

# FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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## Planning Committee Details of Delegated Comments September 2022

Decisions can be delegated to the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman) plus two other members if agreed by the Chairman.

The following decisions were made under delegated authority by Keith Brandon (Chairman), Tony Hall and Maria Naylor. (The Chairman has the casting vote in any tie).

- **WD/2022/1908/F – Creation of a single new dwelling with a new highways access and parking area to the frontage.  
Land and buildings on the east side of Gun Road, Blackboys TN22 5JY.  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=158791>**

For clarity, the Parish Council resolve to reiterate the comments from the previously withdrawn application. Many of the supporting documents have been used from WD/2021/2977/F in this application, therefore all of the points previously raised are still pertinent.

In addition to the comments below, there is a questioning regarding the fact that ESCC Highways are not passing comment on this application. This has not been seen on any other application before the council. ESCC are the statutory authority to pass comment on highways matters as they are the experts in this field. At many WDC planning meetings, officers state that they cannot comment on highways matters, nor go against their recommendations as they are not the experts. Using guidance as ESCC have suggested would lead to a subjective decision by the non-authority. Are WDC officers qualified to make highways decisions based on guidance?

Chairman's Statement: Following the approval of WD/2019/0945/F, despite compelling support from the Parish Council and local residents in objecting to this application, we are back here again, next door. We stated that as soon as this application was approved, another would come along for the adjoining site. We follow the democratic process of commenting on applications, but I am at a loss as to why with this one. I will set out the reasons for why I will object, which will be the similar to the above-named application.

However, in the officer's response to our comments: *"While the proposal involves encroaching into an open field, it is within a locality which has recently been assessed as being sustainable for residential development by the Planning Inspectorate. In this respect, without up-to-date policies and a lack of 5 year Housing Land Supply, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged, as per the National Planning Policy Framework"*

This application will go one of two ways:

1. It will be approved, despite the Parish Council and multiple residents objecting to it. Evidence for support will be based on WD/2019/0945/F and that the Inspectorate would dismiss it, based on other applications.
2. It will be 'refused' by WDC, and later go to appeal. It will then be dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate for the same reasons as WD/2019/0945/F and then built. At some point in the future, there will be an application to build on the entire field behind the aforementioned applications.

Either way, it will be built.

At what point will WDC fight back? WDC is our defence at developers destroying our villages and hamlets. This location is not in a core area, it is NOT sustainable, and should be refused. The two semi-detached houses built under WD/2019/0945/F (next door) have created an undoable blot on the countryside. This just cannot carry on, and developers – large and small are laughing at us. Gun Road is a single-track lane (in part, and the point of this site) in open countryside with sporadic houses along it. It is now becoming an urban street scene.

As previously mentioned, the Parish Council will pass comment, as it is our duty to represent the residents and offer a balanced, justified local voice about our community, but time and time again, it just seems fruitless. There is little weight in the local plan that is being used, there is no 5-year land supply, and you won't argue with the Planning Inspectorate. I have no words of reassurance for our residents anymore. From a planning perspective, our parish is being unjustifiably concreted over. I appreciate that I have said this, prior to determination, but the evidence is there to support this method of planning approval. These are my comments as Chairman of the planning committee, and not that of the Parish Council, they will follow below:

The Parish Council strongly objects. The proposal is outside of the Blackboys Core area (as was) and adjacent to the High Weald AONB. To extend housing further along Gun Road is not only changing the street scene of a very rural countryside landscape, but also blocking undulating views across the wider valley and landscape which is enjoyed by many properties locally, as well as from the road and footpaths.

This will be yet another new access in close proximity to the Village Hall. Pulling out of the access for the Village Hall which is almost opposite the application site has to be done extremely carefully, as visibility is impaired due to the narrow and bendy layout of the road and hedging. This will be exacerbated with new entrance that was built for WD/2019/0945/F, which is a few metres to the right of the hall access. There is no footpath on Gun Road and children with parents have to use the road to access the pre-school, which is at the village hall, almost directly opposite the application site. By increasing housing on this road, it will also increase the risk to pedestrians who have to step onto the mud and grass verges to get out of the way of vehicles.

The Ecological report is typical of a planning application in our parish. Despite being rural countryside, there is little concern for any flora or fauna. A couple of token gesture bat boxes provide little mitigation for the destruction that this type of application does to our countryside.

If the application is approved, it will set a precedent for further applications. The Parish has seen a large increase in properties being built over the past couple of years, some approved because they are sustainable, and some refused even though they are unsustainable. There is no consistency in how applications are evaluated, as justifications for or against are often reversed for different applications. There is no justification to build a detached 3-bedroom property to fill a gap between houses on Gun Road. It is such a tight gap, that the southern side of the proposed property is a metre or two from the required farm vehicle access. This will be seen from miles around, especially if looking from the north across the valley (such as Chapel Lane).

There appears to be a proposal for a 5-bar gate on the perimeter boundary. We have seen many applications refused by WDC (objected to by ESCC Highways) because the gates should be set back allowing a vehicle to exit the main road before stopping to open the gate. At this location (if approved), the vehicle will be stopping on a single-track road, on a hill, with blind bends, whilst somebody opens the gate to allow access. It will be an accident waiting to happen.

The proposal is not in keeping with open countryside rural dwellings. It creates a high street environment with tightly compacted houses on what was countryside lane with sporadic houses. It is preposterous to have two accesses opposite each other on a single-track road. The village hall access is always busy, especially when the preschool was in session. It is also the access for the allotments and car park.

It has two full storeys by design and using the words 'chalet bungalow' is just semantics. The proposed property is on the side of a valley and will tower above the adjacent existing 'Retreat', which sits lower on the valley. It was a concern with the build of the opposite side adjacent cottages that

were built and overlooking on the property 'The Retreat' when it was proposed, and the applicant made changes to their application to help with privacy. This site is even closer and is bridging the gap in between, and will be of a significant impact to a property that should be able to enjoy rural landscapes without fear of wall-to-wall building, resulting in lack of privacy and an urban backdrop in the heart of the countryside.

This application is pure greed of developing 'a gap'. There is no justification for it being approved, and there is no requirement for further detached properties in the village. Recently WDC planning made a comment on the refusal of WD-2021-1461-F "*The proposal would consolidate the sparse and sporadic pattern of development in the area and undermine the rural and relatively verdant character of this site within the Low Weald Landscape Character Area*". This application is no different and should be refused.

- **WD/2022/1931/F – Demolition of existing storage buildings and erection of single storey storage building for use by rural business.**  
**Oak Lodge, Bushbury Lane, Blackboys TN22 5JE**  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=158820>

The Parish Council strongly objects. In principle, the Parish Council supports the development and growth of businesses within the Parish. However, this application is essentially demolishing a garage and building an industrial unit in place. It is an isolated area, outside of any development boundary.

There is little support as to the need with the exception of some words stating that they have new contracts. Framfield Parish has an unusually high quantity of industrial locations. These are in established areas. The applicant has made an unusual emphasis on the neighbouring business, known as 'Paynes' highlighting that they have large buildings, and also proposed new buildings. There is constant reference to that location 'setting a precedent'. Paynes is already a large established business and was unfortunate to have necessity to rebuild due to a recent fire destroying property. Cognisance was made in terms of the form and size of their application, but putting that aside, it is in fact that this application that would be setting the precedent if approved, not the adjacent business.

The proposal is of a significant size, essentially in a back garden. It has no standard laid road to the proposed building, which appears to be made up of grass and hard core. It can only be assumed that with the size of the proposal and reference to new contracts, that large vehicles including lorries will need to access this site. The access and access track are unsuitable for commercial use.

There is no reference to how emergency services would access the location, with the exception of assuming they would traverse the grass and hardcore track.

There is no reference to services such as drainage, water supply, electricity, business/commercial/hazardous waste etc.

There are no mitigations or reference to protecting the night sky in a very rural location. Are vehicles (potentially lorries) expected to traverse the grass and hardcore track during darkness. There appear to be roof lights in the building which will not protect the night sky.

It is uncertain of the exact dimensions as there appears to be differing scales shown at the top of the general plan. Either way, this proposal if built would be very prominent from the normal street scene. The planning statement states that this building will have a ridge height of 5.66m and will be 12m x 12m.

There is appears to be little to no mitigations to the effect on the ecological impact of this proposal. Within the 'preliminary' Ecological appraisal 2.3, it states that there was no access to ponds P2-P5 as "access was not arranged". These are the very ponds that affect the site and will have an impact on the GCN Red Zone – but were not investigated. There are 11 ponds within 500m of the site and only

two were tested or inspected. The results have therefore made assumptions based on ponds not visited.

It also states that an internal inspection of B1 and B2 was “not possible as both buildings were locked on arrival”. These are the very buildings that will be removed under this proposal. It is ludicrous to not survey, investigate, report, inspect or have cognisance of the area which will be impacted. The report does go on to say that an internal inspection was carried out for the bat survey, so presumably it was done at a different time.

Framfield Parish Council would like to challenge to statement in 3.8 (or V) pg 10 of the Planning statement that states, *“Council’s pre-application response confirmed that there would be no harmful impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and raised no concerns in relation to highways impact. The proposed toilet would be connected to a package treatment plant. There would be no impact upon surface water runoff as the site is current laid to hardstanding”*.

WDC officer’s pre-application advice states that only a site plan was provided. Therefore, it would be impossible to ‘confirm’ anything. Aerial photos and all of the documents appear to show the surrounding ground to the buildings (therefore the proposed site) laid to grass, not hard standing. It would be prudent to state whether this is truly a hardstanding area, or whether somebody has laid grass over the top of it. Either way, hard standing or not, this size of building is going to be impacted by rainwater run-off, with either it heading to the grass and hard core track, which is not ideal, towards Paynes approved building adjacent to this proposal, or towards the ponds that may or may not have life within them.

There is no reference to WDC stating “no concerns in relation to highways impact”. It is also not WDC’s authority to state whether there would be a highways impact without input from ESCC Highways – the statutory consultee.

The Parish Council also challenge WDC Officer comment and that a precedent is NOT set by the adjacent business’s planning application and extant build. As previously stated in our comments here, one approval should not make it a ‘precedent’ and this type of comment is only fuel for a developer and would appear to be what has egged them on to over emphasise ‘Paynes’ application. This is completely different business model, and existing large one at that. It was an application due to a fire. This application is to build an industrial sized unit in a back garden of a residential house.

There is no reference to staffing and whether they will be commuting and how, as there is no traffic impact report.

Bushbury Lane is not suitable for HGV vehicles. Whilst agricultural vehicles use the lane through need, there is no need to create an industrial unit of this size in this area. Within 0.7 miles there is a large purpose-built industrial estate. Within 1.4 miles there is a purpose-built commercial business park.

This application should be refused for all of the reasons stated.

- **WD/2022/1789/F – Proposed garage conversion and single storey front extension. 15 Cleve Close, Framfield TN22 5PQ.**  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=158643>

*(The Chairman took no part in the discussions as the opposite neighbour to the site).*

The Parish Council has no comments/issues on this amendment.

- **WD/2020/2313/LB – Removal of modern lean-to extension and repair of masonry behind, replacement of modern up and over doors with timber ledged, braced and boarded doors, wrought iron strapping of cracked corner area of masonry and conversion of part of the area to a home office.  
Great Streele, Etchingwood Lane, Framfield TN22 5SA  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=151832>**

The Parish Council supports the application. The repairs and alterations appear to be supportive of the Listed Building and would enhance the character and visual appearance within the curtilage.

*Circulation: Planning Committee/All other Parish Councillors.*

27.09.2022