

**MEETING OF HAWKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD WEDNESDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 7:30PM in Empshott Hut**

Minutes

Present: Cllr Caukill (Chair), Cllr Wallace, Cllr Humphrey, Cllr Buckle, Cllr Large, Cllr Sinclair

Also attending: K Horton (Clerk), District Cllr Louisson and 25 members of the public in attendance.

- 1) **Welcome** Cllr Caukill opened the meeting.
- 2) **Apologies for Absence.** Cllr Butcher and Cllr Stewart due to family commitments. Apologies accepted.
- 3) **Declarations of Interest.** No declarations made.
- 4) **Approval of Minutes** - Parish Council Meeting held on 18th September 2024. No comments made on the minutes. Cllr Wallace proposed the minutes be accepted, Cllr Large seconded and all Cllrs in agreement. Minutes duly signed.
- 5) **Public Participation** To allow attending electors of the parish to ask questions of or make representations to the Council.
 - Cllr Caukill clarified how the meeting would be conducted and clarified the time given to Public Participation
 - Resident raised concerns about the placement of a school in a rural area with historic buildings and small lanes. Queried whether there is a local requirement for such a provision and whether it is appropriate to increase numbers commuting into the National Park; local lanes will not be able to handle volume of traffic and access for emergency services will be restricted.
 - Resident referenced accidents on Stairs Hill that have historically pushed traffic on to local lanes and caused back log. Concerned that the application is an existential threat – a tiny village can not cope with 60 additional people arriving/exiting the property.
 - Resident is concerned the tranquility of the area will be impacted by the noise of children. The local lanes are more dangerous at dusk and the traffic will create a hazard for those walking on the lanes.
 - Resident noted that there is a need for SEN schools in Hampshire but the application cuts across the status of a National Park and may impact local ecology. The proposal suggests a traffic increase of more than 10% and this is against SDNP guidelines. The Grange has the infrastructure of a home and its electrics and plumbing are not suitable for a school.
 - Resident has spent years improving local nature and wildlife on their land and local verges. Local stream is currently “pristine” and an asset in Hampshire They are extremely worried about how sewage and pollution will impact these.
 - Resident highlighted that Mill Lane is a protected historic road but in the proposal will take the brunt of traffic. Any proposal increasing traffic use is meant to ensure that the rural road is enhanced and conserved. On historical roads, the vulnerable road users are meant to get priority and Mill Lane is used by locals and walkers providing a link between footpaths.
 - Resident wanted to make PC aware of a road count they had conducted. B3006 is extremely busy and resident does not believe Mill Lane can be safely accessed by the proposed users of Empshott Grange.
 - Resident is concerned that children will be involved in RTAs as the roads will be so busy and also queried whether children will use minibuses rather than private transport.

- Cllr Caukill Proposed suspending the Standing Orders (item 28) for 2 ½ minutes to allow for the applicant's representative to speak and for the Standing Orders to be automatically reinstated at the end of that period. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Large and all Cllrs voted in agreement.
- The Planning Agent for the applicant introduced themselves and explained that the application was not intended to cause upset and so they (and a number of other members of Empshott LLP) had attended the meeting to represent the group and answer any questions that may arise.

Standing orders reinstated. Cllr Caukill returned to the agenda

6) Planning.

a) To consider a response to the following planning application(s):

- i) **SDNP/24/03736/FUL**- Empshott Grange, Church Lane, Empshott, Liss, Hampshire, GU33 6HT
Proposal: Change of use from a dwellinghouse (Class C3) to an independent specialist day school with secondary provision (Class F1)(a), associated external play space, access, parking and ancillary works including landscaping.
- Cllr Humphrey. Thanked everyone for their input and thanked Empshott LLP for their time and providing information during site visits. Noted that Empshott Grange is standing empty and not viable to be let as private house. Also recognised that alternative uses have been considered eg hotel and wedding venue. Pointed out that The Grange had planning permission in 2016 for temporary offices that must have generated traffic.
 - Cllr Caukill added that other considered uses would generate traffic and likely at more inconvenient times such as weekends and evenings.
 - Cllr Wallace pointed out that if traffic is such an issue for the application in its current format and causes it to be rejected than this would be the same for any other application.
 - Cllr Large reiterated that anything that involves change of use for Empshott Grange is going to require increased through flow of traffic and related concerns need to be considered. Appreciates the application is in an emotive subject. Cllr Large noted that traffic studies have been made and EHDC and SDNP will consider this.
 - Cllr Wallace countered that the application does not fully address the traffic issues and believes these do need to be resolved.
 - Cllr Wallace shared a query about sewage capacity at the site. Paperwork advises that currently it can manage waste volume for 24 people and will be expanded in future. Even with only 10 children at the outset there will be close to 24 people on site and the system will already be at full capacity. It would be appropriate to have more information on how this will be addressed.
 - Cllr Buckle noted that there were a lot of unanswered questions about traffic movement and that has always felt like the hinge on which the application hangs. A site visit did not leave her necessarily questioning the use of the house as a school and she was confident from site visit that it could be adapted. Several iterations on what kind of pupils and how many will be able to travel on minibus have been shared and this information is key to confirm how many movements and what adaptations need to be made by Highways; these need to be linked – lane changes, parking and critically easing the traffic on Stairs Hill.
 - Cllr Humphrey agreed that it was unfortunate that Highways have not commented on the application yet and asked whether the PC should be proactive in sourcing their report. Cllr Caukill suggested this could be referenced in any comment HPC log.

