
PLANNING WORKING GROUP

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the on Thursday, 23 April 2026 from 10.30 am - 11.05 am.

PRESENT: Councillors Andy Booth (Chair), Simon Clark (Vice-Chair), Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Christian DeGrussa, Ian Harrison, Kellie MacKenzie and Tim Neal.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Hayden Brawn, Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Kieran Golding, Ben J Martin and Julien Speed.

891 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

892 25/502451/FULL NEW ACRES, SPADE LANE, HARTLIP, KENT, ME9 7TT

The Chairman welcomed the Agent, applicants, members of the public and Members to the meeting.

The Senior Planning Officer (Planning Applications) introduced the application for retention of an existing eight plot Gypsy and Traveller site at New Acres, Spade Lane, Hartlip, Kent, ME9 7TT. Temporary permission had been granted but this had now lapsed. Officers recommended approval of the application as they considered the benefits of the application outweighed the harm.

The Planning Agent outlined the proposed development and raised points which included:

- This was a well laid out site with established boundaries;
- there was currently no soft landscaping given the uncertainty of the temporary permission but the applicant was keen to add this once permission was granted;
- the site currently had no electricity supply as the utility company would not install it until planning permission had been granted;
- the applicants were keen to improve the landscaping and drainage and these could be required by condition; and
- the application was an opportunity for the Council to meet its five-year supply of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

Local residents raised points which included:

- A former connection to an electricity supply had been cut-off resulting in the use of generators to supply electricity at the site, which has had an adverse impact on the amenity of local residents as a result of noise;
- concerns that caravans were, allegedly, being advertised for rent online and could be used to accommodate vulnerable people; and

- concerns that additional caravans would be brought onto the site.

Following a question from a local resident the Planning Manager (Planning Applications) explained that if planning permission was granted any breaches would need to be reported to the Council's Planning Investigations team.

In response to questions from Members regarding foul water drainage and the potential use of cesspits, the planning agent explained that sewage treatment plants were currently being used which then went into the soakaway. Cesspits would not be the best system for a shared site such as this. The site was low flood risk.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel