

**Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Parish Council Planning meeting held on
Tuesday 10th January 2017 at 7.00 pm Lyndhurst Community Centre**

Council members:	Cllr G Bisson	Cllr M Rolle
Chairman H Klaassen	Cllr A Wiltshire	Cllr S Se-Upara
Vice Chairman Revd. Dr. C Wilkins	Cllr T Dunning	Cllr E Chell
Clerk & RFO Mrs J Coe	Cllr K Kaljura	Cllr A Trend
	District Cllr P-Wyeth	
	*= Absent members	

Members of the public in attendance 59

1. Apologies for absence: None

2. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

District Cllr Wyeth declared a personal interest, as she “Chairs the Planning Committee meetings”, at the New Forest National Park Authority. She will remain at the meeting, “but will not take any part in the meeting, what so ever”. Cllr Bisson wanted it noted that although there was no conflict of interest, due to the complexity and importance of the planning application he would not take part in the meeting. He also wanted to answer various questions on emails: His role is primarily a *Parish* Councillor. He was elected as the South East Quadrant representative for the National Park Authority, and as a member of the National Park, he was later elected onto the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee is independent from the officers, and with the declarations of interest there is no need to obtain permission to talk. There is also no pre determination as long as you consider the case on its merits with an open mind and can debate and vote on the application whether you have talked about the item previously or not. He wanted to clear the matter up in full transparency rather than by email.

Cllr Revd. Dr Wilkins declared an interest as she was asked to form a sub group to look into the heritage value of the hotel and as a result she campaigned to save the hotel. For this reason she would not vote on the matter.

Emma Webster a representative from Pegasus Life was invited to speak on behalf of Pegasus Life. She thanked the Council members who attended the site visit and also for the contributions that the Parish Council made in the process of early engagement leading up to the public consultation. She went on to talk about matters people had raised regarding the application and five residents raised objections to the application during the discussion that followed.

The Chairman then handed over to Cllr Kaljura to address the Council with his proposed response to the planning application taking comments and questions on each section. There were further questions raised to Emma Webster from members of the public and the matter was then brought back to the Council to formulate their comment. It was proposed to agree the document subject to some minor amendments by Cllr Trend and seconded by Cllr Dunning. In total seven voted for the proposal and four abstained.

Resolved to - Recommend refusal to the planning application (Comment 4) and

adopt the document outlining objections taking into account amendments added as follows:

Clare Ings
Planning Department
New Forest National Park Authority
Lymington Town Hall
Avenue Road
Lymington
Hampshire
SO41 9Z9

10th January 2017

Commenter type: Lyndhurst Parish Council

Dear Ms Ings

Planning Application No. 16/01000 for LYNDHURST PARK HOTEL, 78 HIGH STREET, LYNDHURST, SO43 7NL

“Creation of 74 age restricted residential units integrated with communal, wellness and support facilities; 12 no holiday lets; associated car and cycle parking; landscaping; refuse store; substation; alteration of existing vehicular and pedestrian access; demolition of existing hotel and buildings ”

Lyndhurst Parish Council writes to **OBJECT** to the planning application referenced above.

The application has been assessed by Lyndhurst Parish Council (LPC) against the planning policies set out in the current Local Development Framework (December 2010) and the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework.

It is requested that if the National Park Authority (NPA) concurs with the LPC view any documentation setting out the reasons for refusal should be comprehensive and include ALL of the areas that did not meet the relevant criteria set out in the current Local Development Framework (December 2010) and the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework.

It should be noted that in the foreword of the current New Forest National-Park Local Development Framework, the statutory obligation of the National Park is to “Seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities that make the New Forest the place it is whilst at the same time ensuring that what development does take place is focused on catering for the needs of local people”. It goes on to say that “Major Development proposals should not take place in designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances...” Major development proposals should be demonstrated to be in the overriding public interest before being allowed to proceed.

This site offers a very sensitive location, and an extremely exciting opportunity to enhance the approach to the village of Lyndhurst and create a good quality edge to

the forest and to one of the most popular iconic open spaces in the New Forest. It is clear that the scale and design of this development are not in keeping with a village environment and that the proposal shows a distinct lack of understanding of the character and local needs of Lyndhurst.

The proposed application contravenes the vast majority of policies as set out by the NPA and National Planning Policy Framework.

The specific objections to the proposed development are as follows:

Development Plan

Designation Outside Defined Village Boundary:

The Proposed Development is outside of the defined village boundary for Lyndhurst and therefore should not be allowed as this will be in breach of the current Local Development Framework (NPA Core Strategy page 37 Paragraph 7.7 / 7.8).

In addition, even if the proposal was within the village boundary it would fall outside of policy CP9 as it has been classed, by the NPA, as a Major Development and not a small scale development to meet local needs.

