good planning requires green space within a development of this size, and this is not possible within such a limited space. The proposed density is therefore excessive.*
- 3 *A development of the extent proposed warrants the provision of Community Benefit such as allotments, recreational space and/or facilities. This application has none.*
- 4 *The proposed access is unacceptable for the proposed development. An existing access to High Street has been agreed for the six houses approved under WD/2019/1499/RM and a further application for one house has been submitted under WD/2021/1015/F using this same access. In all over the last five years applications have been approved for some 25 new homes to access High Street from four separate access points within about a 20 metre stretch of this narrow, speed restricted, and traffic calmed road which is just a short distance down from Bonners School. This is a dangerous situation which will only get worse should further development accessing this part of the highway be allowed.*
- 5 *A phased development is totally unacceptable as it will prolong indefinitely the noise and safety issues generated by construction traffic thereby causing distress and nuisance to occupants of neighbouring properties as well detracting from the peaceful ambience of Maresfield Village.*
- 6 *Adjacent landowners are preparing a “Master Plan” which incorporates development proposals for the Applicants’ land and, subject to ESCC Highways approval, provides for access from a proposed new roundabout on the A22 which would also serve the Applicants’ land. Whilst we understand that the Applicants’ are aware of this Plan and that its promoters are having discussions with Wealden and the Parish Council about it, the current application ignores this and is thus premature, opportunistic and inappropriate.*

*We would also like it noted that whilst the WDC Housing response reports a requirement for 9 affordable homes in the village, there are already 14/15 affordable homes in the pipeline on the back of approved applications WD/2017/0694/MAO and WD/2015/2432/MEA and therefore there is no “acute shortage”.*

### **3698. Reports by and questions to: -**

1. County Councillors.

CCllr Galley reported as follows:

- There is an emphasis on recovery plans as we emerge from the pandemic.
- Various funds are available – Levelling Up Fund and Recovery Fund.
- There is a £16m Fund for holiday activities and food for children eligible for free school meals.
- The Tourism sector has been badly hit. Wealden is putting together a strategy with new branding and a website due to launch soon.
- The Nursery Lane petition is going to the Lead Member at the September Council meeting. CCllr Galley anticipates an update from the Assistant Director in mid to late August. Members of the Parish Council will be able to attend the meeting (possibly remotely). Further information to

follow in due course. Cllr Dr Smith thanked CCllr Galley for his efforts in this regard.

**ACTION:** Cllr Watson to update Nursery Lane residents/petitioners.

- Government is looking to build 300,000 houses per year in order to create a plentiful supply enabling young people to buy.
- The current formula means Wealden District must build 1200 houses each year.
- Local need and migration could justify 700/800. Consideration as to the affordability factor in Wealden increases the allocation to up to 1200 houses per year.
- Councillors met with four MPs last week, partly with a view to letting them know how disgruntled we are in Wealden about having development imposed upon us and hoping that it may be possible to influence how they vote on future planning policy.
- 7500 homes have been granted permission in Wealden but have not been built out. This number **MORE THAN** covers the requisite 5-year land supply.
- Why isn't WDC encouraging building on Brownfield Sites? Cllr Galley noted that there are very few Brownfield sites available.
- There are some properties on the Crowborough Road that have been empty for some time and WDC Officers have been in touch to establish whether they can be released to the market.
- Affordable Housing – Cllr Strevens noted that residents would be seeking local employment of which there is little within Wealden. There is a current requirement for 35% of any development to be "Affordable" but this is often not delivered. The Local Plan is deliberating whether the percentage should be decreased and whether there should then be greater enforcement. It was noted that some areas of affordable housing are in the middle of larger developments and there can often be issues as a result of this.
- **ACTION:** CCllr Galley to ask ES Highways to inspect the very bad condition of the footpath/pavement from Fords Green to Littlemead.

## 2. District Councillors.

DCllr Roundell reported as follows:

- There is currently much in the press about the planning process.
- We await the results of the Government White Paper Consultation, which will affect what WDC, MPC and the NDP can do as they will all need to be in alignment.
- Neither affordable housing nor self-build contribute to infrastructure.
- M&S and Home Bargains will be having a consultation in Uckfield on 1<sup>st</sup> July and MPC Councillors might be interested in attending.
- Cllr Dr Handley enquired as to the possible provision of a food waste collection service. CCllr Galley said this will cost taxpayers money and it is doubtful Government will fund it.

*Two members of the public left the meeting.*

### 3699. Parish Wards – issues, needs and Councillors' reports: -

1. Fairwarp Ward. There is no update regarding the application for a mobile telephone mast. The Conservators have been consulted.
2. Maresfield Ward. The sorry state of the grass at The Parade was raised. It is understood that each property owns a strip of grass and the residents are currently in some kind of dispute.
3. Nutley Ward. None.

