



RUSPER PARISH COUNCIL
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Clerk and RFO to the Council – Lisa Wilcock

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 29th April 2025 at 7.00pm. This meeting was held at Rusper Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs M Cooke (Chair), G Hussey (Vice Chair), G Sallows, R Gatt, F Maitland-Smith, S White, G Fleming, M Fillmore, M Fenton.

Apologies: County Councillor Katie Nagel, District Councillor Tony Hogben, D Matthews.

Also present: There were 4 members of the public for part of the meeting.

Meeting commenced 1900hrs

001-25/26 **Apologies**

It was resolved to accept apologies in advance of the meeting from County Councillor Katie Nagle,

002-25/26 **Declarations of Interest** None.

003-25/26 The Council **acknowledged** that there is currently a climate crisis, and to ensure that all decisions made within meeting have consideration to this.

004-25/26 **Minutes of previous meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 25th March 2025. The Chair signed the minutes.

005-25/26 **Open Forum**

006-25/26 **Reports from other Authorities**

To note the new WSCC Highways Road Safety Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/RoadSafetyWSCC>

007-25/26 **Planning Applications**

DC/25/0523 Land North of East Street Rusper West Sussex ([Email](#), [Map](#))

Erection of 18no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings, (including 6no. affordable housing units), together with access from East Street, vehicle and cycle parking, landscaping and open space, and sustainable drainage.

It was RESOLVED to strongly object to the application.

Rusper Parish Council Strongly Objects to this proposal.

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The proposed development is not any area that was put forward for the recently made Ruser Neighbourhood Plan and there was no local consultation before this site was added as a proposed site for the new HDC Local Plan, which has been rejected by the Planning Inspector, because of the lack of consultation. The application makes several references to the emerging Local Plan, but this has now been rejected and needs to be redrawn following the initial examination. Note that the inspector specifically referenced the failure to consult and the problems with the allocated sites against the spacial policies of the plan as reasons for its rejection, both of which reflect badly on this application.

The site fails the spacial policies of both the current HDPF and the stalled proposed Horsham Local Plan. It is outside of any built boundary and despite being adjacent to the current boundary, it fails to provide any pedestrian access to the local village, without walking along a road with no pavements. It fails all 12 Spacial Objectives of the current HDPF, as this is a green field site, outside the built boundary of a small village settlement with no daily public transport, in a rural setting.

The only access to the village shop, playground and church, will require stepping into a road with no pavement and where traffic drives directly into the setting sun at key points of the day, which renders them blind to pedestrians. The Site Access Arrangement, ITB200340-GA-002, REV C, clearly shows a 2m wide footpath, as the only pedestrian access to the site, exiting directly onto the narrow lane of East Street with no further pavement access. Additionally, the proposed vehicle entrance is directly opposite the already agreed entrance for the development opposite in East Street ([DC/21/2172](#)) and between the new entrances for Longfield House and the significant Millfields development ([DC/24/0699](#)), all of which represent an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and significant cumulative impact on the road network, contrary to paragraph 116 of the NPPF. The NPPF paragraph 117 specifically states:

117. Within this context, applications for development should: (a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

which this development clearly fails to do.

Divine Homes argues that Horsham's inability to demonstrate a five year land supply is due to a lack of available sites, where the real case is that more than enough sites have been put forward, reference the failed submitted Local Plan, but the problem is the ability to build these given the current water restrictions. Indeed the site at North Horsham, approximately 500 of which would be in Ruser Parish, is currently on hold because of this issue.

The Divine Homes Planning Statement (paragraph) references the HDC FAD, but incorrectly implies that **all** the requirements are met for this application. The actual FAD states:

Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion

The growth of settlements across the District will continue to be supported in order to meet identified local housing, employment and community needs. Outside built-up area boundaries, the expansion of settlements will be supported where;

- 1. The site is allocated in the Local Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan and adjoins an existing settlement edge. - **This site is not in the current HDPF, or the Ruser Neighbourhood Plan***
- 2. The level of expansion is appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement type. - **Ruser parish already has allocations that will more than double the current housing stock, including extensive development opposite this site.***
- 3. The development is demonstrated to meet the identified local housing needs and/or employment needs or will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities and services. - **The current housing need with Ruser parish is already more than met by existing allocations.***
- 4. The impact of the development individually or cumulatively does not prejudice comprehensive long term development, in order not to conflict with the development*

strategy; - **The implications of this proposal, especially in relation to road traffic, for other developments in the area could be significant.**
and

5. The development is contained within an existing defensible boundary and the landscape and townscape character features are maintained and enhanced. - This site is not within an existing boundary and would significantly impact the landscape features of the rural setting.

The site of 18 dwellings proposes only 4 visitor parking bays. The nearest car park is the village car park next to the church, some distance from the site, but with no pavement to connect to the proposed development. This will lead to overflow parking along the narrow country lane of East Street and an increased hazard for all road users.

