

HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Committee** held in
the Community Hall, South Harting
at **7pm on Thursday 12 June 2025.**

Present: Mrs Bramley (Chair), Mr Bonner, Mrs Curran, Mrs Hewetson, Mrs Martin, Mrs Maxwell Davies, Mr Palmer and Mr Shaxson.

In attendance: Trish Walker, Parish Clerk.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Mr Miller.
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** Mr Shaxson declared a non-prejudicial public service interest as a member of the SDNPA's planning committee. Mr Bonner declared a personal interest as his property has a driveway on New Lane.
- 3. Members of the Public Present:** There were 69 members of the public present.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting on 15 May 2025:** To be agreed at the next planning meeting on 17 July 2025.
- 5. Matters of Urgent Public Importance:** None.
- 6. Current Planning Applications:**
 - 6.1. SDNP/25/01692/FUL**

[Erection of 7 dwellings, with associated gardens, access, parking, drainage and landscaping](#)

Land to the rear of Loppers Ash New Lane South Harting West Sussex

The Chair introduced the application and gave some background to the site as it had been allocated in policy SD86 in the South Downs National Park Local Plan which was adopted in 2019.

Representations were made by members of the public, all in objection to the application. The issues raised were:

- Ignores pre-application advice
- Out of step with landscape led plans
- Overscaled for the site – too close to the boundary of Loppers Ash and will cause loss of light and privacy. Does not conform to SDNPA conditions. Concern about the height of the houses and the impact that will have on the single storey buildings in South Acre. Loss of sky view.
- Allocated area is including New Lane
- Access issues in the narrow, rural lane
- Lack of detail – no detailed drawings showing the houses or the visual impact they will have on the surrounding area.
- Petition with over 500 signatures collected in objection to the plans
- Ecological harm – insufficient evidence of reports. There are many types of wildlife flourishing in that area
- Drainage & Flooding – concerns the area with the attenuation pond already floods and that the area will not cope with more water. Drainage plans seem to be flawed and have not been welcomed by CDC engineer.

- Visual impact – this site will be very visible from the Downs. There is a need for scaled drawings showing impact from various points around the area. The landscape assessment is using out of date Google views.
- Lack of consultation – the community have not been consulted about the type of housing required. Also, the planning notices do not appear to have reached all neighbouring properties.
- Car Parking – the car park is too big and an eyesore
- Bin areas – each property should have its own bin area
- Renewables – The Design and Access statement refers to alternative energy sources and heating but no provision made on the detailed plans.
- Traffic survey in New Lane – concerns that New Lane is also a very well used footpath and there has been no known survey of the pedestrians using the path/road. An independent survey is required
- Traffic in South Acre – concerns about increased traffic flow through South Acre as this will be an easier route than joining Elsted Road directly from New Lane
- Lighting – Harting is a Dark Skies area and no other houses have outdoor lighting for parking. The community is used to using torches to get around during the darker hours.
- Access from New Lane to the Elsted Road

There was a representative for the applicant at the meeting who raised the following points:

- The inclusion of New Lane in the allocated area is a technical issue
- All houses will have disabled access although there are steps at the rear in the garden
- One access entrance – this is the preferred way ahead although SDNPA have a preference for multiple entrances
- Ecology – the ecologists have been out on site on many occasions and the developer is fully aware of the issues. Although the report is dated on one day that does not mean there was only one visit.
- Archaeology – a full excavation will be carried out if full planning approval is given
- Lights – outdoor lights will be down lights, this has changed since the plans were submitted. The lights are also a planning requirement
- Design and Access Statement - the detail about the roof lights in the document is incorrect
- Drainage and Flooding – the developer is looking to remove the pond area from the plans and instead redesign the scheme and try, as far as possible, to alleviate some of the current drainage problems in the area
- Renewables – The houses will have air source heating and solar panels in the gardens. There has been a deliberate move to avoid them being placed on the roofs due to the visual impact
- Footpath – the developer has been consulting with a Highways Consultant over this and the popularity of the path is one reason for maintaining just one access point to the site
- Hedging – as much as possible of the original hedging will be retained and any additional planting will be with native species

The members then considered the application, and the following comments were agreed:

The Council, informed by the very strong views expressed by the many members of the local community who attended its planning committee meeting, **OBJECTS** to the proposed development for the following reasons:

1. Highway safety (Policy SD 21)

a. New Lane

New Lane is a single-track lane with a width of just 2.3 metres. It is an extremely well-used and safe route for pedestrians to access the Downs and other footpaths running through the parish.

New Lane adjoins the main Elsted Road via a small junction which can be difficult to exit due to limited visibility. This may mean vehicles will use a route which is seen to be 'easier' via South Acre, see point 1b below.

New Lane meets the definition of "historic rural roads" in SDNP Local Plan at 6.28. The proposed development will increase the traffic by more than 10% and 6.31 of the Plan states '*Where this applies, the assessment should check whether these routes meet the definition of historic rural roads given above. If that is the case it must be demonstrated that the changes to traffic levels and patterns arising from the development would conserve and enhance the ecological, landscape and recreational value of those roads. Cumulative impact must be taken into account.*'

There have been no detailed traffic assessments to address this issue.

The Council is very concerned about the impact the increased traffic will have on the recreational value of this road and it is suggested that any traffic assessment should cover pedestrian as well as traffic use.

b. South Acre

South Acre is a cul de sac which has two entrances; one leading onto Tipper Lane and one leading onto New Lane, opposite the proposed site.

The Council is concerned that vehicles will use South Acre as a 'rat run' to access the proposed site and feel it is essential the impact of traffic in this area is included in the traffic assessment.

There is also a concern that the construction traffic will choose to access the site via South Acre as the width of New Lane will be prohibitive to large vehicles. Measures to mitigate the impact of this need to be identified.

2. Insufficient detail in the plans

a. Visual appearance

There is insufficient detail within the plans to indicate the visual appearance of the properties and how materials will be used to link these properties to the local area. This is contrary to SDNPA Adopted Design Guide SPD C.2.1 which states '*The character of a place should be identified and described. New development needs to conserve and enhance this character.*'

Although the Design and Access report details the use of brick and flint, there is no representation of how this might look and no details of the proposed UPVC windows and wooden doors.

b. Impact on nearby properties

There are no drawings or plans to show visual impact of the development on New Lane and the surrounding area. This is particularly concerning for the single storey properties on the eastern side of South Acre as the height of the new buildings will

potentially be imposing, and for the properties at Loppers Ash where the proposed building will be 1 metre from the boundary of No 4 Loppers Ash (see 3b below).

c. Renewables

In its Parish Priority Statement in Dec 2023 the Parish Council agreed 'All new developments should be constructed beyond current building regulations saving and creating energy'

The plans for the proposed site do not indicate the position of air source pumps or solar panels, although these are mentioned in the Design and Access Statement.

The siting of air source pumps is important to ensure there is not a noise problem for neighbours.

The positioning of the solar panels is also very important as, if they are not mounted on the roof, there appears to be insufficient space in the small gardens to have ground based units.

The Council requests the plans are updated to confirm this detail and to ensure a commitment to providing renewables.

It is further noted that the car park area incorporates only one EV charging point for all seven properties.

3. Overdevelopment of site

a. Mass and bulk of buildings

The Council is concerned the buildings will be overbearing due to the height of the site in comparison with the sunken New Lane and in relation to the height of the single storey properties in South Acre.

The two bedroom properties at the southern end of the site are of particular concern as they do not have the same design as the other houses where dormer windows have been used to reduce the height.

b. Proximity to neighbouring boundaries – loss of light and privacy

The proximity of the most northerly houses to the boundaries of Loppers Ash is not acceptable and will cause considerable loss of light and privacy. The plans indicate Plot 1 is just 10 metres from no. 4 Loppers Ash (and 1 metre from its boundary). This is contrary to SDNPA Adopted Design Guide SPD C.10.4.1 Design Principles which states:

'a. All new development should consider the private amenity and daylighting of new and existing residents.

b. Overlooking distances for rear windows between existing and new homes should be at least 22m and 20m respectively.'

c. Type and number of properties

The Council recognises that the site was allocated in SD86 for the development of 6-8 dwellings. However, given the issues in relation to drainage it questions the number of properties on the site and would suggest that 4 or 5 dwellings would be a more suitable number. This would allow sufficient space on the site for a SuDS and would allow the layout of the site to be adjusted so the overall impact would not be so overbearing.

The Council has also taken on board the comments from the community, who feel there should have been greater consultation between the developer and local residents to identify what type of properties might be needed. This is due to the need for properties from young local families and for downsizing. Although the Council realises this is not a planning issue, it is a point to be noted. There is also concern that none of the properties would be for sale.

4. Drainage

The SDNPA Local Plan paragraph 9.223 refers to this:

'There is an area of surface water flood risk in the lane adjacent to the site. Suitable mitigation should be used to ensure the development addresses this flood risk.'

The Council is extremely concerned about the drainage plans. These indicate that pipes would be used to move excess surface water to an attenuation pond measuring some 45x25 metres and situated at a significant distance from the Allocation Site. No detailed plans for the pond are provided and there are no plans showing sections and levels. It is not clear how deep underground the pipes would need to be laid in order to carry the water away from the site and against the natural water flow. At the planning meeting the representative for the applicant suggested that the pond would be 300mm deep and that spoil from its creation would be spread across the field.

The area of the field where the proposed pond is sited is already regularly flooded and water flows from it into the gardens of properties along the Elsted Road.

The Drainage Plan has not used the correct climate change allowance ie. 40% instead of at least 45%, therefore the validity of this report has to be questioned. The Chichester District Council's Drainage engineer has also recorded concerns about the workability of the scheme and notably suggests that the inability to accommodate the SuDS on site indicates overdevelopment.

The impact of a failing drainage system on existing properties on Elsted Road and the run off in New Lane would be considerable.

5. Sewage and Wastewater

The current sewage system in South Harting is already insufficient for the current number of houses. In 2025 untreated sewage was discharged into the river Rother continuously for a period of over two months despite low rainfall. This is the highest level in the area and is not acceptable. Southern Water are currently completing an extension to the current treatment works in South Harting, but there is no guarantee that the upgrade will alleviate the long-standing problem.

The Council urges the planning authority to allow no further development until there is certainty this situation has been resolved.

6. Boundary area

The boundary of the Site Plan includes a portion of New Lane which is not in the Allocated Plan and would be under the ownership of West Sussex County Council.

7. Assessments and reports

The SDNPA Local Plan paragraph 9.224 indicates

'Development proposals should therefore be informed by the following evidence studies:

- *Archaeological Assessment*
- *Highways Assessment*
- *Landscape Assessment'*

The Council notes the reports provided with the application are lacking sufficient detail and further evidence will be needed to ensure the decisions can be fully informed.

In particular, the desktop archaeological assessment fails to acknowledge the presence of a Roman Villa 200m to the south of the site and assesses the archaeological potential as "low to moderate". As pointed out by the county archaeologist an archaeological evaluation including a geophysical survey is essential, and this should cover the whole site including the proposed attenuation pond and the proposed piping route.

In addition to the assessments listed above there is a need for a further, more detailed, ecological assessment.

8. Lighting

The proposed site is within the Dark Night Sky area and hence there are no street lights or any form of public lighting in the surrounding area or in the adjoining cul de sac. The proposed lighting for the car park area, even with down lights, will cause light pollution in this area and is therefore in conflict with SDNPA's Dark Night Skies Policy (SD8).

Local residents in a rural area such as South Harting use torches to find their way around and it is hoped residents on the proposed sites would be able to do the same

9. Parking area

The Council has previously supported the idea of a single access to the site but only on the basis that such an access point would be directly opposite the South Acre entrance. It is recognised that a single parking area is controversial and that the plans seek to reduce the visual impact of the parking area. However, we understand that the parking area is to be 500cm below the level of the houses. Further plans showing contours are needed and further detail to clarify the nature of this "permeable car park" and to explain how surface water will be collected by the drains beneath it.

7. Date of next meeting: to be confirmed

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.40pm.