

**Minutes of the Planning, Highways and Transport Committee held on
October 15th 2020 via Zoom at 6.30pm**

Present: Cllrs Broom, Edge, Harrington, Humphries, Wearn, Watson and Wood-Mitchell.

In attendance: P Hatley, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

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Apologies

Councillor Lyford and Swinbank.

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Declarations of Interest

None.

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Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting September 17th 2020

The Minutes of the last meeting held on September 17th were approved as true record.

**RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last meeting on
September 17th 2020**

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Matters Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

P20/32 TPOs at Allerburn House – the Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had received the first of the TPOs for the Allerburn House site. The remaining TPOs were being finalised so the Town Council should receive official notification shortly.

Planning Outcomes Notified:

20/02664/COU 39 Bondgate Without, Alnwick NE66 1PR Change of use from Sui Generis to A1 – **GRANTED.**

20/02355/LBC 1 Prudhoe Street, Alnwick NE66 1UW Listed Building Consent for replacement of ground floor window with timber glazed 6 over 6 door in west elevation – **GRANTED.**

20/02406/PRUTPO Loan End, Argyle Terrace, Alnwick NE66 1XG Tree

Preservation Order Application: Oak tree – Crown thin, 10% and pruning of uppermost branches by approximately 2-3m. Removal of branch overhanging neighbouring property back to trunk – **PERMITTED.**

20/01883/FUL Site North of Highway England Depot known as Hotspur Forestry Sawmill, Larch Drive, Lionheart Enterprise Park, Alnwick Construction of 1,700 sqm B2 / B8 general industrial shed, hard standing storage yards, hard standing display area, access road and SuDS basin – **GRANTED.**

20/01730/VARYCO Land at West of Greensfield, Weavers Way, Alnwick Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) to remove the cycleway on the southern side linking the school car park of the clubhouse and discharge of Conditions 3 (Highways), 4 (Surface Water) and 5 (Cycleway/Pedestrian access) relating to planning permission 09/00944/FUL – **GRANTED.**

20/02199/FUL 32 West Acres, Alnwick NE66 2QA Part demolition of side garage and construction of new garage to side elevation and new entrance porch to front elevation – **GRANTED.**

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Responses made since last meeting

20/00744/PREAPP Land South Of Greensfield Farm Weavers Way Alnwick Northumberland Demolition of existing agricultural buildings and development of 18 no. new residential dwellings, along with associated access roads and gardens – **Alnwick Town Council are unable to make comments at this stage feel there is insufficient information at this stage.**

20/02577/FUL Brizlee Wood MOD Communications Site Alnwick Northumberland
Demolition of existing radome and single storey building and erection of replacement radome and platform; new single storey support building with interlinking snow tunnel – **NO OBJECTIONS**

20/02884/CCMEIA Land North Of Shiel Dykes U3050 Swarland Junction To Stouphill Junction, Swarland, Northumberland Phased extraction of approximately 5 million tonnes of hard rock and importation of inert material for use in restoration using overburden from site and imported inert materials over 30 year period |

Alnwick Town Council OBJECT to this planning application as they feel that the following areas of concern still need to be addressed:

1. Traffic - the access and egress arrangements for vehicles
Although the close to 100 additional HGV movements per day will be a fairly small change in the A1 traffic flow, the safety record for the road is poor so any additional vehicles will create excess danger. HGVs turning into the site need to have adequate deceleration lanes and clear sight lines and those leaving the site must turn north so an acceleration lane would also be needed. Loaded HGVs would also be accessing a junction which other vehicles approach at 70mph.

Those heading south out of the site (which will be directed N to Alnwick then S) are going to be problematic on the Alnwick slip-roads. The northbound exit is acknowledged by Highways England as being too short. We have done traffic monitoring on the Willowburn roundabout in recent years (in connection with the DCHS and retail park developments) and know that during the morning weekday peak, the traffic does back up the slip-road onto the A1 which extra HGV's will exacerbate. Either the Alnwick slip road needs lengthening or there needs to be a bridge built at the point of connection with the site and the A1, to avoid traffic having to backtrack to Alnwick. The southbound slip-road onto the A1 from Alnwick is also not ideal but constrained by the bridge.

The Town Council are also very concerned that the developer states that larger lorries leaving the site to head South will not attempt to cross the dual carriageway but will drive 3 miles North to the Alnwick Willowburn junction this will not be the case. The developer also states that lorries under 7.5m in length will be permitted to turn right onto the A1 directly from the quarry, using the separator island in the middle of the lanes. Again loaded HGVs would have to join a road where other vehicles are travelling at 70mph.

All these issues are critical to road safety and details must be given as to how this will be mitigated.

