



# Rolvenden Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Rolvenden Parish Council held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 at 7.30pm in The Gallery, Rolvenden Village Hall, Maytham Road, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4ND.

Present: Cllr D Murray (Chairman) Cllr Mrs D Curtain (Deputy Chairman), Cllr M Hook, Cllr Mrs I Newman, Cllr Mrs J Stace, Cllr G Tiltman, and Cllr R Wilcox

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Locum Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

**127. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Cllr B Hindley and Cllr J Wilkins.

**128. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

**a. Declarations of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

Cllr Mrs D Curtain, trustee of the War Memorial Trust

Cllr Mrs I Newman, trustee of the War Memorial Trust

**b. Declarations of Members' Other Significant Interests:**

None

**c. Declarations of Members' Other Interests:**

Cllr M Hook, membership of the Weald of Kent Preservation Society and Rolvenden History Group.

Cllr D Murray, membership of Rolvenden History Group.

**129. MINUTES:**

The minutes of the Parish Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were submitted, subject to an amendment to minute 122 to acknowledge the receipt of funds from the Hildegard Sykes bequest, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**130. Public Participation:**

A member of the Rolvenden History Group presented a request for funding amounting to £212.00 for the staging of the Hildegard Sykes lecture "Rolvenden in context: perspectives on the history of the landscape and the community".

The Parish Council has previously discussed the use of the Hildegard Sykes bequest to fund an annual lecture, therefore the request was agreed.

**131. Planning:**

18/00709/AS – Lower Woolwich, Mounts Lane, Rolvenden – Retrospective application for the change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian use, the erection of stables for the keeping of horses, and, the erection of a proposed sand school and perimeter fence.

**RESOLVED: The Parish Council supports the application.**

18/01067/AS and 18/01068/AS – Forsham Oast, Wassell Lane, Rolvenden – Proposed change of use, and extension to, the old stables into a separate dwelling, together with the construction of replacement garage building. Listed building application 18/01068/AS Works of conversion of and extension to the old stables into a separate dwelling.

**RESOLVED: The Parish Council supports the application.**

18/00974/AS – Land West of Kingsgate Cottage, Frensham Road, Rolvenden – Erection of 6 new dwellings comprising of 4 no. 2 bedroom houses and 2 no. 3 bedroom houses. Adapted vehicular access point from Frensham Road.

**RESOLVED:** Rolvenden Parish Council objects to the proposal on grounds of density and damage to trees.

The proposal is not opposed in principle and it is hoped that a suitable redesign can be achieved.

We would firstly like to congratulate the applicant and their agents on the quality of the presentation itself and see it as an exemplary application. It is well presented and includes clear information in a concise set of documents.

We also support the proposal to use high quality and appropriate materials, and to include fireplaces and real chimneys.

It is the council's belief that the additional cost of such quality will be recovered due to high desirability.

It is also well received that there are 2-bedroom houses in the proposal, and this tends to justify an increase in the number of units from the four in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan includes this site, which we call Kingsgate Corner, and therefore will support appropriate development.

Because of this backing, we now detail the issues and suggest possible solutions.

#### Density and the effect on trees.

The main problem is that the 6 houses shown require such space that they interfere with the trees,

One of the houses is under the canopy of the most substantial oak tree. This is not wise as the house will be shadowed and constantly have leaves and debris falling on it. Some of the branches would have to be trimmed to allow this design, resulting in

an imbalanced tree, contrary to published guidance. Also, the foundations would be around 2.5 deep, due to proximity, and cut through both surface and deep roots to approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the circumference.

It is standard practice to protect roots to at least the circumference of the tree canopy, but this has not been considered.

Therefore, we suggest that this house must be removed from the plan, or made smaller, or repositioned.

Similarly, the smaller trees along Maytham Road will grow bigger and the houses are shown too near.

Also, regarding tree, the entrance shown runs over the tree root area. It is suggested that, if this access cannot be relocated, then the access way should be of flexible and permeable material to allow air and water through and allow the roots to move.

Rolvenden's tree warden, Mrs Kellett is in agreement with all these Council comments.

#### Drainage

The proposal states that rainwater will go to mains sewer. We would recommend the usual requirement of a limit of 5 litres / second to mains sewer, with the remainder being retained on site.

This is especially important as there is regular flooding of the stream at Mounts Lane and at Hexden Channel.

Ideally, the rainwater should be retained on site, with permeable paving and with roof water going to soakaway or a new pond or swale.

#### Vehicular access.

There is divided opinion on whether the access should be off Frensham Road, or off Maytham Road.

Whereas Frensham Road is safer in terms of traffic speed, the exit onto Maytham Road has poor visibility to the left when exiting, due to hedge obstruction. On the other hand, the traffic speed on Maytham Road can be well in excess of the intended 50mph, and that would be likely to continue, even if the speed limit was reduced.

A solution might be the permanent installation of a SID device, which has been proven to improve speeds at this location.

We would therefore recommend further consideration on the best entry point.

#### Bin Stores and rear access.

These are considered to be inserted as an afterthought, and overprominent. They might better be located behind the houses. It is also noted that there is no access from the rear to the central houses, and householders would have to carry garden equipment and materials through their houses. An alleyway would resolve this.

Rolvenden Parish Council hopes that a more appropriate solution can be presented, maintaining the 2-bedroom house and the other good design principles, but perhaps having to reduce to 5 units.

Other planning issues:

#### Halden Field

Acting upon comments from a resident, representatives of the parish council inspected the site from Halden Lane, along with the village tree warden.

The complaint was that the houses nearest to the significant oak tree were being built under the canopy, contrary to the agreed design and requirements to protect the tree. These houses are numbered 13 and 14, to the north-east of the site.

The inspection was on the evening of 20<sup>th</sup> August.

It was noted that one house is very close to the tree canopy, but perhaps not quite under it.

We recall that the tree protection zone was approximately 2m outside the canopy. However, it was also noticed that a layer of earth fill has been deposited between the house and the tree, perhaps 500mm thick, and covering the root area.

Before doing this earthworks, the tree protection fence has been moved back under the tree canopy, contrary to the planning constraints and also of earlier enforcement and instruction to protect the trees properly.

The fence remains under the canopy: not protecting it. Scaffolding is also constructed within and beneath the tree.

Our tree warden confirms that the layer of earth will damage the tree by stifling the surface roots which need air, water and nutrients.

It should therefore be removed, carefully (without damaging the surface roots) and with urgency. Some other remedial action may be required but we leave that to your tree specialist.

As we do not have access to the site we cannot give dimensions, but the problem is clearly visible.

We request that enforcement officers also check the remainder of the rear boundary where the same problem may apply, and where the parish council has always been concerned that the design forces a clash of houses and trees. The retention of the rear line of trees was fundamental to approval, in providing a screen from the adjacent countryside.

This is an important and urgent matter if the damage to trees is to be minimised, and we would welcome a prompt response and action.

Barrett Field – The Parish Council understand that the maintenance works previously reported as not being carried out as agreed have in fact been undertaken.

**132. Finance**

Payments authorised at the meeting

Cheque number	Payee	Amount
300053	Playsafety Ltd	£184.80
300054	J P Oakeley	£290.00
300055	Cornex Garage Ltd	£105.30
300056	P Setterfield	£577.04
300057	H M Customs & Excise	£84.00
300058	S Brooks	£150.00
300059	I Newman	£8.65
300060	T Johnstone	£54.00
300061	P Setterfield	£30.57
300062	G Tiltman	£846.37
300063	D Curtain	£7.96
300064	Rolvenden History Group	£212.00
300065	St Mary the Virgin Rolvenden	£41.60

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm.