

Wigmore Group Parish Council

Minutes of an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on Friday 10 September 2021 at 7.00pm at Wigmore Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Nick Davidson (ND) Chairman; Phil Brown (PB); Gwen Fraser (GF); Leslie Knight (LK); and John Williams (JW).

In attendance: 2 members of public/press, Ward Councillor Carole Gandy (CG), Maggie Brown, Clerk.

1. **Apologies** were received from Cllrs Jayne Hodgetts and Jan Malcolmson.
2. **Declarations of interest** were received from Cllrs Phil Brown and Les Knight in relation to items 5 and 6.
No written requests for dispensations received.
3. **Open Session**
 - 3.1. Ward Cllr Carole Gandy confirmed she will give her report at the scheduled meeting on 13 September.
 - 3.2. A resident present made the following observations:
 - a) The privacy of neighbouring property on the western side of the site will be severely impacted by proposed windows and balconies. This could be mitigated by having opaque glass in the window on the western elevation and screening on the side of balconies so you cannot see over the top.
 - b) It is not clear from plans provided which caravans have permission and which do not.
 - c) 4 additional sites are proposed, but additional to what? Clarification on total permitted on the site is requested.
 - d) Development on the pub garden started illegally preventing objections to the removal of the garden.
 - e) The Design and Access statement includes some inconsistencies and inaccuracies. It is important that the planning department goes through it in detail to ensure the evidence presented is accurate.
 - f) Hedges and trees screening the site from the property on the western side have been removed by the applicant.
 - g) Why will the 4 additional caravans not use the mains drainage?
 - h) Concern raised on loss of trees and ecological habitat.
4. **Response to applications P2313106/K to be determined by Herefordshire Council**
[P2313106/K - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area](#) Brook Farm Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UJ, Works proposed to the Copper Beech (location shown on plan). Reduce height by 30%. Uplift and thin by 30%. Presently causing excessive shading and rather unkempt in growth.

RESOLVED Wigmore Group Parish Council **supports** to this application.

Councillors Phil Brown and Les Knight left the room after item 4 and did not return.

5. **To consider response to applications P212844/F to be determined by Herefordshire Council**
[P212844/F - Planning Permission](#) The Castle Inn Ford Street Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UN, Proposed change of use from what is currently part of the Castle Inn public house, to form 4 holiday units as part of the operation of the Inn.
RESOLVED Wigmore Group Parish Council **objects** to this application. Please see appendix 1.
6. **To consider response to applications P212540/F to be determined by Herefordshire Council**
[P212540/F - Planning Permission](#) The Castle Inn Ford Street Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UN, Change of land use from public house garden to 4 no. caravan plots. Retrospective.
RESOLVED Wigmore Group Parish Council **objects** to this application. Please see appendix 2. Ward Cllr Carole Gandy was asked to request re-direction of this application.
7. An update on **Planning Matters** re Holiday Home Park to the rear of the Castle Inn was received.
RESOLVED to write to Planning Enforcement reiterating concerns reported in June and asking for an update of action taken regarding the breach of Conservation Area regulations (trees), see item 1 in Appendix 3; and asking for confirmation of number of chalet bases permitted. See item 2 in Appendix 3. .

The meeting closed at 20:15

ORIGINAL SIGNED AND ON FILE

Signed

Cllr Nick Davidson. Chairman, Wigmore Group Parish Council

11 October 2021

Planning Application 212844 Castle Inn Proposed change of use from what is currently part of the Castle Inn public house, to form 4 holiday units as part of the operation of the Inn.

Wigmore Group Parish Council (WGPC) **objects** to this planning application for a number of reasons including several aspects of the Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) with which it does not comply.

The whole of the Castle Inn lies within the Wigmore Conservation Area. The proposed development is not consistent with some aspects of **NDP Policy WG9**:

a. WG9 c. *“Reflect the proportion of wall to opening found in the elevations of traditional buildings and employ robust detailing, avoiding the use of applied features or detailing;”*

The proposal includes creation of much larger and additional openings on both the ground and first floors.

b. WG9 d. *“Reinforce local identity by the use of traditional materials ... used in the Conservation Area”*.

