

Bethersden Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mr Colin Tearle Sunny Lawns Densole Lane Densole CT18 7BL
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I hereby give you notice that a Parish Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 1900hrs in Bethersden Village Hall.

All members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend for the purpose of considering and resolving the business to be transacted at the meeting as set out under.

Dated this 6th day of December 2024.

**C D Tearle
Parish Clerk**

AGENDA

Receive a statement from Chris Dickenson of Chorus Homes about the Bears Lane Phase 2 development and reports from County and Borough Councillors. Public questions and comments on agenda and non-agenda items (this section will be limited to 15 minutes or otherwise at the discretion of the Chairman).

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

A Councillor who declares a DPI in relation to any item on the agenda will need to leave the meeting for the whole of the item and not be able to speak or take part, unless a relevant dispensation has been granted. A Councillor who declares an OSI will be able to speak on the item, but will be required to leave the meeting for the vote.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the 13th November 2024

4. Chairman`s Report

5. Parish Clerk`s Report

6. Planning Applications

a) To consider the following applications

PA/2024/1442-Land adjacent to the Bull Inn, Bethersden

Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except access) for the erection of up to 32 dwellings including access from Bull Lane, parking, landscaping, open space and associated infrastructure and earthworks.

A SUGGESTED RESPONSE

The amended description of development has been considered by the Parish Council and it is our view that the **reduction in the scale of the development by a mere 8 dwellings**

makes no material difference to the unacceptable impact of the development and hence makes no difference to the fundamental nature of our objections – which are repeated here in full for clarity and wish to continue to raise the STRONGEST POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS on the following grounds:-

In view of the comparatively isolated location of the site in both visual and functional terms and in the countryside, the proposed development would be detrimental to the sustainable objectives included in the Development Plan and NPPF.

1. The proposed development materially harms and undermines the conservation and/or the enhancement of the surrounding rural area. This is in direct contravention of one of ABC's key objectives and highly valued "Vision for the Borough" (2030).
2. This development would be the first, very substantial incursion into this area of open countryside on the south side of Bull Lane and thereby represents an unacceptable and inappropriate sprawl of built development on the outer edges of the village settlement. Further, it comprises an incongruous form of built development and domestication of the countryside to the detriment of the locality.
3. The proposed scheme would result in a harsh, heavily urbanised/dense form of development, totally out of character with the predominant nature of isolated dwellings, set in heavily landscaped surroundings, on the outer edges of Bethersden.
4. Although the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan (2015-2030) was not adopted, it's much praised local consultation and public engagement was widely supported by the local community. *This was recognised by the Senior Planner at the time; Simon Cole.*

It identified a number of key objectives which the proposed development fails completely to recognise. These include "*small scale housing to retain the village character*", "*developing "smaller sites"*" and supporting housing "*....on suitable sites at appropriate lower densities...to provide sufficient public open space, so that the built development retains its rural character....*"

5. The scale and form of the development will inflict an intrusive and harmful impact, out of keeping with the surrounding area, especially having regard to the markedly rising nature of the land.
6. The location means that future residents of the development will not have easy access to basic day-to-day local services within the village.
7. The proposed development's location, will generate significantly more daily traffic from its access close (circa 100m) to the busy and hazardous junction of Bull Lane and the A28. This partially blind junction is on the brow of a hill with a bend. In this specific regard, the Council is urged to take into account the numerous recorded traffic accident events at, or within approx. 90m of, this dangerous junction, including several at the junction itself.

NEW NOTE – on the issue of increased traffic levels, we have noted the response to the planning application from KCC Highways and especially comments that say, inter alia:-

"This level of additional vehicle activity is not so great as to cause concern regarding its impact on the wider highway network....."

"The application site is within walking distance of bus stops and the facilities located within the village...."

We would comment that, by making such comments the County Council is seriously open to accusations of a dereliction of duty and irresponsibility in terms of traffic safety.

If the increased traffic levels associated with 32 more dwellings turning out onto the A28 from the partially blind junction with Bull Lane “*is not so great as to cause concern*”, when will the highway authority ever recognise and protect motorists from potential road traffic accidents, especially given the accident record at or near this junction?

Also, ALL sites are ultimately “*within walking distance*” of somewhere and hence the second extract above from KCC is missing the point. Surely the correct key assessment to actually consider is if this site is within convenient walking distances, such that the scheme will result in less reliance on private vehicles for all journeys than would otherwise be expected! And we contend that this is fundamentally NOT the case with this development.

8. Finally, regardless of the methodology used, the applicant’s contention that an increase of between 189-206 new dwellings, is considered both massively disproportionate and entirely inappropriate (neither could such numbers be respectfully assimilated), having regard to the confines, character and appearance of the village settlement and community of Bethersden.

We also wish it to be noted that we will continue to ask for this application to be called in for decision by the ABC Planning Committee (if officers do not intend to refuse the application under delegated powers).

PA/2024/1897-Wissenden Grange, Wissenden Lane, Bethersden, TN26 3EL

Listed Building Consent for installation of two wood burning stoves together with stove pipes, register plates and other fittings in existing ground floor fireplaces; installation of flue liners within the existing chimney to serve these stoves; installation of new chimney pot and cowl to serve new stove; replacement of two existing chimney pots and cowls; flaunching the chimney stacks: installation of room ventilation

A SUGGESTED RESPONSE

Bethersden Parish Council has no comments or concerns on the above listed building application, having regard to the very minor nature of the works involved.

- 7. Hoads Wood Progress Update**
- 8. Bethersden Village Hall**
- 9. Community Warden**
- 10. VE Day Celebrations**

11. Finance

- a. To resolve to approve the schedule of payments and bank balances

30th November 2024	£
Lloyds Bank – Treasurers Account	61,609.02
Lloyds Bank – George Field Account	8999.08
Co-op Bank	21,128.01
Income	
Bank Interest	8.13
Bethersden Tennis Club (Tokens)	505.00
Expenditure	
C Tearle (Salary -£1,234.04 & Expenditure -£166.65)	1,402.69
Countrywide Grounds Maint Ltd	639.60
Chris Buckman	135.00
Bethersden Village Hall (BVH-2024-201 & 210)	59.50
A Boyd (Rail Travel Expenses) Kent Highways Forum	48.60
InkXpress (printing ink)	259.20
SSE Energy Solutions (Tennis Club)	154.47
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal (A Boyd)	25.00
Forvis Mazars (External Auditor)	378.00
VE Day Celebrations (T Laws)	200.00

- b. Please note the amount of money paid to Bethersden Village Hall in the current financial year is £576.00

12. Precept 2025/26

To determine the Council Budget and Precept for 2025/26

13. Date of the Next Meeting

This will be on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 1900hrs in Bethersden Village Hall.

14. Exclusion of the Public

To resolve to exclude the public and the press from the meeting for the following item of business by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

15. Playground Working Party Report

16. Attenuation Tank (Cllr A Boyd)