2. Public right of way – there is a across the site which is used by cyclists amongst others. Details need to be submitted on how this will be safely and adequately diverted for the period of operation.
3. Public Protection
DUST - great care needs to be taken with the assessment of dust affecting Alnwick and surrounding areas including business parks. Fine quarry dust may be an issue in certain winds in dry periods with some businesses and certainly many homes being affected. Robust analysis of the risks should be undertaken and processes to dampen down dust in certain situations put in place.
NOISE - there will be substantial on site rock crushing and lorry loading activity taking place. This with explosive blasting twice per week between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday, 3 miles from Alnwick. With the prevailing winds from the South West the site noise would have a significant affect on many Alnwick residents.

4. Light pollution – this needs to be kept Should be kept to an absolute minimum as this is presently a very rural area, and there could be effects on wildlife and the night sky
5. Environment - the site is bordered by the Hampeth Burn immediately to the North and the Newton Burn immediately to the South. The developer states that the site will have no significant effect on the burns but their technical report appears to indicate that there will be an effect and ends with a disclaimer. Processes to ensure that all existing waterways are protected during and after operations must be developed. We would support the recommendations made by NCC's Environmental Officer.

Screening with tree planting may be appropriate, particularly with views into the quarry from the A1. Alnwick and surrounding areas rely on tourism to a large extent and so visual disruption to the landscape must be minimised. Whilst there appears to be assurances that the site will be improved when it is finished (30 years) that would still mean that present waterways and wildlife habitats would be damaged for decades. Suitable mitigation, such as off-site tree planting, needs to take place before the quarry starts to ensure there are no negative effects while the quarry is actually in use.

Alnwick Town Council would want all these matters adequately addressed before they could withdraw their objection to this application. The most serious matters however relate to the junction with the A1.

This must be made **safe** and routing all southbound HGV's around the current Willowburn roundabout junction is unacceptable.

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Planning Applications

20/02803/FUL Land West Of Linnet Court Hawfinch Drive Cawledge Business Park Alnwick Installation of Six Electric Vehicle Charging Points, a Transformer Station Unit and Power Cabinets and Associated Infrastructure – no link so please key app number into portal search – **Alnwick Town Council SUPPORT** the application and support the comments made by the Highways Officer.

20/02452/CCD Former Alnwick Lindisfarne Middle School Lindisfarne Road Alnwick Northumberland Refurbishment of annexe building, works to include: Strip up to 4no. roof elevations and replace with slate, tiles removed will be salvaged and used to restore remainder of roof elevations. Replacement of all timber windows with UPVC double glazed units. Installation of solar panels to 2no. roof elevations. Internally the M&E upgrade. Installation of loft insulation. Creation and refurbishment of classroom and spaces for community use. Extension formed to front elevation to increase cafe area - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

20/02937/FUL 53 Cawledge View Alnwick NE66 1BH Proposed Living Room Extension and Bedroom Extension over - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

20/02782/VARYCO Hope House Cottages Hope House Lane Alnwick Northumberland NE66 2AA Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission 19/02024/FUL in order to make layout changes and subsequent alterations to elevations drawing number 1866_06B - **NO OBJECTIONS.**

20/02992/FUL 46 The Dunterns Alnwick NE66 1AN Construction of garden store and raised planting bed to front elevation within courtyard – Alnwick Town Council **OBJECT** to this application for the following reasons:

1. This retrospective development is totally out of keeping with its location, surroundings and neighbouring properties.
2. The materials which the garden store has been built in are totally out of keeping with the main dwelling and surrounding properties.
3. The garden store seems disproportionate to the rest of the property and seems unnecessary given that there is approval for a large garage and workshop.

The Town Council feel that the site is being over-developed and are disappointed that another retrospective application has been submitted for work which has already been undertaken.

The following policies from the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan need to be considered:

HOUSING

H5 Existing Stock

Extensions to existing dwellings beyond permitted development limits will be supported where:

The scale and design of the extension complements and respects the scale and design of the original property;

The extension respects the character of the street scene;

HERITAGE & DESIGN

HD5 Design in the Wider Town

Outside the historic core of the town new development (including extensions, alterations and changes of use to existing buildings) is encouraged to take the following design principles into account:

- a) Footprint: expected to respect the density and grain of the surrounding distinctive suburban townscape;
- b) Design: expected to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness whilst not discouraging appropriate innovation;
- c) Quality: expected to respect and enhance the quality of the surrounding suburban townscape and any historic content, in design, materials, detailing and finishes;
- e) Size and scale: expected to respond positively to local character;
- f) Materials: expected to be sympathetic to the local materials that are traditional in the surrounding suburban townscape;

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Response to Government Planning White Paper from ATC

The Town Clerk advised that Alnwick Civic Society had met with Rob Murfin (RM), NCC's Director of Planning, to discuss the white paper. RM had advised that he could not see this becoming policy for some time. The deadline for responses is October 29th and RM had advised that he would share NCC's comments with the Town Council prior to them being submitted. The Town Clerk recommended that the Town Council wait for NCC's comments then submit anything additional issues / concerns they had with the government proposals.