The proposed steel balconies and powdered steel balcony railings are not local traditional materials. WGPC requests that, in order to comply with **NDP Policy WG9 d**, materials for the proposed enlarged door and window openings are clarified prior to the application be considered.

In the Design and Access Statement the applicant recognises that *“The Castle Inn sits within the Wigmore Conservation Area. Although the building is not listed, the applicant team acknowledges its historic importance and that any interventions should make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area (CA) and avoid any harm to the setting of the CA or any heritage assets.”*

The building is in the landscape setting of nearby listed buildings, and the proposed 1.5 m wide balconies will significantly affect that historic landscape setting. At first floor level the balconies will overlook neighbouring properties, leading to significant loss of privacy, and will diminish the heritage aspects or their settings cf. **NDP Policy WG10 c**. Juliet-style balconies would be an alternative to minimise such loss of privacy to surrounding properties.

The proposed re-opening of a first-floor window on the west elevation, currently wholly hidden behind dead ivy is also of concern. The Parish Council requests that, as a minimum, this window is glazed with frosted glass, to avoid further invasion of privacy of the neighbouring listed building.

Ecological Survey

The Parish Council notes that not ecological survey has been submitted with the application.

Residents have reported that several pairs of Common Swifts nest annually under the eaves of the rear (north) elevation of this building, and bats are regularly observed using the building. The Parish Council requests that an ecological survey, by a suitably qualified professional ecologist should be undertaken and supplied, with proposals for any appropriate mitigation measures if protected species are identified, before further consideration of this application.

Sewage disposal

The addition of 4 holiday units will increase sewage flows through the existing foul sewage drain from the Castle Inn. The Parish Council has considerable concerns that the existing drainage arrangements are not fit for purpose. The system is already overloaded, and causing problems to the Inn and neighbouring properties, foul smells having been reported to Environmental Health. It is understood that a number of chalets discharge sewage (using a pumping system) into the same outlet. The Parish Council requests that the existing sewage system for the Inn AND for these chalets be scrupulously assessed before the application is considered.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

The Parish Council reiterates comments made by the PROW and requests that plans are re-submitted showing the public right of way.

Mrs Maggie Brown

Clerk. 11 September 2021

Planning Application 212540 Castle Inn Change of land use from public house garden to 4 no. caravan plots.

Retrospective.

Wigmore Group Parish Council (WGPC) **objects** to this application for a number of reasons.

1. General

There appear to be discrepancies, misinformation, and missing information for this application.

a. No overall explanation/clarification is provided of what works have been already undertaken that are the subject of this retrospective application. WGPC requests that a clear statement of all such works be provided so as to more accurately inform decision-making on this application, and any conditions to be applied if it is approved.

b. The application form submitted is the standard pro-forma for a planning development proposed *to be* undertaken – not *having been* undertaken. Hence, although the answers to some questions are strictly accurate concerning the current situation they are misleading concerning works already undertaken. For example, Q10 “*Are there trees or hedges on the proposed development site?*” Answer: “*No*”. But this is because mature hedgerows and trees previously providing screening around the pub garden area have been removed without planning consent during the development work in the last year.

2. Public Right of Way (footpath). Site Plan and Location Plan both show this PROW as “existing” and running through the Castle Inn car park and then down the track through the middle of the park. According to the official Herefordshire Council PROW map this is incorrect: it runs first along the neighbouring Ford Farm driveway and then down the western boundary of the caravan park. The recent works undertaken on Plot 1 (Warden’s Lodge) have further blocked this PROW route. WGPC is not aware that any formal application for the realignment of this PROW has been made, and requests that this is regularised as part of this application.

3. Compliance with Wigmore Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Policies and development within the Wigmore Conservation Area. The documentation makes no reference to the NDP, nor of any compliance (or otherwise) with NDP Policies. Part of the area (west side of track, Plot 1) lies within the Conservation Area and so is subject to **Policy WG9**. The design and appearance of the chalet (Warden’s Lodge) already installed on Plot 1 does not meet any of the development criteria set out in this policy.

4. “Soft landscaping” proposals. In the Design and Access statement, the only soft landscaping proposed is planting of 12 trees as an avenue down the central trackway.

