

Stannington Parish Council

David Hall, MA, B.Eng (Hons), MCIPR - Clerk to The Council

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Minutes of Meeting held

3 August July 2023

Stannington Village Hall

6.00pm

Attendance:

S Dickinson
M Scott
R Tolson
R Nixon
K Carins
H Brown
R Philipson

D Hall – Clerk

A number of residents of Whitehouse Centre and The Dovecote

Architects representing the developer for Whitehouse Centre

Purpose of the meeting

To receive comments from the public and representatives of the following development and to consider the council's response to the application:

23/01554/FUL | Siting of 15 no. holiday lodges and 33 no. holiday chalets with reception; change of use from boiler room to 5-bedroom managers dwelling (C3 use); development of entrance kiosk and cafe/picnic barn link | Whitehouse Farm Whitehouse Farm Centre Stannington Northumberland NE61 6AW

12. To receive apologies for absence

, Cllr Darwin – Northumberland County Council

13. To receive any declarations of interest

None

14. Public session

The Clerk outlined the planning process and the role of the Parish Council as one of many statutory consultees. Residents were advised that all residents and occupiers of properties should comment on the local planning portal, for and against the application. Cllr Carins outlined the Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Members of the public expressed their concerns on a number of fronts:

- Scale of development and likelihood of further development

- Light pollution
- Access via an unsuitable and dangerous private road with no passing places and potential to block emergency access to properties
- That a new access previously granted planning had not been implemented
- The access road is a public footpath and so is a safety concern re conflict between pedestrians and vehicles
- Access via Glorum and The Dovecote is unsatisfactory and overloaded
- No local consultation by the applicant
- The previous level of unlawful developments and enforcement cases on the site
- Noise levels and visual impact/lack of landscaping mitigation
- Loss of amenity for residents

Architects for the developer advised on a number of fronts but most notably that in their view:

- This is the maximum development possible because of the ecological constraints of the site
- No alternative access could be implemented because of the impact on ecology
- Lighting had been designed in line with least polluting standards
- Drainage had been designed to appropriate standards
- Roads were suitable in line with the applicants transport plan

14. Consideration of the application by Council

Councillors had listened carefully to the views of the public and helpful points of clarification given by the architects for the development.

Whilst the Council supports tourism development and that of the rural economy, Councillors expressed their concern on a number of fronts:

- Size and scale of the development
- Impact on wildlife and habitat
- Light pollution
- Lack of consultation
- Impact on the local highway network which is already vastly overloaded at Glorum and Stannington Village estimated to be 7000 movements a week on top of existing traffic
- Lack of clear plan for sewerage and objections from the Environment Agency
- Access to the site on narrow bends
- Lack of a dedicated access road
- Footpath links
- Perceived use of public footpath which is unusable by non-able bodied and pushchairs and wheelchairs

Resolved that: Stannington Parish Council objects to this planning application on the following grounds:

Comment Reasons:

There has been no consultation with the residents of Whitehouse Farm and the surrounding area nor with Stannington Parish Council.

NPPF states that:

39. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

40. Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.

Early consultation was requested by Stannington Parish Council but was denied.

Policy 5 of Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) states that it will support new and expanding Rural Businesses to create and retain a sustainable local economy in the Plan area, small-scale business proposals will be supported where they enable the creation of new business or the opportunity to expand existing business, subject to respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety. Particular support will be given to proposals within the existing business centres of Horton Grange, The Milkhope Centre, Whitehouse Farm and New Kennels. The provision of new businesses which have a community benefit, such as a restaurant, public house, village shop, pharmacy or café will be supported within the built up area of the defined settlements. Farm diversification proposals will be supported where they respect local character. The creation or expansion of any rural business which could adversely affect the Green Belt, and the purpose for its designation, by virtue of scale, impact, location or use, will need to be justified either as being not inappropriate development or through demonstration of very special circumstances that could justify support for the proposals.

Stannington Parish Council believes this application will harm residential amenity and highway safety.

Objective 4: Transport 'Reduce the detrimental effect that road traffic has on residents and businesses in the Plan area, whilst seeking improvements to local highway networks, including pedestrian and cycle routes, and public transport provision'.

Policy 7: Safety improvements on the road network :Proposals for speed reduction measures and safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the road network will be supported.

