



HART DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Held on Tuesday 13th April 2021 - Via MS Teams

PRESENT

Name	Position	Parish/Town Council
Alastair Clark	Chairman	HDAPTC
BW - Adrian Collett		Blackwater & Hawley
BW - Trish Monks		Blackwater & Hawley
CC - Bruce Bulgin		Church Crookham
CV - David Jackson		Crookham Village
CV - Simon Ambler		Crookham Village
DO - Ann Fillis		Dogmersfield
EH - Marilyn Robson		Elvetham Heath
EV - Adrian McNeil		Eversley
FL - Bob Schofield		Fleet
GR - Beverley Bridgeman		Greywell
HDC - Mark Jaggard		Hart
HE - Susan Turner		Heckfield
HO - Jane Worlock		Hook
HO - Les Morrison		Hook
LS - Nicholas Trew		Long Sutton
LS - Roger Bright		Long Sutton
RO - Rachel Johnson		Rotherwick
RO - Susan Richardson		Rotherwick
WI - Kate Stewart		Winchfield
WI - Meyrick Williams		Winchfield
WI - Richard Milnes-James		Winchfield
YA - Bob McSorley		Yateley
YA - Tony Spencer		Yateley
Melanie Pride	Secretary	HDAPTC

21/519	Welcome and Introductions All were welcomed by the Chairman of HDAPTC, Alastair Clark. The first virtual meeting since the start of the pandemic.	
21/520	Apologies Apologies for absence were received from: Hart DC - Daryl Phillips Odiham PC Elvetham Heath - Jan Hyatt	
21/521	Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th January 2020	

	<p>The acceptance of the minutes was: proposed by Alastair Clark. Seconded by Adrian McNeil. All being in agreement; they were duly signed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
21/522	<p>Matters arising from Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.</p>	
21/523	<p>Hart District Council Report and update on Covid and Election timetable</p> <p>Email report received from Daryl Phillips gave an update on the local elections on 6th May 2021 and the count timetable.</p> <p>Mark Jaggard attended the meeting, representing Hart DC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr David Jackson submitted a summary of recent issues affecting the Parish of Crookham Village regarding the Hart Planning System dated 29 March 2021, prior to the meeting. Some specific points were discussed and Mark Jaggard responded as noted in 21/524. • An update was given regarding the issue of travellers who were moved on from Edenbrook following action by the council. Some of the travellers had moved to Ancells Farm and the discussions were ongoing regarding their eviction from the site. • Update: issues regarding discarded land around Winchfield Court - there is a temporary measure to stop continuing development. 	
21/524	<p>The Hart Planning System – A paper presented by Cllr David Jackson from Crookham Village Parish Council (refer to Appendix A)</p> <p>The paper identified issues experienced within Crookham Village Parish Council regarding Hart DC’s handling of planning applications with the aim to find out if other parish/town councils within Hart have experienced the same issues and alert them to the issues that could arise in the appeals process.</p> <p>Mark Jaggard from Hart DC acknowledged there are some things that still need to be improved, but also reflected on the good things that have already been achieved. It was stated that all applications were still dealt with during the COVID pandemic, but at the same time Covid has been a factor that has impacted on some of the things Hart DC have wanted to do.</p> <p>The points responded to are summarised below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proof reading and errors in officers report - Should not happen, but there will be human error at times. 2. Missing information in reports – Sufficient information had been provided. No site plan was required at application submission stage. 3. Background procedures in Hart – There is not a requirement to publish pre-application decisions. Hart DC may choose to keep large projects 	