The categorisation of the application is at odds with similar applications Pegasus has submitted elsewhere. Pegasus are insisting it is offering an institutional level of care or C2, making it exempt for the need to provide social housing – this is incorrect as the dwellings being proposed are for single and multiple occupancy and are not rented. They are residential, which in turn makes their categorisation open to 50% affordable / social housing. The application should actually be C3B which is residential with assistance.

Principal Development Plan Policy objections

CP1 Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance

The proposed development sits within 400m of the boundary of a New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), the proposal has not demonstrated that adequate measures have been put in place to mitigate any potential adverse effects on the ecological integrity of the SPA.

CP2 The Natural Environment:

The proposed development will adversely affect the surrounding conservation area due to the incongruous visual impact against the rural setting. The National Park designation applies which has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

Impact on protected trees on the site. All trees falling under a tree protection order and wildlife within will be adversely impacted by the close proximity of the proposed development. The proposal would result in attrition of landscape with the building being too dominant.

In the Pegasus Planning Statement, the bat survey identified that 'There was a high level of bat activity recorded... both foraging and/or commuting.' At least 8 species were identified. Although not referred to as such in the report Executive Summary at least three of the species listed appear to be amongst the rarest and most threatened species whose protection and enhancement is a key objective listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act.

The space adjoining the eastern edge of the site is open grazed forest, a wide seasonal pond and a setting for the iconic Bolton's Bench. The proposal presents a series of oversized blocks of flats at three storeys with a foil of retained trees and an attempt to screen at lower levels by restoring a laurel hedge. The building will look institutional especially on winter evenings when the trees provide little cover and the regular grid of three rows of windows is lit up to spoil the backdrop to the open forest.

Special Area of Conservation – adjoining:

This will be fully commented on by Natural England

Special Protection Area – adjoining:

This will be fully commented on by Natural England

Site of Special Scientific Interest – adjoining:

This will be fully commented on by Natural England

Ramsar Site adjoining:

The proposal will have a negative impact on a site of ecological importance (Area between Beaulieu Road and Lyndhurst Park Hotel boundary) and be in direct conflict with the government's commitment to take the steps necessary to ensure that its ecological character is maintained.

CP6 Pollution:

Due to the relationship with the High Street, the proposal to extend the High Street will bring a closing in affect where it is currently more open. It is also likely to extend the pollution corridor already within the High Street, which is already an Air Quality Management Area due to high levels of pollution. In addition the holiday let frontage will also drastically increase light pollution.

CP7 The Built Environment:

The proposed development does not Conserve and enhance the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the built environment of Lyndhurst or the wider New Forest. In addition one of the National Parks Statutory purposes together with national planning policy (particularly PPS1 and PPS5) recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing an area's character. This should not allow for the destruction of the culturally important Georgian part of Lyndhurst Park Hotel (the former Glashayes House) or the erection of a series of overbearing incongruous blocks of flats.

As noted in the pre-application response letter from the NPA to Pegasus 'the overall development approach appears to cover most of the space not occupied by trees and mature vegetation with built form or hardstanding. The scheme has the feel of an urban infill proposal rather than one which addresses this sensitive landscape edge to the site and the village'.

CP8 Local Distinctiveness:

The addition of 74 age restricted flats and 12 holiday lets would erode Lyndhurst's local character and would result in increasing the urbanisation of the village. The proposal aims to meet an external demand and not local needs (CP9) and therefore is not aligned with the local planning policy.

Despite the work put into the design and access statement the designers have clearly misunderstood the context in some fundamental ways. The result is a set of buildings which fail to respond to the context of their siting and are not inspired by what actually characterises Lyndhurst.

The design of this scheme falls very far short of what one would expect for such a development opportunity and would be harmful to the character and quality of Lyndhurst Village. The proposal is fundamentally inappropriate in its context and within the neighbourhood, failing to respond to the character of this area, which is one of transition, the approach and arrival to the village centre and the edge of the open green area of the forest.

The buildings are too large, too bland and laid out in a way that fails to respond to the landscape, to the street and to the spaces around them. Spaces between buildings are not given due consideration and the result is a poor layout demonstrating that ultimately this proposal is one of overdevelopment.

Many smaller dwellings nearby are rich with detail and delight. The proposal on the other hand is unfussy with simple clarity of detail, clean lines and simple forms. This is a contemporary design solution which could work in the right location especially if there is a wide unfussy spacious setting or where there is room to personalise or create garden colour and variety. These buildings however have a setting which is fussy and fragmented, the landscaped areas leave little opportunity for personalisation or colour and variety where it matters, the design subsequently looks inappropriate and out of place in its setting.

CP9 Defined Villages:

This proposal in no way supports local needs and does not strengthen the well-being, identity and sustainability of the rural community. In addition it does not promote affordable housing to meet local needs and will only weaken the vibrant Lyndhurst community.