The tree species proposed is *Sophora japonica* Japanese Pagoda Tree. This a non-native species. Planting non-native trees is not consistent with WGPC NDP **Policy WG8 g**. “*Landscaping schemes include plant species native to Herefordshire*”. WGPC requests that an alternative native species such as Field Maple *Acer campestre* should be planted.

There are no proposals for reinstating or compensating for the removal of boundary screening trees and hedges. WGPC requests that boundary screening on the western side of the site, in the Conservation Area, be reinstated as part of this application.

5. Holiday park chalet status. Nothing in the application indicates whether the additional chalets are holiday chalets (as are all other chalets on this site) or residential chalets. The developer’s agent verbally confirmed to councillors that these are holiday chalets, but WGPC requests that agreed occupancy arrangements are made explicit in the application and in any planning determination. This may form part of the draft site licence, and although the licence it is not a planning consideration, it would help the Parish Council to have sight of it.

6. Drainage – foul and surface water.

This is of particular concern to the Parish Council. There are inconsistencies in the application documentation as to whether drainage discharges into the River Lugg or River Teme catchment. It has been confirmed to WGPC by the

Assistant Drainage Engineer from Balfour Beatty and the Environment Agency that discharge is into the River Teme system.

Concerns were raised about the proposed Treatment Plant. It was not clear at the site visit on 25 August precisely where it is to be located. If it is installed and is found to be inadequate, it will be very unpleasant for residents either side of the treatment plant, and the wider community.

Consultee responses have noted that

- a) the application is located in an unsewered area (Welsh Water).
- b) there are inconsistencies in the proposals concerning foul water drainage proposals (Land Drainage)
- c) that submission of a surface water drainage strategy and a revised foul water drainage strategy should be provided prior to any planning permission consideration (Land Drainage).

WGPC notes that foul drainage from a number of chalets discharges (using a pumping system) into an outlet at the Inn and questions why the proposed chalets will not do the same.

WGPC requests that the Drainage Report supplied by the applicant be revised and re-submitted for response from consultees and reiterates the requests from Land Drainage listed at c).

7. Fire Safety

Concerns were raised about safety due to the close proximity of chalets on the site as a whole. No indication of heating arrangements in the chalets has been provided.

The Parish Council confirms that in principle, it does not support retrospective applications. It thanks you for taking its comments into consideration.

Mrs Maggie Brown, Clerk

RESOLVED to write to Planning Enforcement reiterating concerns of breaches of planning conditions reported in June and asking for an update of action taken to address these, and regarding the breach of Conservation Area regulations (trees), see item 1 below; and asking for confirmation of number of chalet bases permitted, see item 2 below.

1. Breach of Conservation Area regulations concerning trees.

Removal of mature trees and native hedgerows along the western boundary of the holiday park within the Conservation Area. Satellite imagery (see images below) shows that these features were present until at least May 2020 but gone by April 2021. WGPC believes these were removed in about August 2020, as reported to Herefordshire Council planning enforcement.

No information from the planning department has been received, since 8 May, when Mr Tansley confirmed this condition had been breached.

It is understood that the illegal removal trees in a Conservation Area is a criminal offence, prosecutable by the local planning authority. Also, by law appropriate replacement trees must be planted in compensation.

Please confirm what action has been taken by the Planning Department. Note that the “soft landscaping” proposals in the retrospective planning application does not address this matter.

2. Number of chalet bases now installed on eastern side of caravan site.

The retrospective planning application 212540 Site Plan appears to be incorrect of the most recent satellite imagery available (April 2021).

The 2007 consent was for 8 bases and chalets on the eastern side of the plot. The Site Plan shows 8 plots (plots 12-19) on this area. (Note that this number excludes Plot 20 shown on the Site Plan, noted as having assumed consent – WGPC notes that there does appear to have been a caravan on this location since sometime prior to 2018).

However, the April 2021 satellite imagery (see below) and the WGPC site visit finds that there are now 9 bases/chalets installed on the 2007 consent area, i.e. one more than consented.

Please confirm number of chalets complies with planning permissions given. If there are more than permitted, please advise what actions will be taken to address this.

Email to Planning Enforcement Appendix 1

Satellite imagery April 2021 from Google Earth



Satellite imagery from Google Earth

May 2020



June 2018



Mrs Maggie Brown, Clerk

11 September 2021