Councillors Watson and Humphries felt this was the right way to proceed and Councillor Wearn said she would like to comment on the lack of local democracy.

P20/40

Infilling of proposed Greenway Bridges

Councillor Edge reported that Highways England were planning to fill in the two bridges at Rugley and Mossy Ford towards Rothbury. They own the road (but not the land underneath) and have proposed filling the bridges as they feel they are unsafe. Potential issues with this as i) this is a potential heritage site, ii) there is a nature reserve at Rugley, iii) there is currently a move to make this into a cycleway which would not be possible if the works go ahead. He reported that Councillor Castle has spoken to NCC Highways to try and stop this from happening by looking at alternative solutions.

The Town Clerk advised that NCC might take over the sites and are looking to set up a working group to look at this. He recommended that this was discussed at the Sustainable Travel Advisory Group. Councillor Broom advised that the track bed belongs to

Northumberland Estates and that they should be approached to make it a public right of way. Councillor Harrington recommend that councillors visited the sites of the bridges. Councillor Broom said that a request to have them listed could be made.

Councillor Watson advised that there were ways of filling in bridges without blocking them off entirely. We should suggest the least invasive type of in-filling the bridges. The Town Council should continue to object to the proposals.

Councillor Wearn reported that there had been an email conversation between Councillor Castle and Paul Derbyshire (NCC's Rights of Ways Officer) about the area not currently being a public right of way. She also reported that Highways England have now changed their mind about completely infilling the bridges.

P20/41 Civic Society paper on town centre COU applications Retail to Residential Checklist

Councillors had been sent the Civic Society paper to review. Councillor Harrington explained that the Civic Society were asking the Town Council to support their request to have a standard checklist used for Retail to Residential COU applications.

Councillor Watson explained that an Alnwick District Council Design Guide had been developed some time ago and feel it is still relevant. Feel it still relevant to all planning applications. The Assistant to the Town Council advised that the documents were still in used on the planning portal and that the proposed checklist was maybe additional as most current guides are aimed at listed buildings.

Councillor Humphries asked if there was a county-wide document. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that NCC had planned to have a county wide document which the Civic Society had worked on to produce an Alnwick version.

Councillor Wood-Mitchell felt it was a good document but did not go far enough. Argument to also produce a document for planning applications going from residential to retail. Feel more relevant if properties have been empty for some time.

The Town Clerk explained that he thought there had meeting to discuss the design guides. The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that there was a meeting between the NCC, the Civic Society and Town Council Officers to review the design guides and that NCC are pulling together a countywide design guide which would include some additions for Alnwick.

Councillor Wearn thought it was interesting that there were planning guides but little evidence that they had been read or used.

Councillor Watson felt that the design guide was still relevant but just needed the date changing.

Councillor Humphries reported that there are a number of empty shops in the town which are now empty. Some are leaving the shops in a sad state and would like to suggest that the estate agents allow the town council to brighten up the windows.

Councillor Wearn advised that PD Quick shop had a new.

Councillor Harrington advised that hopefully the Clark shop would also be re-let.

Councillor Humphries thought that it would be helpful to have images in the windows as had been done when Collectables had been closed.

Councillor Broom felt that no access through Narrowgate was causing less businesses to open in Bondgate Within. He felt Narrowgate needed reopening as it was impacting on businesses. He reported that there are no signs to say no access to HGVs through Alnwick.

Councillor Harrington advised that Narrowgate would be reviewed by NCC. He agreed that NCC needed to review signage especially for HGVs.

P20/42 Percy Street Resident Issue

The Town Clerk reported that a resident had complained about traffic issues when young people are being dropped off for dance classes at Mechanics Institute. He had spoken to the Dance School who agreed to speak to parents.

Councillor Broom advised that the vets car park is used. The Town Clerk advised that this had been used before but that complaints had been received.

Councillor Harrington suggested if the issue continued the matter be referred to NCC.

Councillor Wearn suggested contacting the police about the matter.

P20/43 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Broom asked if the review of resident parking schemes could be added to the next agenda as some seem to not be suitable. The new one at the War Memorial is a good scheme and others could be changed to be more useful.

The meeting closed at 7.37 p.m.