

**Minutes of the Environment Committee on Monday 1 September 2014 at  
European School of Osteopathy, Boxley Village, commencing at 8.52 p.m.**

Councillors present: Mrs Wendy Hinder (Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mr Ivor Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr Bob Hinder, Mr D Hollands, Mr A Springate and Mrs M Waller together with the Clerk and for item MC/14/2395 Borough Councillor Derek Butler.

1. **Apologies and absences**

Cllr Hinchliffe (family commitment) and Cllr Spain (holiday).

2. **Declaration of Interests, dispensations, predetermination or Lobbying**

Cllrs Dengate and Wendy Hinder declared that they had been lobbied and were predetermined on item MC/14/2395 Proposed development at Gibraltar Farm.

Cllr Bob Hinder declared that he had been lobbied on MC/14/2395.

All councillors declared that they had been lobbied on MA/14/0387 Highmill and 14/501511 Street Farm.

3. **Planning Applications and Appeals for Consideration**

14/502252/OUT – Outline application for a development of 8 no. houses with access considered at this stage and all other matters reserved for future consideration at Land at Junction of New Cut Road and Bearsted Road, Weaving, Kent. **Noted** this had not yet been fully registered with MBC so was not yet released for consultation.

14/502268/TPO. TREES - Oak (T1) - Crown lift up to 5.5m above ground level. Thin canopy by 10% focusing on conflicting branches at 3 Celestine Close, Walderslade.

*Do not object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.*

14/502456/TPO – Works to trees protected by TPO no 1 of year 1974 involving trimming and cutting back branches to clear adjoining roadway by 8 metres at Land Adjacent The Street, Boxley.

*Do not object defer to the views of the Landscape Officer.*

MC/14/2395. Gibraltar Farm, Ham Lane, Hempstead, Gillingham. Outline application with some matters reserved (appearance, landscaping, layout, scale) for construction of up to 450 market and affordable dwellings with associated access, estate roads and residential open space.

After discussion members **agreed objection** (two abstentions Cllrs Dengate and Wendy Hinder) proposed Cllr Dengate seconded Cllr Brooks.

Reasons for refusal:

1. The proposed development will be on greenfield land that is a substantial tract of undeveloped land extending from the North Downs as a green wedge into the heart of the urban area.

The area:

- Provides a wider landscape setting for Capstone Farm Country Park.
- Contributes to the setting of the Kent Downs AONB to the south and the M2 motorway.
- Contributes significantly to informal open space needs of the communities which adjoin it.
- Prevents coalescence of Lordswood/ Princes Park/Walderslade and Hempstead.

It is considered that development would be contrary to BNE25 Development in the Countryside, BNE34 Areas of Local Landscape Importance.

2. The likely proximity to wildlife habitats, ancient woodland and woodlands, with the associated lighting and activity and likelihood of informal and harmful recreational use, of the proposed houses and gardens, will further adversely impact on flora and fauna habitats and the visual amenity to the wider area. The proposal is

therefore considered contrary to the provisions of paragraph 118 of the NPPF 2012 and BNE37: Wildlife Habitats.

- 3. It will have an unacceptable visual and sensory impact on the rural character of the area. The importance of which is identified in the Medway classification of it as an Area of Local Landscape Importance. It is considered that development will be contrary to section (ii) of BNE1: General Principles for build development.
- 4. It is an incongruous and out of character incursion of built development into undeveloped countryside which will result in the irretrievable loss of agricultural land.
- 5. Traffic introduced into the adjacent residential area will have an adverse affect on the existing infrastructure and will likely result in Gleamingwood Drive becoming a rat-run. Princes Avenue, Lordswood Lane and Walderslade Woods Road will be used to access the M2 and the parish council is of the opinion that the infrastructure will not cope. Access to Maidstone will be via Boxley Village using a C road that is already heavily used. Other roads in the area, Westfield Sole and Harp Farm Road, are already used as rat-runs and are little more than country lanes. It is considered that the development will be contrary to BNE2 Amenity Protection (iii) Activity levels & traffic generation.
- 6. In the absence of legal agreement being in place to secure developer contributions in connection with education, health, recreation and community services, the development will place additional demands on local services without provision first being in place to ensure that the additional demands placed on these services are being met. The proposal will therefore result in an intensified use of these facilities to the detriment of existing users. The proposed development is close to the administrative boundary with Kent and Maidstone and these areas will be adversely impacted upon so section 106 payments should also used outside of the Medway boundary.
- 7. The area is within the setting of the North Downs AONB and is also a water catchment area so development will potentially have an adverse impact on both.

Additional comment:

The site will be immediately adjacent to the Abestos First Waste Transfer Site.

Meeting closed at 9.22 pm.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman.....Date.....