	<p>confidential until application has been submitted to avoid mis-leading information being published.</p> <p>4. Public relation issues – it is standard process for public speakers to wait in the lobby until the start of their agenda item. It avoids inadvertent things happening. Invite instructions should be made clear about the protocol for when you are able to join the meeting.</p> <p>In summary, Mark Jaggard agreed with some of the matters and had a different view on others.</p> <p><u>Other Planning Issues highlighted:</u></p> <p>Eversley PC enforcement issues: retrospective applications and lack of enforcement effectiveness when permissions have been refused. It was agreed Eversley PC could send a list of these applications for Hart DC to check against. Communication could be improved from the Enforcement Team at Hart DC and could also act as a deterrent to others if enforcement actions were well publicised.</p> <p>Pre applications: It was noted Hart Officers have coped very well with applications during the challenge of the pandemic such as the solar farms application. A suggestion was made for parishes to always be notified of pre applications in advance of Hart DC giving comments. It was discussed that ideally the applicant should take ownership of liaising with the parish, residents and other key stake holders to obtain feedback on their submission.</p> <p>Solar farms: Nick Trew provided background information prior to the meeting (refer to Appendix B). In the meeting concerns were made that developers could be exploiting a weakness and identified the main issue in the solar farm application process and the potential negative visual impact on the landscape. Mark Jaggard from Hart DC confirmed there are two solar farm applications. One is live and one is being discussed and nothing further can be discussed about the live one at this time. It was proposed that Nick Trew draft a letter and share with other parish/town councils to be co-signatories to lobby our MP and encourage central government to create a framework to help local councils. Alastair Clark agreed to co-ordinate the sharing of the letter.</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): Mark Jaggard advised they are currently waiting for consultants to respond in next couple of months. Looking at a fresh infrastructure delivery plan and check if it is relevant. Timeline exists and working towards adopting CIL in Summer 2022.</p>	AC
21/525	<p>Shapley Heath Garden Village Development – A report on progress by Hart</p> <p>Mark Jaggard advised that because we were in the pre-election period (purdah), the Shapley Heath site cannot be debated. Most information about Shapley Heath is on the council website. Meyrick Williams raised the point that there is the potential that the survey responses could deflect from the problems noted in the letter from four parish councils to the Opportunity Board. Mark Jaggard agreed to pass on this message. Meyrick Williams acknowledged there are answers on the website but he does not necessarily agree with them.</p>	

21/526	<p>The proposed construction of a water main between Fleet and Odiham</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the South East Water pipe line project that will cause problems, identifying one of the main issues being the impact on traffic in the parishes affected by the route; and the other issue was to ensure communication from South East Water is in place for the relevant residents to be informed in a timely manner with realistic timescales of the work to be carried out and reinstatement of roads and other affected areas is complete prior to the completion of the work is signed off. Also, a point of contact was requested. Mark Jaggard said he would try and get an update and send out via the HDAPTC Chair.</p>	
21/527	<p>Parish Questions for Hart District Council</p> <p>There were no further questions and Mark Jaggard left the meeting at 20:45hrs.</p>	
21/528	<p>Approval of the Associations Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020</p> <p>Accounts proposed by Jane Worlock. Seconded by Tony Spencer. No objections. Have been audited. Application for annual administration funding has been sent to HALC.</p>	
21/529	<p>Parish Reports and items of interest</p> <p>Class Q planning application experience: David Jackson Crookham Village PC asked if any other parishes had experience regarding the tight rules for what is allowed on a Class Q planning application that permits the change of use of certain buildings from agriculture to residential use whether the site was in full agricultural use or not in 2013. Parishes should contact David Jackson directly or via the HDAPTC Chairman with any comments on this.</p> <p>Physical vs Hybrid Public meetings after 7th May 2021: Jane Worlock advised that in summary, legal counsel services across the country have approached the high court to make a declaration that the existing local government act pre covid wording does allow meetings to be held virtually or as hybrid meeting. Pre-existing legislation would in fact enable any combination of meeting. It is hoped this declaration will be made before 6th May. Simon Ambler said the case is going to judges on 21st April and a quick decision is expected and will not be contested by the Government.</p> <p>Virtual Meeting PC Training: Following discussions with Daryll Phillips at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Jane Worlock will communicate via email if training will be offered by Hart District Council who have experience and expertise in running these types of meetings.</p>	
20/530	<p>Dates and Venues for future meetings</p> <p>Tuesday 13th July 2021 - Annual General Meeting <u>NOTE.</u> Depending on the health of the country it is hoped that this meeting will be a physical meeting for which a venue is required. Please contact the Secretary if you are able to host the meeting.</p>	
	<p>The Chairman thanked members for attending and the meeting closed at 20:55hrs</p>	

The Hart Planning System

A summary of recent issues affecting the Parish of Crookham Village
By Cllr David Jackson, Chairman Crookham Village Planning Committee

This year a number of issues have arisen with Hart's handling of planning applications within the parish of Crookham Village. The question is: are there similar issues with Hart's handling of planning applications across the whole of Hart? If so, what is being done about it? More staff? Better supervision? This is a topic best pursued through HDAPTC.