- Cllr Sinclair stated that she believed SDNPA should call in the application and allow for it to be fully considered. Empshott Grange needs to have a viable use and the application is better than other iterations and The Grange's position in the National Park would allow children to appreciate the natural environment. Site visit clarified this point for her.
- Cllr Wallace agreed that the size of the issues being considered made it appropriate for SDNPA to be involved in decision making.
- Cllr Buckle asked whether it is EHDC Planning Committee who should look at the application for SDNPA. Cllr Caukill suggested it HPC could ask for both – if EHDC are going to consider the application then it should be the full Committee and the PC can also make a request to SDNP that they call the application in
- At the Chair's request, District Cllr Louisson introduced himself to attendees. Cllr Louisson advised that the comments suggested the application hinged on traffic and the determination on traffic issues rests with Hampshire CC who are responsible for Highways. Cllr Louisson confirmed that it would be appropriate to engage with County Councillor to have the traffic issues looked at in more detail.
- Cllr Caukill confirmed that Cllr Oppenheimer has been asked to engage with Hampshire Highways to ensure there is proper scrutiny.

Cllr Caukill added that the application seemed incompatible with a number of Local Plan policies and these are complex policies to consider:

- Policy 43 requires development proposals to show a "local need". Is the local need that in the parish or that of the wider county and beyond the National Park?
- Policy 25 – The applicant has not demonstrated that there is a proven need for this development that cannot be met elsewhere.
- Policy 19 – Transport requires developments giving rise "to a significant number of journeys" to be based at the centre of towns or villages with road and public transport infrastructure. There is practically no traffic on these lanes. His own survey recorded 5 vehicle movements plus a horserider and two farm vehicles on Mill Lane at the time of day when the applicant proposes 44 movements. This is a "significant" increase. Policy 19 also requires applicant to "demonstrate the continued safe and efficient operation of the.... local road network". There are significant concerns about the flow of traffic along the local roadways and at the junction of Mill Lane and B3006 which need to be addressed.

Cllr Caukill stated that SDNPA need to consider the application against their plan and decide what compromises need to be and can be made. For these reasons Cllr Caukill proposed that an objection be submitted to EHDC Planning and a request made to SDNP that they call in the application. Cllr Large confirmed he was comfortable with these comments

- Cllr Caukill proposed that the Parish Council should ask SDNPA to call the application in for them to full consider it. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Sinclair and all attending Cllrs voted in support
- Cllr Caukill proposed that if SDNPA do not call in the application that the Parish Council should request that EHDC Planning Committee consider the application in session. Cllr Wallace seconded the proposal and all attending Cllrs voted in agreement.
- Cllr Caukill proposed that Hawkley PC object to the application in its current format on grounds of traffic, conflicts with the Local Plan of SDNPA and sewage concerns and as such are also taking the two previously outlined steps.
- Amendment to proposal. Cllr Buckle proposed that while supportive of Empshott Grange being used as a SEN school, Hawkley PC object to the application in its current format on grounds of traffic , conflicts with Local Plan of SDNPA and sewage concerns and as such are taking the two previously

outlined steps. Cllr Humphrey seconded this proposal and the attending Cllrs voted 5 in favour and one Cllr abstaining.

7) Date of next meeting – Wednesday 20th November 2024 at 7:30pm, Hawkley Village Hall.

Meeting closed 8:31pm

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Signed, Councillor Caukill, Chair HPC

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Date