CP11 Affordable Housing:

This development makes no provision whatsoever for local affordable housing. Any residential development should provide at least 50% local affordable housing on the development site as required by the Local Plan. The New Forest National Park Authority is fully aware that current demand is for local affordable housing to meet the level of need in the area. There is significant evidence that

demographics show an increasing older age profile within the National Park this is driven by an external demand. Therefore more must be done to prevent the increase of the age profile by making provision for affordable housing, particularly for younger residents who are being driven out of their local communities by high housing costs.

CP12 New Residential Development:

CP12 states that an additional 220 dwellings will be required within the National Park between 2006 and 2026. The proposed scheme represents, in one development, 39% of the total new housing across the whole of the National Park over a twenty year period (7.8 years' worth of development).

The proposal does not adhere to the Local Plan that states "new residential development will be permitted within the National Park to maintain the vitality of local communities and support local services, where the proposal is":

- Within the defined New Forest villages set out in CP9; or
- A replacement of an existing dwelling in accordance with Policy DP10; or
- An extension to an existing dwelling in accordance with Policy DP11; or
- An agricultural or forestry worker's dwelling in accordance with Policy DP13; or
- Affordable housing for local needs in accordance with CP11.

The proposal by its very nature will have an impact on local support services. The doctors' surgery is currently overstretched, with many local residents having to wait weeks to gain an appointment. In addition the local pre and primary school are currently taking in pupils from outside of their catchment due to lack of children, this is driven by the skew in the Lyndhurst demographic towards an older generation, the proposal will further increase this problem and may eventually lead to the closure of the school which in turn will reduce young families desire to live in the area and affect the community spirit in the village. The proposal does not include any form of facility that is for community use.

It should be noted that in local and national press the developer seeks to attract "high end" home owners. The development in Poole has been marketed at £700,000 – £900,000. This shows the developer has no intention of housing local people intent upon "downsizing" when they retire thus releasing local housing stock. In addition the Boltons development has 23 residential units of 1 and 2 bedroom retirement homes, 11 remain unsold since December 2015, and this clearly shows there is no local need for this type of development.

CP15 Existing Employment Sites:

The proposal is in breach of the policy as no employment will be retained on site.

CP16 Tourism Development:

The loss of the hotel, both in terms of its function (as serviced accommodation) and its associated heritage will impact tourism. No clear evidence has been put forward to demonstrate there is no demand for at least part of the site to continue to operate as a hotel, nor has the building been marketed as a hotel. As well as the loss of local jobs there is also the loss of tourist income for existing Lyndhurst and wider New Forest businesses.

Pegasus State, in 7.16 of their planning statement that the New Forest currently has 2,447 serviced bedrooms and that the loss of 60 bedrooms from the hotel only equates to 3%, this is clearly misleading as the impact to Lyndhurst would be significantly higher.

CP17 The Land Based Economy:

The proposed development is in breach of the policy as it does not propose affordable housing for commoners.

CP19 Access:

Traffic, access and parking. The proposal does not include sufficient parking and so the overspill will be into the adjoining forest and village car parks; this will prevent tourists accessing this part of the forest.

Only 5 visitor spaces have been allocated for visitors, tradesmen and an array of domestic care workers. Based on the mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments the development should have in the region of 150 spaces based on NPA policy guidelines.

The fragmented nature of car parking, with residents unable to view their own car and with spaces squeezed into any gaps available adjacent to buildings, are not ergonomic and would be inconvenient, the design layout is clearly driven by overdevelopment.

In addition the amenity space around each block is somewhat random, based upon tree protection areas with buildings inserted everywhere there is space between these. The open spaces are contrived from that land which is left over after the car parking has been added. Considering also that the footpaths are often poorly considered leaving odd shapes and ignoring desire lines, the layout is poorly designed.

DP1 General Development Principles:

The extent and scale of the proposed development. The volume of the buildings and the residential density is completely out of keeping with what would be appropriate in a village. There are elements of the development which are poorly designed, again this is as a result of over development

The Local Plan states that only appropriate small scale housing development to meet the needs of the local communities will be supported. No evidence has been submitted to show why this application should be an exception to the Local Plan.

The proposal does not sit separate to the High Street and the frontage space does not act as an important buffer that promotes a gradual change from rural to urban. This does not create any uplifting termination to the vista on arrival at the village. It does not enhance the rural edge and does not enhance the street frontage with either greenery or delightful and rich buildings.

In addition when looking eastwards from the high street, the proposed High Street frontage would dominate the view and destroy the current transition from the built environment to rural.

When viewed from the rear gardens of properties situated on Gosport Lane to the West of the proposed development, the blocks of flats would be incongruous and overbearing in nature.

