

GRAFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE GRAFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th APRIL 2019 AT 3.30pm, EMPIRE HALL, COMMITTEE ROOM, GRAFFHAM.

PRESENT: Cllr. S. Macqueen (Chairman of Graffham Parish Council Planning Committee),
Cllr. C. Ainley, Cllr. S. Lydiard-Wilson and Cllr. J. Uphill

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Tracy Rowe, Clerk
2 Parishioners.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllr. H. Charman, Cllr. T. Richardson and Cllr. S. Mackie.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

3. **Public Questions.**

The two parishioners were present to hear, and comment on, Agenda Item 4: SDNP/19/00968/FUL – South Downs National Park Wealden Heaths Heathlands Reunited Project: Graffham Common Sheep Pig Sculpture.

There were no questions or comments from either parishioner at this point.

4. **SDNP/19/00968/FUL South Downs National Park Wealden Heaths Heathlands Reunited Project. Five stone sculptures carved from sandstone on various heathland sites which include: Graffham Common Sheep Pig Sculpture.**

Cllr. Macqueen, Chairman of Graffham Parish Council Planning Committee, stated that a site inspection had not taken place for this application, as the site being a natural scrubland common was well known. He raised the query of whether SDNPA was allowed to sit in judgment on a planning application which was apparently from itself in substance i.e. was SDNPA both applicant and ruler?

It was noted that Woolbeding with Redford Parish Council had submitted an OBJECTION response to the related Heathlands Project of Resting Reptiles on its Common and its comments were similar to that previously expressed by GPC to SDNPA in its various correspondence since January 2018. (emails of 15.01.18, 13.03.18, 13.11.18 and 05.12.18.)

The Chairman asked the parishioners present for their views. One queried the exact proposed siting of the sculpture and was informed that there was a grid reference in the application details. The parishioner stated that Graffham Common was in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB), and queried how a sculpture would enhance the natural beauty of the common. He queried what could have been the motivation for an inappropriate project such as this? What would follow on from this? Tea shop, ice-cream vans to cater for the tourists? It was noted that increased visitors to the park could lead to litter and erosion to the area.

A GPC member stated that if this sculpture were allowed, other intrusions could follow: marked paths and signage – all unnecessary and unwanted.

A parishioner stated that the idea of a sculpture on the common was bizarre – the common is a wild, rough scrub common. Any sculpture, of any sort, would be inappropriate, it would be an eyesore, a carbuncle. This was not an urban area where a sculpture might possibly be appropriate.

A GPC member commented on the inappropriate use of public funds – a project such as this was a waste of public money which would be better spent on other necessary areas such as schools.

Following discussion, it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Graffham Parish Council had not changed its view as previously expressed on several occasions to SDNPA over the past year. The Clerk was **UNANIMOUSLY** instructed to submit the following response:

Graffham Parish Council (GPC) submits a **STRONG OBJECTION** to this application.

GPC has previously made its views known to SDNPA on 15.01.18, 13.03.18, 13.11.18 and 05.12.18 which seemingly have been ignored.

Having held a planning meeting, and gained the views of parishioners, it now reiterates these views again: A sculpture, of any sort, would be totally inappropriate on Graffham Common, which being a wild, rough scrub common is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

This is especially so given that one of the aims of the SDNP is to conserve and protect the existing environment.

GPC considers that a sculpture, of any sort, would not enhance the natural beauty of the common, and would be an eyesore and totally out of place in the natural beauty of the land.

The “Disneyfication” of Graffham Common, with the aims of increased visitors leading to litter, vandalism and erosion is entirely unwarranted.

Any sculpture, of any sort, would only be suitable in an urban park – not in the precious landscape of Graffham Common.

5. **SDNP/19/01272/HOUS 15 Guillods Cottages, Graffham GU28 0NR**

The Chairman noted that it had not been possible to conduct an inspection of the site, although contact had now been made with the architect.

This item would be deferred until a future planning meeting, to ensure that a site visit could be conducted prior to discussion.

6. **To include any late or amended planning applications received.**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 4.39pm.

These minutes are an accurate record of the meeting.

Cllr. Sandy Macqueen, Chairman, GPC Planning Committee Date.....