

WARTLING PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

held on 14th December 2021 at The Reid Hall

58 Present

Cllrs K Stevens (Chairman), C Paterson and W Reid.

District Councillors P Doodes and R Cade. Twenty three members of the public were also present.

59 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E Ashley.

60 Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 22nd November 2021

The Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on the 22nd November 2021 were read, approved by all and signed by the Chairman.

61 Matter's Arising from the previous meeting.

There were no matters arising on this occasion.

62 Disclosures of Interests

No disclosures of interests were declared.

63 Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered;

WD/2021/2709/F and WD/2021/2710/LB- The Cottage, Boreham Lane, Boreham Street, Hailsham, BN27 4SL - Replacement of existing post and rail fence with close boarding fence. Replace oil tank and septic tank. Erection of raised decking area. Alterations to garage fenestration and internal alterations to main dwelling – Wartling Parish Council has no objections to this application as long as it complies with the Listed Building Requirements.

The meeting was then suspended to allow questions from the floor.

WD/2021/2689/F - The Lamb Inn, Wartling Hill, Wartling, BN27 1RY - Proposed Change of Use from public house with restaurant and guest accommodation at first floor level (Sui Generis) to hotel (C1).

Councillor Stevens read the following statement from the applicant;

'Firstly, we would like to thank Keith Stevens for kindly reading the following statement.

Secondly, let it be known, we did not seek this planning application. We are in this position because Wealden planning authority wanted us to regularise the Lamb Inn's current usage.

Thirdly, the Lamb Inn has not changed. It has dining areas, a commercial kitchen and bedrooms, plus most importantly, we have retained our Premises Licence.

The reasons for its current usage are; Commercial Viability, Public Amenity and Tourism.

Commercial Viability

The current commercial climate makes the Lamb Inn not viable. In 2019 the Lamb Inn lost £100,000 of gross revenue due to the diabolical mismanagement of roadworks between Pevensey roundabout and Windmill Hill. Then the pandemic struck and people retreated to their homes for both food and entertainment.

Public Amenity

This has not been lost, we remain a venue for wedding parties, friends and family gatherings. Even last year, during a break in Pandemic restrictions, we opened on 17th December 2020 for a well supported lunch & dinner.

Tourism

The Lamb Inn draws parties from all over the UK who happily spend money in Wealden and Rother Districts. Typically, eating out in local pubs and Hastings restaurants.

The current use of the Lamb Inn allows this historic pub to ride out these troubled times'

Residents asked the Parish Council to object to the application because;

- The pub is understood to be around 500 years old and has survived every other disease and war in that timeframe.
- They appreciate everything the owners have done to make it successful and would like it to be restored as a pub.
- Those living in the vicinity are regularly kept awake at night by all the noise and disruption. Because the building looks like and is clearly a pub, it attracts those who want a 'party house'. Whilst residents appreciate the owner vets people and engages with them, they say they are being kept awake until the early hours. Those renting the pub do turn down the noise when asked but others take over when they leave and the whole process starts again. There is no-one on site to regularise the behaviour and there needs to be because the pub is in the middle of a residential area.
- The Police and Councils seem to be unable do anything unless there is a breach of the Covid rules.
- The Lamb is the only community asset in the village. It is a much loved asset which is borne out by the fact that 60 residents signed a petition asking for it to be nominated as an Asset of Community Value. It should stay as a pub and the upstairs rooms could be rented out.
- Residents also questioned the statement saying the pub is not viable. It seemed to be viable before the pandemic and grants were available during that time to help keep it afloat. A £100000 loss in gross revenue doesn't necessarily mean it ran at a loss.
- It is our understanding a license application is granted on condition at least one licensee remains on site at all times. There is no-one on-site now and there will continue to not be anyone if this application is allowed to go ahead.

Residents also asked;

- What the C1 planning classification means – C1 is for a 'Hotel without taking any care and attention'.
- If planners look into the viability – it is not a material planning consideration but it is a consideration and planners are aware of all the tactics.
- Why the owner does not sell it to someone who wants to run it as a pub – they said they know of two people who would like to buy it.
- Does the fact it is an Asset of Community Value mean the application automatically has to go to Committee for a Decision – No. Being an Asset of Community Value just gives residents the right to bid if the property is put up for sale. It does not mean the applicant has to sell it to them though.
- Does the fact it is an Asset of Community Value mean it can be compulsory purchased – No.
- Does it make any difference if responses are input directly on the website or sent in via email – No. All responses by email will be entered on the website too.

- Can we mention the impact on other businesses – other businesses would need to respond individually.
- If the Parish Council supports the application does that response carry any weight – The Parish Council is merely a consultee but Wealden does have to listen. The District Council will also take into account residents' responses as long as each one has valid planning reasons.
- If Planning Officers recommend Approval and the application is turned down at Committee, but the applicant then wins on Appeal who pays the costs - the District Council and therefore the tax payer pays all the costs.

The meeting was then re-opened.

Wartling Parish Council objects to this application for the reasons stated above and asks for it to be called into Planning Committee South for a Decision should the Officers recommend it for Approval.

64 Questions from Members

There were no further questions and the meeting closed at 7.50pm