Significant errors in officer's reports and decision notices have not been corrected before publication and, it seems, not corrected subsequently. This not only undermines confidence in the planning system, but leaves Hart and parishioners unnecessarily vulnerable in the event of a subsequent appeal. **Errors highlighted in red.**

There are also questions about procedures for admittance of registered speakers to meetings of the Hart Planning Committee and conduct of their complaints procedure.

20/02825/HOU – Officer's Report and Decision Notice

Fleet Neighbourhood Plan

• *Policy 10 - General Design Management policy - Development, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, will be supported, provided that it is in accordance, where relevant, with the detailed characteristics set out below relating to the six principal and subsidiary areas defined in the Hart Urban Characterisation Study 2010, **the North Fleet Conservation Area Management Plan** and all other statutory, local and Neighbourhood Plan policies and the general design principles of the NP.*

Crookham Village has its own neighbourhood plan, which covers an area which does not overlap with Fleet's. Since the quote is from the Fleet plan, there is more to this than a mistaken heading. This is at least the second report that has quoted Fleet NP for an application in our parish.

Church Crookham Parish Council have noted the lack of parking provision.

The parish input is attributed to Church Crookham PC, which is another erroneous attribution. This is not the first time that Hart staff have been seduced into associating CCPC with CVPC postal addresses containing Church Crookham.

*The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy INF3 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2032, Policy GEN1 of the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006, **Policy 5 of the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan** and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).*

And the reasons for refusal quote Policy 5 of the **Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan**, which is a further aberration. This latter 'justification' also appears in the refusal notice.

What relevance the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan has to an application in Crookham Village is not immediately obvious.

20/02827/AMCON - Proofreading

At the meeting of the Hart Planning Committee on 10 February, the officer had to ask for an amendment to his published report to insert 'not' where that word had been omitted, thus reversing the thrust of the original.

20/02453/FUL – Officer's Report

Conclusion

*The proposal is acceptable to the character of the property. It is considered that the design, scale and appearance of the proposal is acceptable and that **there would be material loss of amenity to the property or harm to the area or the street scene**. It is therefore considered **that the proposal would not comply** with the relevant saved policies, The Local Plan Policies and the Crookham Village Neighbourhood Plan.*

The application is therefore recommended for approval."

This looks like a careless cut and paste resulting in the conclusion pointing in a completely different direction to the recommendation.

21/00564/CON – Validation Checks

This application was validated without any location map and with location described in the application form as **Edenbrook Countryside** and the accompanying letter as **Edenbrook Country Park**. Edenbrook Countryside is not a recognised location, whilst Edenbrook Country Park is a completely-different site from that in which the subject

pillbox is located. The correct location is within a new SANG being prepared within this developer's site off Watery Lane.

21/00260/PREAPP – Officer's Report

This application is for a site inside the parish of Crookham Village and immediately adjacent to the boundary with Dogmersfield parish.

The planning officer's report states, inter alia, that "**The site is located outside of the Dogmersfield Settlement Policy Boundary**. As such, the countryside policies of the HLP32 and Saved Policies of the Hart Local Plan 1996-2006 would apply to the proposal."

Of course it is outside the Dogmersfield settlement boundary - it's not in that parish! But it is also out the settlement boundary of Crookham Village, which didn't get a mention.

21/00261/HOU – Missing from the Web

The CV response of 'no objection' was acknowledged by Hart on 18 February, but the response does not appear on the web nor does it get a mention in the officer's report dated 25 March.

21/00662/PRIOR – Missing from the Web

The applicant submitted two updated documents which had been acknowledged but had yet to appear on the web despite both he and I chasing Hart on the Friday before our planning meeting on 22 March. The applicant sent us copies for our meeting, but Hart had still not put the applicant's submissions on public view by 29 March. One of them we attached to our response because we needed to refer to its content.

Publication of PREAPP Decisions

Request to put up the decision for a pre-app resulted in this response from Hart:

"The decisions regarding pre- application notices are not shared with members of the public.

Therefore, this application along with any pre-application submitted and dealt with will not be available for viewing on Hart's Planning website."