This application increases the danger to both residents on The Drive, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and all road users. The slight widening of the entrance to the Drive does not mitigate against the very real danger to all road users entering Whitehouse Farm. Emergency vehicles cannot pass or get through as the road narrows into the proposed site. The quality of life for the existing residents has been severely compromised. A resident was recently knocked over by a visitor to the Whitehouse Centre. Visitors are often seen walking through Glororum, a narrow, and in places, single track farm road with no pavements and only a few passing places, this is not acceptable. Many visitors in cars and coaches do not know the area and the highway rules along this section resulting in accidents and confusion. Blind bends are also an issue, Dovecote has no passing places at all. The school bus also negotiates the roads in this area.

Policy 8: Safe cycling and walking routes The development of safe cycling and walking routes will be supported across the Plan area. Support will be given to:

- a) Routes which link the settlements in the Parish;
- b) Routes which link existing cycling and walking routes; and

There is no provision for a new road, cycle path or pavement to mitigate against the highway issues surrounding this application.

Policy 9 Provision of Highway Safety Infrastructure Direct provision, or financial contributions sufficient to secure the provision of additional infrastructure associated with highway safety improvements and the development or expansion of safe cycling and walking routes will be sought using planning obligations or planning conditions as appropriate where it can be demonstrated that securing such provision can be demonstrated as being necessary, reasonable and directly related to the development for which permission is being granted and where their provision will not threaten the viability of the development.

The provision of a new road, screening and a noise curfew (particularly during the Festive season and evening events) is vital for the residents on the Drive. The Bus service has been reduced due to lack of use and car sharing does not work so cannot be used as a solution in this application.

Policy 10: Design and Character Development proposals will be expected, where relevant, to demonstrate how they will:

- a) respect the context of the site and its surroundings, rural character, historic setting and context; and
- b) demonstrate high quality design and where appropriate, innovative design; and
- c) where appropriate, incorporate sustainable design measures including SuDS; and
- d) integrate access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport into the development

Drainage/sewage measures have not been suitably demonstrated and are currently under review. Contaminated water entering the local water course(Catraw Burn) is not acceptable and harmful to the ecology and wildlife in the area.

Stannington Parish Council believes that this proposed development does not respect NPPF planning guidelines:

NPPF states:

85. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

111. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

112. Within this context, applications for development should:

a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;

c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;

d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and

e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Policy TRA 2 The effects of development on the transport network

1. All developments affecting the transport network will be required to:

a. Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;

b. Include appropriate measures to avoid, mitigate and manage any significant impacts on highway capacity, congestion or on highway safety including any contribution to cumulative impacts;

c. Minimise conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management where necessary;

d. Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists and equestrian users where necessary;

e. Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection where necessary; and

f. Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality.

In conclusion:

Stannington Parish Council will not support this development in its current form.

If this application is approved we would ask for the following conditions to be applied :

1. A new access road via Betts Lane

2. Road widening within the site to accommodate emergency vehicles and to negate visitor and service vehicle conflict.

3. Screening on The Drive

4. Noise curfew during events. Noise is heard by residents at Dovecote/ Glorum during Whitehouse open hours so is intrusive. A curfew will mitigate against this issue.

5. Permitted Development Rights to be removed

6. Consultation/liason meetings with residents, the applicant and Stannington Parish Council to minimise any issues for all parties.

7. A robust sewerage/drainage system

8. Calming measures at Glorum put in place due to traffic from St Mary Park development as current measures do not work and further development around St Mary and Whitehouse Centre will further impact upon the residents at Glorum.

9. Better signage and directions to avoid the cumulative impact on the existing rural road network. The tourist signage directs all Whitehouse traffic through Glorum which causes conflict for all road users, particularly pedestrians.

10. Light pollution is a concern and needs to be addressed either by using softer lighting or a rigid timetable to alleviate this issue. Low level lighting will be welcome.

11. There have been several changes made within the Whitehouse Centre that have been commissioned without planning permissions in place, some have required a retrospective planning application to be submitted. Stannington Parish Council request a more robust enforcement plan to be put in place.

12. Robust conditions put in place to avoid disturbing red squirrels in the area plus the introduction of feeders.

13. Strict ruling in place on the use of barbeques near to the wooded areas.

Signed: _____ Chairman

Dated: _____