

## **ITCHINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025 in the Jubilee Room of the Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr Alan Strudley – Chairman  
Cllr Ross Dye – Vice Chairman  
Cllr Lorraine Awcock  
Cllr Jenny Cass  
Cllr Elaine French  
Cllr Brian O'Connor  
Cllr Simon Ott  
Cllr Nick Yeo  
The Clerk Jan Critchley  
District Cllr Kasia Greenwood and County Cllr Amanda Jupp

**97 Apologies for Absence** – were received from Cllr Rob Fryatt, Cllr Sarah Peay and Cllr Tricia Youtan. Cllr Rebecca Jackson was absent.

**98 Declarations of Interest** - *Members are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial interest that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.* Cllr Elaine French declared a personal interest in relation to Sigma Homes Development as she lives near to the development site.

**99 Minutes of the last Meeting to be approved**

The Minutes of the last meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The Minutes were approved, accepted and signed by the Chairman.

**Action**

**100 To consider any matters arising from the last Meeting that are not on this Agenda**

All matters arising are on this agenda.

**101 Reports from County and District Councillors**

**Report from County Cllr Amanda Jupp had been circulated** – for the full report go to the Parish Council website. Key points from Amanda's report are as follows:

1. Devolution and Mayoral election plans for Sussex and Brighton move forward - Sussex council leaders have welcomed approval of their plans to collaborate in a single strategic authority for Sussex and Brighton with a directly elected mayor. The government has agreed to move forward with a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) and confirmed the first mayoral election will take place in May 2026.
2. The West Sussex Flood Risk Management Strategy - is being reviewed and updated and will set out the County Council's strategic approach for the next five years (2025 to 2030).
3. Could you be there for a child in care? – the WSCC need more local people to befriend children in care by becoming an Independent Visitor. These are volunteers who are matched with a child aged between 8 and 17 who are looked after by the County Council and will not be returning home.
4. EV Chargepoints - The West Sussex Chargepoints Network is set to continue to grow as an additional 30 on-street sites are confirmed following a countywide consultation. The latest chargepoints will be installed alongside additional underground wiring making it easier to expand the network further in the future. The network's continuing growth will support the county's move to electric vehicles ahead of the 2035 ban on new petrol and diesel car sales.
5. Highways - Amanda said that she was very disappointed that Emms Lane has still not be resurfaced between the level crossing and Parsons Brook. She will chase this up with Matt Davey at WSCC Highways and copy in the Clerk. With regard to repairs to footways in Smugglers Way, Parish Cllr Lorraine Awcock to send a summary to Amanda with what needs to be done and copy in the Clerk.

**Action**

**Action**

**Report from District Cllr Kasia Greenwood had been circulated** - for the full report go to the Parish Council website. Key points from Amanda's report are as follows:

1. Annual Canvass - Each year HDC is required to contact all households in the District to ensure the information that we hold on the Electoral Register is correct. Over the next week, HDC will be sending approximately 50,000 emails to residents in relation to the annual canvass. HDC will be sending forms and further emails in the coming months. Information is available on h website – [www.horsham.gov.uk/annual-canvass](http://www.horsham.gov.uk/annual-canvass). Forms will be sent out throughout August, September and October in addition to this, and will specify whether residents need to respond, or not. Any emails will be sent from the returning officer at Horsham District Council.

**Report from District Cllr Tricia Youtan had been circulated in her absence.**

1. Tricia said that she was delighted that at long last Itchingfield NP is progressing after such a hugely lengthy time and hopefully will be done and dusted speedily.

2. Enormous attention is being paid by the police towards Kingfisher Farm and although they continue with their illegal actions they will be forced to obey HDC's rules eventually!
3. I am on the cross-party Committee looking into S106 monies to ensure that they have been allocated across to those areas affected by the relevant development. There is also a concerted push towards ensuring that all those who want areas, buildings and other community assets owned by HDC can afford the upkeep of these (eg. car parks) before they take responsibility for these asset

## 102 Open Session for Members of the Public –

Graham Pooley addressed the Parish Council and asked whether the Parish Council would be receiving CIL or S106 money in relation to the Sumners Field Development. The Chairman said that as we don't have a made Neighbourhood Plan yet we would receive a reduced percentage of CIL Money. It hasn't been confirmed what amount that will be yet.