The proposal has no facilities on site for play or other activities, so all of this will require residents to walk up to the village, again with no pavement to connect them.

The Planning Statement (para.2.5), mentions the number 52 bus service, but fails to point out that this is the only public bus service for the village and that it only runs twice a week. This means that there is effectively no regular bus service for the area.

The proposal references nearby footpaths (1496 & 1501), but there is no way for residents to connect to these paths without walking along a dangerous road. It highlights the bus stops in the village, but fails to note that the bus service only runs two days a week and allows for a brief 2 hour stay in Horsham before returning.

The proposal references distant Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), but fails to mention the 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which lie within 2.5km of the site.

The proposal makes no mention of the 22m of hedge and more than 12 significant trees that were removed, without permission (see attached photographs), prior to the application being submitted. Indeed these are completely omitted from the Biodiversity Net Gain Report, calling into serious question the validity of this report. Despite this the report still indicates **a net loss of habitat units**. The Planning Statement also says (paragraph 6.42) that "It is envisaged that the securing of off-site habitat units would be evidenced to the Council by way of condition.", yet this was not done before removing the hedge and trees. The hedgerow and trees have subsequently been protected by a TPO (TPO No. TPO/1579), so any further development of this site will need to protect those trees.

The Energy and Sustainability Statement is vague and fails to indicate which measures will be incorporated. This document has no detail of the actual construction just a list of what could be done. For example, para (c) on page 4 states: The objectives of this Energy and Sustainability Statement are to outline the possible measure that can be incorporated into the development during detailed design....."

The Transport Statement, is also vague and talks about access to existing footways:

3.2.2 On the northern side of East Street, the footway fluctuates in width but is typically 1.4m wide although there are sections where the footway narrows to approximately 1.0m wide further to the west, which is sufficient to accommodate a wheelchair or pushchair. The footway on the southern side of the carriageway is a minimum of 1.2m wide which is sufficient for two pedestrians to pass each other without needing to step into the carriageway.

3.2.3 The footways continue to the west providing access into Rusper Village where the main local facilities and bus stops are situated. These facilities continue onto Horsham Road to the south providing a connection to Rusper Primary School

and

7.5 A separate pedestrian access will be provided in the south-west corner of the site. There is the opportunity to provide a kerb build out on the northern side of East Street opposite the proposed separate pedestrian access with an associated priority working which may offer wider benefit in terms of reducing vehicle speeds in the village. The applicant would like to discuss with WSCC delivering this kerb build out as part of the access works.

However the existing footways stop far short of the proposed pedestrian access to the site on both the north and south sides of East Street, meaning that pedestrians would need to walk in the road to access the existing paths. We would request that WSCC Highways do an on site assessment of the current situation and the proposals set out. Ideally this would include a period near to sunset, so that they can experience the blinding effect of a low sun at this point of the road.

The Divine Homes Planning Statement also says (paragraph 6.31) "*6.31 Although not required to achieve safe pedestrian and vehicular access to the Site*". This is clearly not true as without safe access the application should be refused.

RPC strongly believes that there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Despite acknowledging that the policy requirement for affordable housing is 35% (Planning Statement para 6.26) the proposal is to only offer 33.3%. Additionally, despite 14 mentions of affordable housing in the document, there is no indication of how this will be provided.

The application specifically states "... landscaping and open space, ...", but we can see no evidence of open space, apart from around the SUDS pond on the south-east corner of the site, which would not constitute public open space.

In terms of water neutrality the proposal relies on a legal agreement with Slade Farm, Rogate (near Petersfield), but is not clear that any surplus from that borehole will be provided to Southern Water, which could mean that this development would still impact the Arun Valley extraction. The legal in perpetuity agreement would need to be ratified by Southern Water and HDC before any development could commence on this site.

This development is opposite several new developments that have permission with access onto East Street and would create a significant cumulative impact on the character of the village and the traffic flow in East Street specifically. They are:

[DC/21/2172](#) - Erection of 6 No. 3-bed dwellings (including 1 No. retirement property), creation of an access drive and landscaping works (Resubmission of DC/20/2454)

Land South of East Street Rusper West Sussex

The proposed access road for these 6 dwellings is directly opposite the proposed entrance for this proposal. There has been no discussion about how priorities would be managed.

[DC/14/0413](#) See also [DC/23/0069](#) and [DC/24/1144](#)

[DC/24/1300](#) - Erection of 2No. detached self-build dwellings with car parking. Relocation of an approved access and retention of existing access.

Former Longfield House East Street Rusper West Sussex RH12 4RB

The proposed development shows the footway exiting directly onto the road, between the two access roads for the Longfield House development opposite, thus greatly increasing the risk for pedestrian traffic with no pavement along the road.

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[DC/24/0699](#) - Demolition of existing structures and erection of 43no. dwellings (Use Class C3), creation of a new access and provision of public open space, alongside associated landscaping and other works.

