

# FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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## Planning Committee Details of Delegated Comments June 2020

Decisions can be delegated to the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman) plus two other members if agreed by the Chairman.

The following decisions were made under delegated authority by Keith Brandon (Chairman), Tony Hall, Maria Naylor and Sam Sharples. (The Chairman has the casting vote in any tie).

- **WD/2020/0937/F – Replacement porch and single storey extension.  
5 MAPLE LEAF COTTAGES, SCHOOL LANE, BLACKBOYS, TN22 5LJ.**  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=149807>

The Parish Council supports the application which is a modest addition to the property. The Council particularly likes the plan to move the front porch to balance the building once the planned extension is in place.

- **WD/2020/0921/F – Change of use from storage to residential dwelling  
CIDER HOUSE FARM, LEWES ROAD, BLACKBOYS, TN22 5JD.**  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=149787>

The Parish Council supports the application which is a sympathetic conversion keeping the original appearance as much as possible. The Parish Council would not like to see further residential properties being built as there is already permission, which is partly built, for 28 static lodges and 5 'other' conversions.

- **WD/2020/0799/F – Erection of an animal store for calves.  
ARCHES FARM, PUMP LANE, FRAMFIELD, TN22 5RJ.**  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=149625>

The Parish Council supports the application. We would not like to see the building any higher or longer (at the height of over 4m) in the future, as it is running parallel with a narrow lane and will have an impact on the rural street scene.

- **WD/2020/0700/MAO – Outline application for the erection of up to 80 dwellings.  
Lands south of Framfield Road, Blackboys**  
<https://planning.wealden.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=149499>

The Parish Council submitted comments early in May on this application. The points raised are still valid concerns, but the Chairman wishes to add a further statement:

Over the past few weeks during the Covid-19 lockdown, I have been increasingly made aware of the anxious and distraught concerns of our Parish residents in regard to this planning application, and the planning process generally throughout a global pandemic. Whilst many of the legal requirements to follow process sit with government directly, it

should be noted that the public are deeply concerned that they cannot raise issues and concerns in the normal acceptable method – by attending a planning meeting. Whilst it may be too late for the current application along with the crisis affecting the world, perhaps Wealden District Council can look at ways of approaching government with a view of restricting planning applications during similar events in the future.

The comments made by our Committee are still appropriate, and we implore the Planning Committee and/or Officers of WDC to dismiss this application. Since our first written comments, it should be noted that the Grove Café on the boundary of Blackboys has now sadly closed, permanently. This was a key attribute for the applicant in presenting a sustainable location. With only a pub in the village, it is now further unsustainable. It also highlights the increasing trend that small villages and hamlets that once employed local businesses, find it difficult to survive. Pubs are closing at phenomenal rate, and we would not want to see the Blackboys Inn close, but sustainability should be based on future potential as well as the current situation.

Blackboys offers minimal amenities. A small playground albeit proportionate to the current size of the village, and a recreation ground that has been used by a local cricket club since the mid 1800's. When they do play, the boundary rope takes up over 90% of the recreation ground, highlighting that our open green space is limited in size.

As you will be aware, conversing with the public has been difficult during lockdown, but we have spoken to many concerned residents over the past few weeks who wanted to air their views. Along with this, I have personally read all the letters of objection (currently nearing 140 at time of writing). It should be noted from these letters that there is a common theme, and their local knowledge of the impact that this application would have on the local community and wider areas should be taken seriously. It was distressing to read their concerns and comments, and I wholeheartedly endorse every single one.

The additional comments from statutory consultees also share concerns and seek refusal, albeit many due to lack of information by the applicant. The points raised, especially regarding flooding and sewerage is of grave concern. With severe cuts by ESCC on road, pathways and vegetation maintenance, it is falling on our Council to fill the gaps, but funding this is not sustainable for a Parish Council. The B2192 and B2102 have several flood areas, and generally causes road closures each year due to flooding, accidents or fallen trees. Adding 80 houses to a rural setting with an equally rural road network is going to exacerbate the issues it already faces. The potential for KSI incidents would increase dramatically.

The proposed location is on the limits of the village and is as rural as it gets. The police have commented that they would wish to see street lighting on the proposed estate to get their support. A large cluster of houses with street lighting in open rural countryside is a preposterous idea. It would inevitably cause an aura of a night-time glow above it, and will ruin the dark skies currently enjoyed by residents and wildlife.

Our Parish has seen a steady but large quantity of newbuilds and conversions in recent years. The location of this application was never sustainable, as highlighted by previous dismissed appeals. Nobody would deny the need for affordable housing, but to what detriment? We have a duty to protect the rural landscape. With a climate emergency already announced locally by Wealden District Council as well as globally, this application offers no meaningful benefits to reducing our carbon footprint. 80 houses, with potentially two cars per household, will result in an instantaneous step backwards. With another application for 88 houses just a couple of miles down the road in the same Parish, the potential to destroy a peaceful, rural setting is high.

The potential to promote invitations from other preying developers if this is approved will see a cascade of applications that will destroy the countryside in similar settings. As a

Parish we are contributing to the housing need, proportionally to our size and location (if not more), but 80 additional houses is obscene.

Please listen to our residents and neighbouring councils. There is only one logical determination for this application – refusal.

09.06.2020

*Circulation: Planning Committee/All other Parish Councillors.*