## 103 Sigma Homes Development

CLlr Ross Dye reported that 2 plots are now occupied with a third plot to be occupied shortly. However, the First two occupants are having issues with mains electric and have been supplied with generators. The Parish Council raised complaints regarding early working on the site and whilst Sigma acknowledged the complaint, there was no apology. The southern parcel of the site is now making good progress. It was agreed that lessons need to be learnt from this development.

## 104 Miller Developments

Chairman Alan Strudley gave the following update regarding correspondence that had been received from SLR Consulting Limited on behalf of Miller Homes which was reported at the meeting in July. The letter sets out proposals to develop land south of Smugglers Lane ahead of submission of a planning application. As part of the HDC Local Plan, HDC identified this land for development, however, this site was not in our Neighbourhood Plan. HDC Local Plan has now been rejected, however this doesn't mean that this land which has been bought by Miller Homes, is not up for development. The Parish Council dealt with the information pack in confidence initially and has had some discussions with SLR who are the Planning Consultants working with Miller Homes, with respect of getting some engagements with them ahead of a planning application being submitted. In parallel to that, the Parish Council has engaged a Planning Consultant of their own to be guided and be given support on how to be effective in responding to a planning application. The information pack has subsequently been sent out to local residents so it is now a public document. A Public Meeting is to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2025 with representatives from SLR and Miller Homes. Ahead of the meeting, it has been proposed to have a walk around the site for Parish Councillors. The Parish Council will facilitate the Public Meeting which will give residents an opportunity to hear and understand about the proposed development and give feedback. The meeting will give Miller Homes an understanding of what the local feeling is. After the Public Meeting the Parish Council will need to see what the follow up actions will be to meet the needs of the parish. The Clerk will publicise the Public meeting to include notices and leaflets. The Parish Council's Planning Consultants will be issuing an advice note to give us a steer on what matters we should be raising with the developers at this stage.

With regard to the forthcoming Neighbourhood Referendum on 4<sup>th</sup> September, the Chairman reminded the CLlrs that although they can encourage residents to vote they cannot encourage them to vote in any particular way.

## 105 Planning

### 1. New Applications

#### **DC/25/0934 - James Carthy and Kathleen O'Driscoll. Kingfisher Farm, West Chiltington Lane, Billingshurst - Change of use of land to provide 11no gypsy pitches with dayroom, associated parking, access and services (part retrospective).**

Itchingfield Parish Council reviewed this planning application. It was concluded unanimously that Planning Application DC/25/0934 fails to provide a basis for approvable development on multiple criteria and should be **recommended for refusal** for the following reasons:

#### Location and planning history

The proposed site of this application is a strip of land immediately to the west of the existing development at Kingfisher Farm that received LPA permission in November 2019 for 11 pitches (DC/19/1205).

However, multiple regulatory pre-occupation conditions on which that development was permitted, were not met within the due intervals proscribed and continue not to be met. Application DC/25/0934, which is noted as "part retrospective", thus proposes extending an already unlawful development.

#### Principal concerns:

General amenity -The Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People act of 1994 states that sites should not exceed 11 pitches and goes on to say that this is to prevent internal problems arising leading to bad feeling

and violence. Quite clearly the level of unlawful development within Kingfisher Farm has already exceeded that sensitivity threshold and the proposed development would double the jeopardy. Taken in conjunction with the existing and proposed development of neighbouring sites (Greenfield and Greenacre), the intensity of occupation – potentially exceeding 200 inhabitants<sup>1</sup> – increasingly risks overpowering the local, rural community of Barns Green (population 1,107<sup>2</sup>) and eroding the amenity of local established residents and landowners. Importantly, the overdevelopment of Kingfisher Farm also has the potential to undermine the satisfactory integration of the legitimate, stable and settled Romany gypsy community.

