

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF EVERSLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT EVERSLEY VILLAGE HALL AT 7.37pm ON THURSDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2026

PRESENT: Cllr S Dickens (SD) (Chairman)
Cllr S Kendrick (SK)
Cllr S Stephens (SS)
Cllr P Todd (PT)
Cllr E Dixon (ED)
Cllr E Batup (EB)
Cllr S Hughes (SH)

ALSO PRESENT: Tim Davies (HCCllr), 22 members of the public, and J. Street (Clerk)

Abbreviations:

HDC – Hart District Council
HCC – Hampshire County Council
EPC – Eversley Parish Council

ACTIONS

134 Apologies for absence
None were received.

135 Declarations of Interest
None were declared.

136 Approval of the Minutes of the last meeting
The minutes of the meeting of Eversley Parish Council held on **Tuesday 3rd February 2026** had been previously circulated to all Councillors.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

SD

137 Public Questions and Comments

Objections – Can the number of public objections sway Local Planning Authorities? It can yes, but any comments submitted need to be made relating to material considerations. A list of these can be found on HDC’s website.

Firgrove Road – Hampshire Highways commented on the Hollybush Farm application that Firgrove Road is considered a high-speed road with high usage and is therefore unsuitable for pedestrians and cyclists.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – What do you know of BNG at this site? The planning documents show that an assessment has been made which shows that BNG does not meet the required targets. The documents show that extra habitat or alternative sites could be offered but there is limited information available as to what this entails.

Pedestrian routes – There are no pedestrian or cycle routes offered from this site into either Yateley or Eversley Centre, surely this is an issue? The access statement is also missing numerous facilities in both Yateley or Eversley. Hopefully these are issues that HDC will take up with the developer.

Conservation area – Can EPC look at extending the conservation area at Up Green? This is something that EPC plan to look at when there is the manpower available. Currently EPC’s focus is on the Neighbourhood Planning process, and EPC doesn’t have the manpower to facilitate both concurrently. Concerningly the developer hasn’t acknowledged that EPC has initiated the Neighbourhood Planning process, yet HDC have formally recognised it.

Comments – There are several planning applications going on do we have to comment on each or do HDC take our comments on board for all? No you will need to submit your comments for each application. Please submit your comments for this application on HDC’s planning portal by 16th March 2026.

Allocations – Does site approval mean that allocations are made with utilities companies or are allocations only made when building starts? As far as we are aware allocations are made at approval. Subsequent planning applications are then considered with prior site allocations in mind.

Environment Agency – The Environment Agency have made some comments recommending refusal, do we know whether the developer has responded? It is unclear whether they have, there is a large volume of documents in relation to this application.

Infrastructure – Why are the developers so keen to build here when there is no infrastructure for these houses. Agreed, but we aren't privy to their decision-making processes.

Construction traffic – What are the plans for the construction traffic to reach the site? The documents show that the favoured route means it would come from the A30 down Cricket Hill, onto Vigo Lane and Monteagle Lane. We are aware that this would have a huge impact on Yateley.

Cars – As the average house can now have 2-3 cars each now this is a lot of extra cars in the site with restricted pedestrian routes around the site. EPC agrees and requests Berkeley Homes and HDC relook at these plans and make the necessary amendments.

138 Planning applications

To decide a consultee written response on the Planning applications as follows:

1) REF: 26/00145/OUT Firgrove Farm

Hybrid Planning Application for residential-led development

EPC Consultee Comment: EPC objects to this application and asks that it be refused.

EPC considers that the planning application is premature, since the Local Plan is currently under review to identify the most appropriate sites for housing development in the District in the light of the altered housing targets imposed by Central Government; and, since Eversley is in the process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. Therefore, the application should be refused to allow proper democratic process to guide development decisions.

EPC considers that the submission of this planning application has been rushed, resulting in numerous inconsistencies, anomalies, and erroneous statements. It would therefore be a serious mistake to grant the application as it stands.

EPC considers that the proposed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) fails to satisfy the Natural England (NE) requirements in several particulars. Just four instances of these failures are: (i) that the SANG is adjacent to the Thames Basin Heaths (TBH) Special Protection Area (SPA) with free movement between both, thus encouraging additional visitors onto the SPA; (ii) that there is no car park for the SANG to attract users from elsewhere who currently visit the SPA in the same numbers as prospective new residents will choose to use the SPA for walking, cycling, horse-riding (or motorcycling), thus adding to adverse impacts on the SPA; (iii) that the dumping of thousands of tons of excavation spoil will completely alter the natural landscape profiles; and (iv) that the proposed SANG is too suburban, as exemplified by the "Firgrove Park" misnomer, and fails to provide a "natural greenspace". Since the SANG proposal would be ineffective and would result in severe damage to the TBH SPA this application must be refused.

