



# MINUTES

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**Committee:** Planning Committee  
**Date:** Tuesday 02 March 2021  
**Time:** 6:30pm  
**Venue:** Virtual meeting via Zoom

## Present

Cllr Mike Jeffery (Chairman)  
Cllr Malcolm Chudley  
Cllr Mike Warner  
Cllr Vivienne Hodges  
Cllr John Farrand-Rogers  
Cllr Julian Edwards  
Cllr Rose Mogeni

## Also Present

Samantha Parkin (Clerk)

## PUBLIC SESSION

Four members of the public were present. They were all neighbours of the former Post Office and attended to express their concern of the loss of commercial premises in application 0056/21.

## 18/2021 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

## 19/2021 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No declarations of interest were made. No requests for dispensations were received.

## 20/2021 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Chudley, seconded by Cllr Farrand-Rogers and **resolved** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 as a correct record.

## 21/2021 PLANNING APPLICATION: 0056/21: Proposed: Change of use of redundant former post office to holiday cottage at former Post Office, Moretonhampstead

Cllr Mike Jeffery noted the objections received from the public. Cllr Warner's background report had been circulated prior to the meeting and is attached at appendix 1 on page 9.

Cllr Warner noted the application does not comply with the DNPA's requirement for town centre use classes. He noted the car park provision in the application is in fact the town car park and doesn't think this is adequate for the planning application. Cllr Warner recommends the committee object to the proposal as it doesn't comply on a number of technical grounds and is not in the town's interest. Cllr Hodges endorsed what Cllr Warner said and suggested using Cllr Warner's report as a response to DNPA.

It was proposed by Cllr Farrand-Rogers, seconded by Cllr Chudley and **resolved to strongly object** to this application because the Town should not lose potential commercial space in order to add to the stock of holiday accommodation. The provision of car parking set out in the application document, plans to use the Court St carpark as provision for guest parking, which would be noncompliant. The applicants supporting statement refers to no interest during marketing in the property as a retail opportunity. However, a local consortium offered the asking price but was outbid by the applicant therefore this statement is incorrect.

## 22/2021 PLANNING DECISIONS

It was noted the following planning decisions have been made:

1. 0619/20: Refusal of Planning Permission at Field adjacent to Kestor, Moretonhampstead
2. 0001/21: DNPA decision – Prior Approval is not required at St Andrews Church, Moretonhampstead

The Chairman thanked the members of public for attending and their interest in the matter.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.40pm.

*Planning Minutes 02.03.21 Attachment no. 1 – Former Post Office Report*

Mike J has asked me to provide you all with the up-to-date position on the planning application above, which is due to be considered by the Planning Sub-Committee, immediately prior to next Full Council meeting.

You will all recall that we tried hard to find someone to take on the Post Office business when Jenny gave her notice in, and due to PO requirements and restrictions, found it impossible, even with a willing candidate, to make it viable as a PO.

The vacant building then went on the market with Sawdye & Harris and a local consortium formed with a view to buying the premises and relocating the Information Centre there. They hoped over time to reintroduce some of the Post Office services and supplement income with an enhanced retail offer. The consortium offered the asking price and the applicant offered a few thousand more. There are a lot of local objections to the proposed change of use both on social media and on the DNPA planning website, as it is felt the Town should not lose potential commercial space in order to add to the stock of holiday accommodation.

We will have to judge the application on the information supplied, but we have received a good technical planning critique from Richard Short, who is a neighbour of Cllr Edwards, and pre-retirement was an Exeter town planner. His critique and letter of objection is attached below. His observations are all technically correct and the provision of car parking set out in the application document, plans to use the Court St carpark as provision for guest parking, which would be noncompliant.

Trust this gives everyone some useful background and please let me know if you have any queries.

Many thanks

Mike Warner

Mr Short's letter of objection to DNPA

While the Post Office, which had ancillary retail, has closed, the established use in planning terms is a Class A1 retail use under the Use Classes Order 1987. Under the UCO amendment regulations 2020 it is encompassed within the wider Class E (commercial, businesses and services). The proposed holiday accommodation is a restricted use within Class C3 residential of the UCO. Planning permission is therefore required. The site is within the main shopping area of Moretonhampstead, one of the defined local centres of Dartmoor. Planning law requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The main development plan document applying is the Development Management & Development Policies document adopted July 2013. The critical determining policy is DMD19 providing that development involving the loss of a Class A1 (shop) use will not be allowed unless evidence has been submitted with the application that the property has been offered for sale or rent or lease on the open market and at a realistic price for a continuous period of not less than 12 months prior to the application being submitted. The emerging Dartmoor Local Plan December 2018 is a material consideration carrying significant weight at this stage of preparation. Strategic Policy 5.3 also provides that within the main shopping areas of local centres changes of use away from Class A1-4 to other uses will be resisted unless the LPA is satisfied the property has been realistically marketed for

those uses for 12 months. The applicant's supporting statement refers to no interest during marketing in the property as a retail opportunity. That appears to be incorrect and no evidence is presented, as the policies require, on the period of marketing, that the terms were realistic and on any other interest that the agents received. I understand that the local tourist information centre offered the full asking price for the property but their offer was not accepted. Such a use which also includes ancillary retail, relocating from their existing smaller premises, would appear to be within the terms of Class A1 and certainly within the new Class E. This would enable it to occupy the building without requiring any material change of use. There may also be other Class E uses with viable proposals for the building. The application must therefore be refused as contrary to DMDP policy DMD19 and emerging DLP Policy 5.3 since the LPA cannot be satisfied that there has been realistic marketing to enable a continuation of a class A1 or new Class E use that would meet the development plan aim of sustaining and improving the range of local shops and services in Moretonhampstead local centre.