**Foul water drainage** - The proposed development in DC/25/0934, coupled with that already present on the Kingfisher Farm site, will exacerbate the problematic treated water outflows from the unlawful development within the DC/19/1205 footprint. These outflows, unable to permeate the Weald Clay Formation, and without a coherent drainage infrastructure, currently are left to disperse haphazardly through inadequate ditches resulting in a constant foul water flow across and down Valewood Lane. Kingfisher Farm and Greenfield Farm sites both have a history of periodically discharging foul smelling water into the neighbouring drainage ditches. The drainage scheme offered by Bright Plan Civils, Drg P004 revision P00 and PL006, Revision P00 for DC/25/0934, shows treated foul water aggregated from the individual sewage treatment plants (STP) on each of the 10 pitches, being discharged across West Chiltington Lane into an ordinary waterway in the neighbouring property Eastlands. Eastlands has large landscaped lakes fed from a spring source close to West Chiltington Lane and the discharge of foul water, treated or not, into this aquatic facility, could cause a serious health hazard in Eastlands and further downstream from the lakes overspill across New Road and into Peartree Farm which operates a Montessori pre-school play group. The only watercourses around the site are these ditches which discharge into West Chiltington Lane and Valewood Lane (see Drg No PL002 Rev P00 (Dec 2024) that supports application DC/25/0934). Foul water drainage from 6 of the existing unlawful pitches in Kingfisher Farm is shown in Drg No PL006 RevP00 (Apr 2025) as running via existing STPs through the proposed site into a SuDs pit in the south east corner of the site and thence into Valewood Lane. However, this facility – if it ever existed – has been infilled and currently a further unlawful pitch (additional to the 11 originally requested) has been erected on top of this SuDs pit site. The drainage system for both the original unlawful development (DC/19/1205) and that now proposed as a drainage system extension in DC/25/0934 are fundamentally flawed and is unlikely to function as drawn or described. There seems a likelihood that the outlets from all these STPs will now be diverted through the proposed site and discharged into the lakes in Eastlands on the west side of West Chiltington Lane. STPs for the remaining pitches are collected into a pipe which goes nowhere and just stops at the southern edge of the site (Drawing No PL006 Rev P00). Furthermore, during the Spring of 2025, many hundreds of tonnes of unidentified spoil and top soil were imported and distributed over the Application site. This invalidates the topographical survey by BP Civils and renders meaningless the survey information in Drg. No PL001 Rev P01 (Dec 2024). The Preliminary Levels and contours Drg PL005 Rev P00 of 25th April 2025 shows "Proposed" levels but without evidence of supporting numbers. The Drainage Strategy, which is such an important element in considering suitability of the site for the proposed development, is therefore implausible. It also raises significant concern about the ongoing foul water outflows from the original, unlawful development that continue to flow down Valewood Lane, even during the drought conditions that have been experienced in the first half of 2025.

**Water neutrality** - The water neutrality statement by Promethean Planning (April 2025) uses a "worst case scenario", coping with a 60 day drought, and accepting that the 10 pitches under DC/25/0934 will be more densely populated than their 3 bedroom specification would otherwise indicate. Based on a Kingfisher census, Promethean Planning has built their model based on 54 persons occupying the 10 pitches. Promethean estimate a water need for the site of 207,846 litres per annum. It is suggested that this will be met by water harvesting for all water requirements via filtration measures from the roofs of the stated structures on each of 10 pitches, through installation of a 10,000-litre potable rainwater harvesting tank and a 15,000-litre. potable rainwater harvesting tank at each pitch. However, even with this collection capacity, there will be a per diem deficit of nearly 1,200 litres that is proposed would be offset through private supplies, presumably protected through pre-occupancy conditions should this application go forward.

**Conclusion:**

Itchingfield Parish Council considers that development application DC/25/0934 represents

- (i) overdevelopment of an unlawful site with significant adverse consequence to the amenity of the Barns Green community;
- (ii) the risk of substantial malfunction in foul water drainage from the site, with adverse consequence to neighbouring properties and roadway infrastructure, and
- (iii) potential liability for failure in water neutrality.