EPC considers that it is inappropriate to develop housing on a site that will continue to be overflowed by aircraft approaching and leaving Blackbushe Airport to the detriment of residents due to noise pollution. As HDC has previously stated, in response to other applications, residential

development “would be undesirable and impractical due to aircraft noise exposure”, so this application should be refused.

EPC considers that the impacts on the natural drainage of the site due to excavation; due to the relocation of thousands of tons of spoil; and, due to ground impaction from heavy vehicle movements has not been assessed and, therefore, neither have the further impacts of those changes, on land both upstream and downstream, been calculated. These impacts could involve both excessive de-watering of land within the SPA and Castle Bottom National Nature Reserve (NNR) and excessive surface water flows and flooding. In the absence of details, the application ought to be refused.

EPC considers that there is doubt about the capacity of the sewerage network to cope with increased volumes. The applicant’s claim that “Thames Water have confirmed sufficient network capacity for the first 200 homes” (only) is contradicted by Thames Water’s submission that the applicant has failed to provide any detail of their requirements. The site of the proposed sewage pumping station is not included within the application. However, the Planning Statement (para. 6.8 9) refers to “A secondary access ... from Kits Croft (Lane) ... for access to the pumping station for the tanker”. If the only means of sewerage removal from the first 131 houses is to be by tanker (although the figures are not included in the Transport Plan), then the application ought to be refused.

EPC considers that the land has been in use for agricultural purposes and for horse grazing purposes and that, whilst the land itself may not be considered as the best and most versatile, its loss to residential development will displace those uses onto other land. In the absence of any specific need to develop this land, its loss will reduce the quantum of land in use for productive agricultural and equestrian uses and available as open countryside. Therefore, the development should be refused.

EPC notes that the application has failed to demonstrate an appropriate level of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The applicant has identified sufficient land in the same ownership to deliver an overall 10% biodiversity net gain. However, since that land, although identified in the documentation, is not included as part of the application site, there must be doubts about both its availability and suitability as well as the legal process to secure its enhancement to deliver sufficient BNG. Without that certainty the application ought to be refused.

EPC considers that insufficient consideration has been given to the adverse impacts on heritage assets. The Planning Statement (para 6.112) notes the need for a green buffer zone to protect the setting of the Firgrove Farm buildings, but notes that the area lies outside the site. Any required buffer ought to be made available within the site, so it can be controlled by conditions. With regards to Firgrove Manor, EPC considers it important to maintain a broad visibility splay to the front of the house to protect important views from and towards the house. The proposal impinges on these views excessively and, in proposing a large three storey building, threatens to diminish the status and impact of Firgrove Manor. As it fails to “conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings” the application should be refused.

EPC considers that the impact of additional traffic has been grossly underplayed. By identifying percentage increases over existing traffic levels, the analysis fails to acknowledge that every

additional vehicle arriving at a junction that currently experiences queueing adds one vehicle to the queue. Adding four cars to a two-car queue is a 200% increase. It is entirely irrelevant that the percentage increase in total traffic is small when many highway junctions are reaching or are already beyond their capacities. Without a realistic analysis of the actual impacts on the highway system of the increased traffic levels the application ought to be refused.

EPC supports all those objectors who have raised issues about the current inadequacies of essential infrastructure, such as schools, health facilities, public transport, etc. These issues can only be properly addressed through pursuit of an integrated Local Plan, as addressed in the argument on prematurity, above.

Were the application to be granted despite the overwhelming reasons for refusal, then EPC would raise issues about the details of the application. These would cover, but are not limited to, the following aspects: (i) the lack of integration with adjoining land through pedestrian connectivity, which obstructs safer access from the development to schools, shops, health services, employment, etc. and prevents safer access by the existing population to the proposed SANG; (ii) the lack of any community building for use as a pre-school, meeting hall, etc.; (iii) the overlarge size of the dwellings when compared to the Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), with a 22% oversupply of bedrooms in the Market Housing mix and a 21% oversupply in the Affordable Housing mix; (iv) the inclusion of three-storey development; (v) the dependence on “shared space” within the development, which has in other instances led to hazardous parking, obstruction, etc.; (vi) the lack of consideration of the site being within Eversley, due, it is supposed, to the lack of any safe routes to access Eversley’s schools, church, public houses, restaurants, employment centres, shops, etc. other than by private car; and, (vii) the imposition of the ridiculous name of “Firgrove Heath” as a marketing ploy, without any knowledge of the site, its history or its significance.

EPC trusts that HDC will refuse the application for all the relevant reasons.

There being no further items for discussion the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:50pm.

Chairman.....Date.....

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 3rd March 2026.

Forward Plan

Date	Meeting
3 rd March 2026	Full Council Meeting
5 th March 2026	Annual Parish Assembly
10 th March 2026	Open Spaces Committee Meeting
7 th April 2026	Open Spaces Committee Meeting
14 th April 2026	Full Council Meeting

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