

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF HAWKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD WEDNESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7PM**

Minutes

Present: Cllr Caukill (Chair), Cllr Buckle (Vice-Chair), Cllr Humphrey, Cllr Butcher, Cllr Wallace and Cllr Sinclair
Also attending: 25 members of the public, Cllr Louisson also K Horton (Clerk).

- 1) Welcome** Cllr Caukill opened the meeting. Introductions made.
- 2) Apologies for Absence.** Apologies noted from Cllr Large (illness) and Cllr Stewart (work commitments).
- 3) Declarations of Interest.** No interests to note.
- 4) Approval of Minutes** - Parish Council Meeting held on 16th July 2025 and Planning Advisory Committee on Monday 11th August 2025. No queries raised. All in agreement for signature as an accurate record of the meetings. Minutes duly signed.
- 5) Public Participation** Cllr Caukill explained the relevant Standing Orders and confirmed who wished to speak.

Resident. Parent shared their personal experience of why school provision is required locally.

Resident. Referred to letter that local Empshott residents have submitted to EHDC raising concerns about application not meeting with South Downs operational guidelines. Concerned that second wider application seeks to develop farmland to accommodate school and stated that the school and its operation will be a detriment of local environment.

Resident. Referred to letter that was circulated to Parish Councillors explaining concerns about drainage and sewerage. If development does go ahead, they would like a requirement for Sewage treatment plant to be installed immediately to remove risk of river being polluted. Resident requests that sewage plant is installed now so that river is not polluted.

Resident. Disagreed with PC's statement (at previous meeting) that an alternative use of the Grange might have a greater impact on the local community. School would allow 200 car journeys – most traffic intensive use possible. Permitting a school would set precedent for EHDC to approve high traffic developments on local lanes. Church Lane is selected on sat nav routes and resident believes that school drivers and deliveries will ignore requirement to avoid this route.

Resident. Application does not meet local need as pupils will travel for up to 60 mins and the cost for this will be borne by the LA. The application is business driven and looks to squeeze income from a property held in trust. The application does not consider residents or ethos of National Park. Integrity of lane should not be undermined.

Resident. Safety of vehicles and that of pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and anyone locally is of concern. Shared personal experience and concern that increase in traffic will increase RTAs. Reference to local fatality on lane in Dunsfold. Discussed concerns about junction with B3006: 1 car every 3.5 seconds.

Resident. Application says that there is an intention to lay hedge to improve visibility. Substantial oak tree (approx 150yr) is in that area. Planning statement advises no protected trees which is accurate but masks that tree is in proposed hedge line. Trees have already been felled that have been in way of development and losing this old tree would impact the local ecosystem.

Resident. Need for the school is there and the building has been well researched for a provision of SEN. A great deal of work has gone in the planning and to ensure the business can be sustained. Would contest issues raised relating to traffic count and RTAs.

No other attendees wish to speak so public participation closed.

6) Planning. To consider a response to the following planning application(s):

a) SDNP/25/03084/FUL – Empshott Grange, Church Lane, Empshott, Liss, Hampshire, GU33 6HT

Proposal: *Change of use of the principal redlined land parcel at Empshott Grange from a dwelling house (Class C3) to an independent specialist school (Class F1(A)), including the stopping up of the Mill Lane entrance, associated operational development comprising external play space, staff and visitor parking, access and landscaping within that principal area; together with highway access works requiring land within the two separate redlined parcels comprising: (I) widening of Mill Lane to a minimum of 4.8m on the approach to B3006 and the provision of displaced car parking and (II) visibility improvements at the Church Lane junction with Mill Lane as shown on drawing no 1790-096H (Location Plan).*