The Council voted unanimously in support of a strong recommendation for refusal of DC/25/0934.

2. **Anonymous Planning Representations** - With regard to making planning representations anonymously, this

can be done, but the value of these comments is substantially diminished because they won't be included in the Planning Officer's review of that planning applications.

**106 Highways, Local Traffic and Roads**

1. SID's – Cllr Nick Yeo had circulated a one page summary on the final proposal for the SID's. The Chairman said that the project still falls within the agreed budget for 25-2026 so unless any objections we can go ahead with the project. Cllr Nick Yeo said that the next steps are that we need to hear back from George Fort at WSCC re the redefined site locations and which one can fit onto existing street furniture. Once this is resolved the public notices need to be re-posted.

2. Cllr Nick Yeo has asked WSCC whether there is a possibility of applying for a TRO to change and reduce the speed limit in Valewood Lane. He said that George Fort's guidance is that it is very unlikely that that would be successful. However, there are other measures they could take to identify the speed of traffic on certain roads and if a reduction is proved necessary then there are other means to slow down the flow of traffic. County Cllr Amanda Jupp suggested putting a gateway in Valewood Lane at the junction with West Chiltington Lane.

**107 Greener Barns Green**

Cllr Jenny Cass reported that the team have had a list of potential projects from HDC's Sustainability Officer. She and Cllr Elaine French will be arranging a meeting with her. Cllr Rob Fryatt has been in contact with Rupert Shipley about involving the local school with the bird boxes and Cllr Jenny has started looking at LED lighting on the heritage street lights that the Parish Council own. County Cllr Amanda Jupp said that she could help with this matter. Cllr Elaine French said that she is currently looking at the initiative of 'Nature Corridors' through Sussex to the coast. Cllr Jenny Cass is looking at costings of putting locks in certain places to secure bicycles at the Village Hall. The team to put one pager summaries together on potential projects.

**108 Correspondence – none.**

**109 Finance – All payments for approval since 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

1. There are twelve payments to be made paid

One cheque was paid out of meeting £500.68 to AJ Darby, Compact Contracting in respect of the repairs to the fence by the Orchard and Ancient Woodland.

The following cheques were then drawn at this meeting:

£23.00 to Barns Green Village Hall in respect of meeting in July 2025.

£28.50 to EE Home Broadband in respect of the Internet Service for July 2025.

£40.00 to Roy Tingley in respect of the strimming of the verge by the level crossing in May 2025.

£79.99 to Microsoft in respect of the Annual Subscription from August 2024.

£603.40 to Treetop Design and Print in respect of the printing of banners for the Referendum.

£378.00 to Moore in respect of the External Audit for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

£43.82 to Amazon in respect of Stationery.

£100.00 to Pete Cochran in respect of Litter Warden duties for July 2025.

£1,347.10 to the Clerk comprising of £1,224.56 salary for July and £122.54 expenses.

£1,419.58 to HMRC in respect of Employers and Employees Tax & NI for April, May and June 2025.

£2,300.00 to Itchingfield Parochial Church Council in respect of a grant towards maintaining the Churchyard.

The Chairman said that the final cheque to be raised for Eibe Play Limited for the surface, fencing and completed works is still outstanding as we are waiting for an independent inspection report of the playpark which the Parish Council has requested following an accident within the playpark. It was agreed that the Parish Council will only pay up to 50% of the final invoice until the matter is resolved.

**Action**

2. External Auditor Report and Certificate 2024-2025 - The Clerk read out the report as follows:

*"On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. There are no other matters affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority."*

3. Bank Reconciliation as at 03 July 2025 and Bank Statements were signed by the Clerk and Chairman.

**110 Any other Business**

1. It was requested that the Clerk ask HDC to put a wastebin at the top of the car park and obtain costings.

**Action**

**111 Date of Next Meeting – Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025. There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.33pm.**

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