



WEST WITTERING PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

held on Wednesday December 17th, 2025, at 10.30am in The Pavilion, Rookwood Road, West Wittering.

PRESENT: MR K MARTIN (CHAIR), MRS N PIKE AND MRS L HANFORD.

MR I WESTERN WAS ALSO PRESENT AS A COUNCILLOR, NOT AS A MEMBER OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** - Mrs B Wright, Mr B Hutton, Mr W Buckland.
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Mrs Hanford and Mr Western declared an interest in WW/25/02735/DOM.
- 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:** - The minutes of the previous meeting held on November 26th, 2025, were approved as a true and fair record and were agreed by all.
- 4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS:** - The Chair proposed that planning application WW/02765/FUL would be taken first and all agreed. The decisions of the Council were as follows:

WW/25/02765/FUL – CAKEHAM MANOR ESTATE BEEACH SOUTH OF LAPWING.

Objection.

WWPC wish to object to this proposal to remove almost 7,000sqm of sand and vegetation (37,000 tons) from the sand dunes and relocate south by 10m onto the beach. The application site is .5 hectare between the Chichester Harbour and Bracklesham Bay SSSI. The application will reduce the natural height of the dunes, reshape them and then fence. This process has already been tried on a much smaller area to the east and on West Wittering Estate Beach. The effect is to remove the natural visual beauty, the mixed vegetation and to introduce fencing and an unnatural flatness, uniformity and lack of mature vegetation. Neighbourhood Plan Policies WW10 and WW11 are part of the development plan, are highly relevant and should be adhered to unless material considerations indicate otherwise. WW10 addresses coastal enhancements which will be supported as long as the works: "are accessible for all and do not adversely impact on the exceptional ecological and landscape assets of the area. Proposals that damage these assets, including which would result in an urbanisation and/or domestication of the foreshore will not be supported" Policy WW11 addresses Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Mitigating the Impacts of Climate Change: "Development proposals should achieve a net-gain in biodiversity assets of at least 10% (demonstrated by reference to the Defra Biodiversity Metric). As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should seek to enhance the natural capital of the immediate locality and increase its resilience to climate change Development proposals should retain and support the enhancement of non-designated biodiversity and geodiversity assets except where the works are essential for the viability of the site (such as access). In these circumstances any harm to the asset concerned should be minimised and where practicable mitigated." The applicants own consultant in its Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) acknowledges the area is heavily vegetated and records a

significant number (73) of reptiles, 5 species of bats, 11,000 records of birds (59 Schedule 1) and 73 red data list. Also that there are three statutory protected areas within the zone of influence. The same applicants report refers to bird nesting sites and a bat roost. It suggest these works will do long term damage and the risk to permanent loss of habitat is "high". The risk is that this very important natural asset will be lost as the consultant suggests it may take 30 years to replace. All the fauna recorded on site rely on the significant vegetation which supports vital insects and habitat all of which will be lost. Yet the BNG matrix describes the vegetation as "sparse" Further the EIA states that mitigation of this loss is required, but no mitigation is offered. The mosaic of vegetation on the dunes, holding it together includes very mature marram grass. This takes time to establish and is nature's way of stabilising the dunes and making them a natural sea defence. Young marram is very vulnerable to trampling hence the need for long term fencing. The adjacent site has had three new fences over the past years to keep the public out . The owners add more fencing when the sand submerges the existing fencing but don't bother to remove what is there so now there are three fences submerged on the beach in front of the remodelled sand dune . This is urbanising, prevents access and is a great loss of visual amenity. Generally, this man-made interference is hated by residents and visitors alike. The proposal is in direct breach of WW10 and WW11 The access for the works which are estimated to take four weeks is through Pound Road and West Wittering Estate private road rather than using the applicants own access, Berry Barn Lane. This means that all vehicles have to come through the centre of the conservation area. The application is silent about the traffic movements, but the significant amounts of waste/ vegetation cannot be left on the beach as previously so will need to be taken off site by heavy vehicles. It is also the road on which our primary school is located. The application states the sand dunes are unstable, but does not include any expert evidence to confirm this statement. What is there includes mature marram, tamarisk etc to hold it in place. There is no reference to the sand dunes as a natural sea defence in front of residential houses. Again expert advice should be sought before up to 5 metres of the sand dunes are removed. The area is very vulnerable to incursions from the sea and the effects of climate change. There also needs to be a full assessment of the consequences to the neighbouring areas of the removal and relocation of huge quantities of material over a .5-hectare area. There is also a significant risk that if the sand dunes are disturbed the wind-blown sand increases as no longer anchored. Again, this has not been assessed. The use of heavy machinery to move a dynamic dune and vegetation is not sustainable. The sand builds up again very quickly everyone accepts that nature cannot be defied. The application does not provide any evidence that this is a sensible or sustainable solution to dealing with a beautiful natural sand dune and its flora and fauna. The Parish is aware from the last sand dune removal how much public upset is created by the loss of natural assets much valued and asks the District Council to consider this application in light of our NP policies and refuse it.

WW/25/02514/DOM – 1 Elmstead Park Road

No objection

WW/02735/DOM – Reymar, 15 Joliffe Road

No objection

WW/25/02835/DOM – Little Ashlyns, Wellsfield

No objection

WW/25/02767/DOM – Grey Hills, Chichester Road

No objection subject to the use of natural materials and appropriate lighting.

5.To receive local planning decisions of interest - all decisions were aligned with WWPC comments.

6. Enforcement, licensing and correspondence – The Clerk has sent further photographs of the landscaping issues at the Church Road development.

7.Date of the next meeting: - The next meeting of the WWPC Planning Committee will take place on January 7th, 2026.

There being no further business for discussion the meeting closed at 11.45 am.

Signed:Date.....
Chairman

THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT FORM UNTIL APPROVED BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AT THE NEXT MEETING, AND MAY BE AMENDED BY RESOLUTION. COPIES OF ALL UNAPPROVED MINUTES, AND AGENDAS AND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WEST WITTERING PARISH COUNCIL CAN BE FOUND ON THE PARISH COUNCIL'S WEB SITE:
www.westwitteringparishcouncil.gov.uk