

HALSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2013 in THE PAVILION, STATION ROAD, HALSTEAD AT 18.00

PRESENT: Cllr. Terry Brooker – Chairman of the Planning Committee
Cllr. Jeff Baldwin
Cllr. Karen Grosvenor
Cllr. David Taylor – Chairman of the Parish Council

IN ATTENDANCE: The Clerk, 4 parishioners, 1 member of the public
The meeting convened at 18.00

1 APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Bent who was on holiday and Cllr. Chris Ford who had a family commitment.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nil

3 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 After discussion, the Chairman, Cllr. Brooker proposed that the Council respond with **objection**; carried unanimously.

SE/13/02523/FUL

PADDOCK SOUTHWEST OF 7 HOTEL & DINER, LONDON ROAD, BADGERS MOUNT, HALSTEAD, KENT

Creation of a new access, gates and hard surface (retrospective)

The Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application.
Council still has concerns regarding the creation of this new access onto the busy A224 even though the sight lines have been cut back slightly.
Council also believes the hedge should be reinstated.

3.2 After lengthy discussion the Chairman, Cllr. Brooker proposed that Council respond with **Strong Objection**, carried unanimously

SE/13/02415/FUL

LAND SOUTH OF ORCHARD BARN, LONDON ROAD, HALSTEAD

Change of use of land for the erection of a new crematorium, associated parking, access road, gardens of remembrance and area for natural and traditional burials

The Parish Council STRONGLY OPPOSES this planning application.

Halstead Parish is defined as follows in the core strategy: *‘Halstead village has a limited range of basic services. It has defined Green Belt boundaries but has restricted scope for further development within the settlement confines. Halstead would only be suitable as a location for small scale development, limited to infilling and redevelopment, where the scale and nature of development is consistent with the local village character’.*

Halstead Parish Council believes that this proposed development does not meet this criteria and would not be in keeping with the village.

Green Belt.

Saved policies GB5 refers to major development sites in the Green Belt. The Parish Council believes this is major development and is not a site which has been identified as such. This would have an immense impact on the openness of the Green Belt particularly as there is no development on the land where it is intended. Much of Halstead Parish is in the Green Belt and in close proximity to the North Downs AONB. The Parish Council believes that this is not an acceptable development for this location.

Saved policy SG1A states *The local Planning Authority will not permit any development unless it is directly related to agricultural, forestry, open recreation or other uses appropriate to a rural area.....this land will be prejudiced by burials.*

Traffic matters.

Council disputes the traffic movement calculations provided in the applicant's documents. The figure quoted by the applicant is 360 vehicle movements per day linked with only five or six services in the crematorium or burial grounds. The time quoted for each service is 30 minutes; this totals 3 hours per day. Council is aware that other crematoria deal with a far greater work load. This seems to be an extremely cautious estimate for such an extensive operational development.

The development would bring a vast amount of traffic into the local villages and onto the already busy A224.

The applicant states that this will serve Sevenoaks District but also in the documents, states that the crematorium will be accessible for residents in Dartford, Tonbridge & Malling, London Boroughs and in Surrey. The impact on Halstead, Knockholt and Shoreham villages will be extensive when motorists with GPS use village lanes to reach the crematorium.

Public Highway A224

This road becomes the main route for motorists when the M25 has traffic disruptions as junction 4 is only minutes away from Polhill.

The **national speed limit** applies to this stretch of the road. If a crematorium is to be considered, the Parish Council believes that the speed limit on this road should be dramatically reduced to avoid potential accidents.

There are no footways in the near vicinity of the entrance to the proposed development and no crossing points along the road. There is a short section of footway from the Badgers Mount roundabout to the Toby carvery which is on the same side of the road; this would mean that people arriving on foot would have to cross a busy main road twice. The stretch of the A224 which goes down Polhill itself is monitored for subsidence.

When Fort Halstead is developed there will a further increase in traffic on the A224.

The introduction of landscaping to provide screening of the development will be problematic.

In Council's opinion the existing hedging on the boundary with the A224 will affect safe egress as departing visitors will have limited sightlines when entering a busy roadway.

Saved policies Transportation; Highways and footways, under development control it states: '*the Highway Authority seeks to ensure that new developments are located so as not to place an undue burden on the existing highway network and so that traffic is directed onto the most suitable routes*'.

It also states T9: '*The Local Planning Authority will not permit any development which involves construction of new accesses on to the defined primary or secondary route network.....*'

Public transport

There are no public transport links with this proposed development site. Under Saved policies

Transportation the local plan aim is to promote an integrated transport network which encourages the use of public transport and other environmentally suitable modes of transport and reduce the need to travel by private car.

Environmental matters

The fields are liable to flood particularly during the winter months. The soil is heavy clay which does not drain well.

This would mean that in the burial area the graves could be water-logged at certain time.

The site 2.5 hectares seems rather small to accommodate a crematorium, natural burial ground and a traditional burial site as well as the garden of remembrance and car park.

The car park seems small for a development such as this with only space for 100 cars.

The applicant quotes the Cremation Act 1902 section 5 which determines the distances the buildings have to be away from **residential properties and public highway: these must be further than 200 yards**. The occupiers of Lamberhurst Farm who own the land for the proposed development, have agreed to the crematorium being sited nearer that this to their property.

Council has been advised that another neighbour at Orchard Barn wishes to convert the upper storey of the barn from offices to a flat under the new Permitted Development Rights legislation

13/02821/PAC relates. The property also breaches the 200 yard limitation. At approximately 50 yards distant from the proposed crematorium, it would be totally unsuitable to have a crematorium sited so close to a dwelling.

There are numerous residential properties which fall within the 200 yard rule as does the **A224 the public highway**.

Pollution

Within the documents there was frequent reference to the 2004 Act which legislated for the action of cremation and treatment of mercury and emissions. No information is given about this at all so the position and possibility of contamination have not been fully addressed.

The Parish Council expresses concerns about the short chimney as a north-easterly wind would blow any emissions into Halstead village.

The low level stack means that downwind locations will be prone to greater bio-accumulation and it is noted that even with filtration/abatement the impact of low stack emissions should not be discarded.

The proposed crematorium will emit considerable greenhouse gases other than the water vapour that the applicant insists is the only emission.

Whilst the proposed crematorium will use emission abatement technology that technology removes some but not all of the particulate matter and it will produce toxic emissions including mercury and bio-accumulative dibenzo-dioxins which are classified as Group 1 carcinogens.

Further CommentsAir Quality

It is a recognised fact that Sevenoaks has high readings of air pollution and there are many Area Quality Monitoring Areas thorough out the District.

It is noted that junction 5 of the M25 Kent/Surrey border is an AQMA 6. This is located at the bottom of Polhill.

The additional numbers of vehicles going to and from the crematorium will only serve to compound this issue.

The proposed location is in an area close to the M25 and adjacent to the busy A224 and traffic already contributes to high levels of particulate matter emissions including heavy metals and bio-accumulative dioxins. Yards away and upwind there is a concrete crusher and mineral dust may be caught up in the high volume of gas emissions from the low level stack exacerbating the downwind impact. Even if the crematorium emissions are low and within statutory limits there is a cumulative impact when existing pollution is taken into account.

4**INFORMATION**

4.1

It was noted that the Rector of the Parish John Benson had sent a letter supporting the planning application for the crematorium. It was noted that two of the parishioners and one visitor had spoken against the planning application for the crematorium

4.2

Application decisions:**Granted**

SE/13/01689/HOUSE 2 JASMINE COTTAGES, KNOCKHOLT ROAD, TN14 7EU

The meeting closed at 19.15