

Development Management Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2024 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Williamson (Chairman)

Cllr. Horwood (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Baker, Ball, Bayley, Camp, P. Darrington, Edwards-Winser, Esler, Granville, Hogarth, Malone, Purves, Silander, Varley and Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Barker and Harrison

Cllr. Robinson was also present.

67. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held 7 March 2024 be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

68. Declarations of Interest or Predetermination

Cllrs Granville and Varley declared for Minute 70 - 24/00068/FUL - The Old Meeting House, St Johns Road, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3LR that they were members of Sevenoaks Town Council, but that they remained open minded.

Cllr Camp declared that for Minute 70 - 24/00068/FUL - The Old Meeting House, St Johns Road, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3LR that she was predetermined and would not participate in the item.

69. Declarations of Lobbying

All members declared that they had been lobbied in respect of Minute 70 - 24/00068/FUL - The Old Meeting House, St Johns Road, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3LR.

70. 24/00068/FUL - The Old Meeting House, St Johns Road, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3LR

The proposal sought planning permission for Change of use to a place of worship, and works to fenestration. The application had been referred to the Committee by Councillor Camp on the grounds the potential impact upon residential amenities, parking, and highways safety.

Members' attention was brought to the main agenda papers and late observation sheet, which did not amend the recommendation.

The Committee was addressed by the following speakers:

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Against the Application: Paul George

For the Application: Peter Court

Parish Representatives: Cllr Sue Camp

Members asked questions of clarification of the speakers and the officer. The proposal would not have facilities to host weddings or funerals. The facility would be open for anyone to use, and it was anticipated it would primarily be used for daytime and Friday prayers. Some members of the congregation currently shared cars to attend services.

The 18-month period of planning permission would allow for the proposed pre-commencement conditions to be assessed, agreed, and implemented, before use could commence. Six months was considered appropriate for this, allowing for 12 months of use, in line with the recommendation from Kent County Council. The Environmental Health assessment had considered noise levels with open windows. Condition 6 would require the applicant to maintain a register of attendance which would be open to enforcement spot-checks. These restrictions on occupancy were a measure to reduce the impact on parking and neighbouring amenity. The limits were maximums, and it was not guaranteed that all occupancy spaces would be filled at any one time.

It was moved by the Chairman that the recommendations within the report, as amended by the late observations, be agreed.

Members discussed the application. It was moved and duly seconded that the wording of Condition 11 be amended to read “only lights conforming to the approved detail shall be installed”, instead of “Only the approved details shall be installed”. The amendment was put to the vote and it was carried.

Members further discussed the application. They expressed concerns regarding the impact of the proposal to residential amenity, in particular through the generation of noise in the early hours of the day, from people parking and walking to the facility. Members noted that these issues could not be controlled by conditions. It was also considered that the proposal could exacerbate the existing parking problems in the area, as the on-site parking was insufficient. The additional pressures on on-street parking could have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Some members suggested that the proposed 18-month trial period would allow these issues to be examined more accurately, and solutions to be developed.

The motion, as amended, was put to the vote and it was lost.

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It was moved and duly seconded that planning permission be refused on the grounds that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity through the generation of noise and activity throughout the day, including during early morning hours, and that the development would have a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network and an unacceptable impact on highways safety, through the insufficient provision of on-site parking, when taking into account existing conditions on the road.

The motion was put to the vote and it was

Resolved: That planning permission be refused on the following grounds:

- a) The proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity through the generation of noise and activity throughout the day, including during early morning hours, contrary to policies EN2 and EN7 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, and paragraph 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework; and
- b) that the development would have a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network and an unacceptable impact on highways safety, through the insufficient provision of on-site parking, taking into account existing parking and traffic conditions on the road, contrary to policies T1 and T2 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, and paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8:44PM

CHAIRMAN