- Cllr Humphrey noted number of residents in Empshott have logged objections. Didn't wish to whitewash difficulties but believes there is a huge need for this type of school and for this reason it may be necessary to look beyond own comfort zone. Noted preadvice had been taken by applicant and if those terms can be met, particularly over transport, then application needs to be looked at in that light
- Cllr Sinclair noted that in the application paperwork there were several mentions of S106 and believes this may be a way of ensuring that work that need to be completed will be enforceable and completed in the correct manner. Eg the eco works for hedging and sewage needs. Cllr Sinclair also said it was important that any traffic works on Mill Lane need to be completed to a high standard. Cllr Caukill noted that it would likely be a Highways agent monitoring and signing off this work.
- Cllr Buckle queried whether Section 106 was appropriate for sewerage improvements. Cllr Louisson advised that conditions for foul water drainage and sewerage can be included as part of approval and developer then has to deliver this. Not necessarily through S106 though. Cllr Caukill asked how such requirements can be enforced. Cllr Louisson advised that it would any breach would be investigated by the Planning and Enforcement teams.
- Cllr Buckle noted the strength of feeling about the application: a small population with almost 50% objecting but was pleased to note that some support had been expressed at the meeting. Cllr Buckle asked whether approving the proposed changes to the historic lanes would set a precedent and considered whether the changes were proportionate and whether they butt against the National Park's "rules". Cllr Buckle noted that a lot of work had been completed by the applicant to mitigate feedback on last application but is concerned about the impact on the lanes. Cllr Buckle acknowledged that the part of lane in question is not the most attractive locally but she and Cllr Caukill considered whether the changes mean that historic lane classification for Mill Lane would be lost.
- Cllr Butcher recognised the feedback from residents and the research that has been done. Reflecting as a governor of a junior school, he is aware that the demand for SEN exists but notes the queries that have been raised over the definition of a local need. Believes this matter has been considered by the LA and concerns have been addressed by the applicant.
- Cllr Caukill referenced the discussion points about the SDNPA and highlighted that the PC are not the decision making body. The Planning Dept appear to take little feedback unless it ties in with the view they reach. On the last application the PC were advised by SDNPA that EHDC were capable of interpreting the National Park's guidelines. As such Cllr Caukill believes EHDC will make the decision on this application. One option open to the PC is to ask their District Cllr (Cllr Louisson) to call the matter in to Planning Committee.
- Cllr Louisson advised that traffic issues are under the remit of Hampshire Highways (EHDC might look at noise impact of cars and delays in relation to the application). If Highways confirm they are happy with

traffic arrangements then it would be hard for EHDC Planning to go against this. If EHDC refused then applicant would have the right of appeal and EHDC would have financial exposure.

- Cllr Humphrey noted that reference had been made to some 200 cars but that this was maximum capacity which the school will not operate at immediately. This figure also doesn't take into account the minibus collection points.
- Cllr Wallace observed that the evening's meeting was important so that voices can be shared and that it was clear there is tension between residents needs vs schooling needs. Acknowledged that traffic concerns are fair – living and moving to an area like Empshott is to be in the countryside and the idea of changing this will be hard but change is happening. Cllr Wallace acknowledged that there is a huge need for SEN but the definition of local would be helpful in relation to this. Further the technical details of the application are beyond her expertise and as such doesn't feel able to comment on these.
- Cllr Butcher asked whether the PC were aiming to support or not to support the application and in either case whether the PC is going to request some conditions be included by EHDC or SDNPA if they approve the application.
- In response, Cllr Caukill summarised the discussion: the development could help meet the need for a SEN provision but the development will have a big impact on local residents, change the character of Mill Lane – impacting the historic setting and biodiversity. Cllr Caukill referenced the parish council's response to the previous application; in which the PC drew attention to increase traffic, flow and junction and also sewage but did not state support or objection. In contrast, this application appears to address Highways concerns but it still leaves increased traffic on historic roads and rural environmental damage. The PC can have a personal interpretation on what "local need" is but not sure how this applies to planning guidelines. Preapplication advises that local need is met and provision would be significant benefit and would be measured against environment damage. The decision will sit with the EHDC planning officer. Cllr Caukill asked the other Cllrs whether more time would allow them to be better informed. The response was in the negative but Cllrs were clear there were a number of commitments the applicant had made that need to be legally enforceable.
- Cllr Caukill offered the following options: support, object or defer to planning to make right assessment of balance with recommended decisions.
- Cllrs were asked to vote on whether they support or object outright. No Cllrs took this option.
- Cllrs were all in agreement for a statement to be submitted informing EHDC that Hawkley PC are not in a position to either log an objection or support the application but reiterate concerns that have been discussed at meeting inc clarification that Local need has been demonstrated, biodiversity and drainage. If EHDC approve the application, then the following commitments need to be included: sewage treatment, a transport plan that serve to reduce traffic and commitments to biodiversity inc Mill Lane hedging and tree.

7) Date of next meeting – Wednesday 1 October 2025 at 7:30pm

Meeting closed 8:11pm

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Signed, Councillor Caukill, Chair HPC

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Date