This is counter to the guidance at the top of page 9 of [government advice](#) that "This record should be shared with all the participants in the pre-app process and (except in clearly justified exceptional cases) made public as soon as possible, if not before an application is made."

Managerial Oversight?

What checks are done for accuracy and adequacy of documentation before applications are validated? On occasions, all documents for an application have not been published on the planning web site until the omission has been flagged up from CVPC; what checks do Hart deploy to ensure that all relevant planning documents are published in a timely manner?

Procedures for speaking at Hart Planning Meetings

Pre-COVID, parish representatives registered to speak at Planning Meetings were free to join the meeting from the beginning as befits a meeting required to be open to the public under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

In COVID times, it seems that Hart has adopted a policy that registered speakers will only be admitted to online meetings at the start of their agenda item unless they separately also register as public attendees. Notwithstanding this policy, a recent invitation to attend as speaker asked for joining to be in the 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. On the night, admittance was not granted until 45 minutes later during which time there was no feedback on progress. Why did the invitation not warn of the impending delayed admittance?

Quite how an excluded speaker is meant to judge joining time with no idea of how the meeting is progressing is not disclosed.

But the more significant question is the justification for the policy in the first place. Why on earth should a registered speaker not be admitted from the start, if they should so desire, as in pre-COVID times – especially if that is what the invitation requested?

Hart Complaints Procedure

My complaint to Hart about exclusion from the Teams meeting and challenging the legality of that policy went to level 2 on 25 February. Response time is published as 10 working days. Response not yet received on 29 March despite hastener at 12 days.

What a complete shambles!

Cllr David Jackson
Chairman Crookham Village Planning Committee
29 March 2021

APPENDIX B – Information from Nick Trew, Long Sutton Parish Council

It is becoming obvious that developers are exploiting weaknesses in the current planning system as it relates to potential solar farm applications.

And as a result, any number of us could be challenged at any time with a significant solar farm application or multiple applications.

Applications greater than 50MW's are deemed as National Infrastructure projects with much greater planning criteria and are determined by the Secretary of State. Applications below 50MW fall to be considered by the local planning authority under the Town and Country Planning legislation. Cynically, a proliferation of applications of 49MW's each are currently occurring, in some cases, within sight of each other; and yet there are no planning rules to properly take account of any cumulative effects.

Each of these 49MW solar farms typically requires approx. 100 hectares of land - 260 acres - and their visual impact on the undulating rural landscape of this part of North East Hampshire can be very considerable.

We all breathed a sigh of relief when Harts Local Plan was finally approved in its 30 April 2020 virtual meeting. However, there appears to be no coherent Solar Plan within Hart at this time which leaves the door wide open to opportunistic and/or unscrupulous developers; many via remote SPV's, newly formed with no solar farm history, taking advantage of currently available competitive funding.

The National Planning Policy Framework stipulates that Local Plans should set out an "overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development" covering a number of areas, including energy. Yet Hart's Local Plan is remarkably "light" on this issue, relying instead on references to an Energy Opportunities Plan within the North Hampshire Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development Study. But this study is 10 years old, focuses heavily on wind power, biomass and district heating systems and is woefully out of date. Nor does it appear to give any indication of preferred sites for solar farm installations within the area.

So there isn't an adequate planning framework for solar development in Hart and this leaves Parishes exposed both individually and collectively having to deal with the uncontrollable visual impact these large applications threaten to bring to our rural landscapes.

Development would normally be Plan led but without there being an available solar strategy for North Hampshire generally and specifically for Hart, I would like to call upon PC's within HDAPTC's to collectively request of Hart DC that it please give consideration to suspending decisions (recognising though that this is unlikely to be realistic in practice) on any further solar farm planning applications until Hart DC have been able to put a coherent policy in place, in particular for the cumulative impact effects of such applications. Simultaneously, we will also need to impress upon central government via Ranil Jayawardena that they too need to take account of the cumulative effects of these multiple applications upon our rural landscapes.

This is certainly not a NIMBY issue - we are all merely custodians of our open spaced amenities, which are regularly used not just by local parishioners but by a variety of walkers and cyclists from all parts of our District; and so important to people's mental health and well-being.

Long Sutton's farmland is largely Agricultural land classification Grade 2 – such high quality food producing land should not be used for a solar farm site. (again something that would come out as part of a complete EIA).