### 3700. Council bodies - To receive minutes and decisions, followed by reports from Chairmen and any questions: -

#### 1. Finance & Administration Committee

- i. Months 1 & 2 2021/22 expenditure and accounts to be noted.  
Noted. Month 1 includes 2021 grant payments. Nearly all monies have now been paid for Maresfield Recreation Ground Pavilion refurbishment.
- ii. To consider and Agree response to St Bartholomew's funding request.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- There is an element of bad youth behaviour in the village and a facility enabling youth provision would be a good thing.
- The proposed facility at the Church should be used to complement rather than compete with the facilities provided by the Village Hall and the newly refurbished Recreation Ground Pavilion.

- Funding for this project could set a precedent in the Parish although Pavilion improvements at both Fords Green Nutley and in Fairwarp are currently on hold.
  - All development within the Parish is happening in Maresfield and to date all CIL money has been spent in this village. It is important to strike the right balance.
  - The Parish Council has approximately £18,000 CIL monies remaining.
- Cllr Lewin proposed a donation of £10,000 funded by CIL monies. This was seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously subject to the following conditions:

- The Parish Council must be satisfied that the project will reach completion.
- Youth provision within the facility must be a priority.

**ACTION:** Clerk to write to Mrs A Welton to confirm level of Parish Council financial support.

**ACTION:** Chairman to include details of grant in next Chairman’s Newsletter.

*Mrs Welton, CCllr Galley and DCllr Roundell left the meeting.*

- iii. Annual Return - to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21.  
This was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously.
- iv. Annual Return - to approve the Annual Accounting Statements for 2020/21.  
This was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Strevens and **Agreed** unanimously.
- v. To note Internal End of Year Audit. It was noted that the internal audit report was very good.
- vi. To Re-Adopt Financial Risk Assessment.  
It was noted the document continues to adequately cover the systems the Parish Council has in place to ensure appropriate/safe financial management. The Chairman proposed re-adoption of the Financial Risk Assessment, this was seconded by Cllr Dr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.

**2. Planning Committee.**

- i. Notes from informal Planning Committee Meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> May and 7<sup>th</sup> June.

The following points were noted in discussion:

- Cllr Watson expressed his gratitude to Cllr Strevens for ably taking over as Planning Committee Chairman.
- Increasingly, MPC Planning Committee recommendations are being over-ruled by Wealden District Council Planning department.

**ii. Application No. WD/2021/1068/MAO**

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Expiry date for comments:	23 June 2021
Location:	MILL HOUSE FARM, MARESFIELD, TN22 2ED
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Applicant:	Messrs S J, N M, P A & R P Flittner
Link to documents on web:	<a href="http://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=153820">http://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=153820</a>

*As discussed earlier in the meeting.*

- ii. Street Naming & Numbering SNN1336D - Development at London Road, Maresfield  
The Chairman proposed Furnace Bank Park and that this should apply ONLY TO the internal road servicing the seven properties and NOT to the access lane. This was seconded by Cllr Lewin and **Agreed** unanimously. **ACTION:** Clerk to respond to WDC.

**3. Environment Committee.**

- i. Update from Chairman. There has been no recent meeting.
- ii. Update from Cllr Strevens re SLR Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June.  
It was noted that there were several issues highlighted and agreed for action at the last meeting which still have not been actioned by ES Highways e.g., SLOW signs on road at Duddleswell Crossroads.

**4. Neighbourhood & Community Development Plan Steering Group.**

- i. Update from Chairman.  
The Chairman reported that he and Mr Fred Taylor are scheduled to attend a meeting with Kelly Sharp at WDC and land promoters for a “Masterplan” in Maresfield. This relates to land put forward in the recent SHELAA. There are one or two issues the Chairman wishes to raise.

The NDP SG is looking at sites as submitted in the SHELAA but not making any recommendations until it knows how many houses are to be allocated to Maresfield.

*One member of the public left the meeting.*

Close to 300 responses from 1650 households were received to the recent Housing Needs Survey and General Survey. The Chairman will begin to analyse data in the coming days, but it is anticipated the data will confirm what we already know.

**5. Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee.**

i. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April. Noted.

ii. Update from Chairman.

Further to a meeting with representatives from the Cricket Club an emergency meeting was called on 17<sup>th</sup> June to discuss issues pertaining to the poor state of the Pavilion after use by MCC. The Committee unanimously agreed to a "Closedown Checklist" to be signed by a representative of each club after each use on departure.

The showers need servicing before clubs are able to use them. This is expected to cost approximately £400 and will be paid for with the remaining monies from the Pavilion refurbishment budget.

iii. To note receipt of £500 grant from Police Property Fund. Noted and the Assistant Clerk was thanked for facilitating this.

**3701. Outside bodies matters.** None.

**3702. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Chairman.** None.

**3703. To receive a report from, and put questions to, the Clerk.** The Clerk reminded Councillors of the forthcoming Maresfield in Bloom event on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June at Maresfield Recreation Ground.

**3704. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.** Grant to St Bartholomew's.

**3705. Date of next meeting – 20<sup>th</sup> July (Nutley)**

**The Parish Council Meeting will closed and reconvened as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground.**

**3706. Matters relating to Council as Trustee of Maresfield Recreation Ground (MRG).** None.

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.09.*