Whereas bland buildings can be attractive if set within good spaces which support the architectural quality or alternatively if they are enhanced with the seasonal colour of planting and the opportunity to personalise, the Southampton Road frontage falls between stalls by offering a narrowing wedge of nominal front gardens instead of the more appropriate set-backs and settings evident from the cottages and gardens opposite.

DP3 Open Space:

Policy DP3 requires that development should either provide for the enhancement of existing open space and amenity areas, or provide on-site open space to a set standard. In this proposal the spaces around the site would be entirely private to the occupants.

DP6 Design Principles:

Larger houses on the approach to the village are rich with articulated rooflines, gardens, hedgerows, gaps and occasionally a feature to celebrate a corner or highlight of the building. The proposal responds with long roof planes of terraced houses or flatted blocks with tedious, rhythm and repetition within the fenestration and building facades. There are few gaps, little in the way of gardens and no discernible highlights on the buildings. Certainly no celebration of the corner where the designer identifies a key vista on the approach to Lyndhurst.

These buildings are bland and although they are proposed with a range of facing materials the development as a whole lacks the richness which a location of this sensitivity requires. The proposed buildings are not in keeping with the local vernacular, the proposed design is overbearing and suburban in style and not at all in keeping with the rich heritage of Lyndhurst nor the unique style of the original parts of Glasshayes House.

The designer has only looked inward towards the village centre for inspiration, failing to take due notice of the defining qualities of the street and the open countryside adjacent to where the site actually lies. Cottages set back behind, and within, garden settings are a 'defining element'. The proposal offers diminutive garden fronts to holiday-let buildings with neither the room nor the opportunity to personalise or create garden settings. A space is provided for some existing trees but rather than creating a positive green space this is more a way of retaining trees merely to ensure there is some softening of the impact of the terraces and to take some of the scale off the end gable of the largest block.

If these buildings are poor enough to warrant screening etc. then they are not good enough for this location. It should be noted that the Planning Inspector's comments relating to the Cedar Mount proposal in Lyndhurst stated, that "it is not correct to rely on vegetation for screening. A harmful design cannot be hidden by vegetation".

National Planning Policy Framework Objections

Sec 3 Supporting a prosperous rural economy:

It is not accepted that the further age restricted accommodation will enhance or support a prosperous diverse rural economy.

Sec 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes:

Clearly as an age restricted community it does not deliver a wide choice of housing options and is therefore outside of policy.

Sec 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment:

There are few opportunities for the tree stock to be perpetuated for the future in a way that is meaningful within the development and bizarrely the only aspect of the site's long heritage that is to remain and grace this proposal is the re-establishment of a laurel hedge along the forest front a feature appropriate to a large hotel or mansion of long standing, but in this case, merely a means of screening several blocks of flats.

Sec 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment:

It is interesting to note that the Pegasus Life Philosophy is one where, "we are always inspired by the land we work on: its history, its surroundings and its future".

The proposal however does not fully consider the architectural heritage of the site and seeks to demolish all of the historic structure. Glasshayes House, the Georgian part of Lyndhurst Park Hotel, has played a significant part in local history and should be seen as having landmark status. It is clear the proposed development contravenes Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

In the pre-application response letter from the National Park Planning Authority, it states that, 'Sitting within the Lyndhurst Conservation Area. There has been considerable interest in the historic significance of the Hotel, in terms of its architecture; there is an historic core which contains some interesting elevations and historic rooms and features (e.g. staircase) which remain fairly intact and also its social history. It is acknowledged that some later changes to the hotel have eroded some of its visual presence within the street scene. However, its character as set out previously relies heavily on its position within the site and the verdant landscape setting which has defined the site from its early evolution.' The proposed demolition of the Georgian part of Lyndhurst Park Hotel would go against one of the core statutory purposes of the NPA and the National Planning strategy of protecting our cultural heritage and historic environment.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Lyndhurst Parish Council feels that as this site sits in a very sensitive location in the Capital of the New Forest; next to one of its most popular and landmark open spaces. The proposal falls far short of what would be appropriate for this location.

The scale and design of this development is not in keeping with a village environment. The development is urban in design with overdevelopment of the site. The proposal shows a distinct lack of understanding of the character and local needs of Lyndhurst.

The application has been assessed by Lyndhurst Parish Council (LPC) against the planning policies set out in the current Local Development Framework (December 2010) and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed application contravenes the vast majority of policies as set out by the NPA and National Planning Policy Framework and hence the proposal has been *recommended for refusal*

As stated previously. It is requested that if the National Park Authority (NPA) concurs with the LPC view any documentation setting out the reasons for refusal should be comprehensive and include ALL of the areas that did not meet the relevant criteria set out in the current Local Development Framework (December 2010) and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

Lyndhurst Parish Council
10TH January 2017

The meeting ended at 8.21pm