Millfields Farm Horsham Road Rusper West Sussex RH12 4PR

Photographs of removed trees and hedgerow:

Before:



After:



008 – 25/26 It was **agreed** that the Clerk will copy the objection to WSCC Highways and the HDC Arborist who issued the TPO to protect the remaining trees.

009 – 25/26 **Annual Parish Meeting.**

The speakers for the event were **agreed** and the advertisement of the event was agreed to be done via the noticeboards, facebook and the website. AiRs Sussex (Hope Keith Village Trust) are available to speak, also Local Dramatics society to be invited plus a representative from HDC. There will also be a table display regarding new playground equipment and SWOI will also have a table.

010 – 25/26 **Rusper Sports Club**

The costs of £2700 were **agreed** for Surrey Hills Solicitor to review and edit the underlease drafted by the council to ensure it reflects the clauses within the Lease. There is an EMR to pay for this, Clerk to progress this with Surrey Hills. Delegation of power for Cllr Filmore to take it forward in conjunction with the Clerk. It was **agreed** to send the completed document to the landowners for approval.

011 – 25/26 **Gatwick**

The council accepted the report as issued on the website. Gatwick have filed responses to the DCO, but one area is that Gatwick are required to use public transport and not use the road network, which the council feel will promote an increase in illegal parking in the area. It was **agreed** to submit

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a response which Cllr Fillmore will distribute to the council in advance of submission on behalf of the council.

012 – 25/26 Fingerposts

It was **agreed** to delete post 17 from the list of fingerposts requiring maintenance, Clerk to go back to Jaxx, Ralph and Wilbar for further quotes based upon the fingerposts that require professional maintenance. Carry to next meeting.

013 – 25/26 Playground

- a) The council considered the three quotations and **agreed** the new items for replacement but there will be a period of public consultation and the budget for the project will need further attention along with possible grant funding sources.
- b) The playground report was noted. There are items on the report that are a moderate risk which were the multiplay, cradle seats and the see saw. The council have ordered new seats and grips.

014 – 25/26 Rusper Noise Monitoring Terminal

The noise terminal has been agreed to be placed in a private location outside of the parish council remit. The council could not provide a suitable location but did offer options. Item is now closed.

015 – 25/26 Courage Dyers

To **resolved** to **delegate** a Cllr M Fillmore to represent the council on the board for the next term. Clerk to inform Courage Dyers and copy the Chair.

016 – 25/26 Tree Survey - maintenance

The tree maintenance quotations were **considered** and it was **agreed** to do the trees at a cost of £2700 Clerk and Chair to approve Financial Regulations 5.6.

017 – 25/26 Parish Litter Pick – 6th April 2025

The council thanked everyone who turned out for the litter pick, massive piles of rubbish were collected. Thanks to Simon at HDC for his efforts. The 2026 Annual Litter Pick will be an agenda item for discussion in October.

018 – 25/26 80th VE Day 8th May 2025

The beacon lighting event was finalised with Cllr S White organising a quiz at The Plough which will encourage people doing the quiz to go over for the Beacon event afterwards. Cllr Sallows is in charge of lighting the beacon and collecting the wood; the area will be roped off. Anyone available on the day to help with people viewing the beacon for a light up at 9.30pm. Refreshments will be available in the Sports Pavillion.

019 – 25/26 Standing Orders NALC model

The new NALC model Standing Orders 2025 will be carried into May.

020 – 25/26 Reports from Representatives

Councillors to give feedback from any representations they made on behalf of the council in between meetings.

- a) Cllr M Fenton – Footpath has been reported and the bus shelter.
- b) Cllr G Hussey – Rusper Stores have contacted RPC and have asked if there can be click and collect cabinets outside the shop. The council supports the idea in principle.

- c) Cllr M Cooke – still looking for some parish councillors and there are 2 vacancies. Parish Council will be moving over to a new email platform and new website.
- d) Cllr G Sallows – Sussex Border path that is closed, the councillors have spoken to the landowner and in consultation with WSCC.
- e) Cllr S White – 20mph speed limit proposal is stalled at the moment. Cllr S White to contact WSCC .

021 – 25/26 **Financial**

- a) It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the reports as attached Reconciliation, Budget and Unity and Nationwide Bank statement March 2025. The Chair signed the bank statements and Cllr M Fillmore signed the bank reconciliation.
- b) It was **RESOLVED** to note the to **NOTE** the CIL and S106 statements..
- c) It was resolved to accept the Internal Audit report FY24/25.
- d) It was resolved to **APPROVE** the AGAR form FY24-25. The Chair, Clerk and RFO signed the AGAR.
- e) It was **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the significant variances report.
- f) It was **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited AGAR.
- g) It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** payment of the Internal Audit.

022 – 25/26 **Schedule of payments**

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the schedule of payments, the Chair signed the report.

023 – 25/26 **Matters Arising**

The Playground quotations with photos.

The Liz Kitchen Memorial Bench.

Next meeting is the planning committee meeting on 20th May 2025.

Meeting closed hrs 2112hrs

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