

Yateley Town Council

Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meeting on Monday,
18th May 2026 at 10.00am held at Oak Room, Council Offices, Reading Road, Yateley

Present Councillors: (committee members)

Cllr Tony Spencer (Chairman for this meeting)
Cllr Mark Griffin
Cllr Julia Wedlock

Absent Councillors (committee members)

Cllr Greg Easterbrook
Cllr Bob Harward

In attendance - Non-Committee Members, Officers and Public

1 member of the public, Julie Routley - Town Clerk

3425 Welcome & Apologies

In the Chairman's absence, the meeting was chaired by Vice-Chairman, Cllr Spencer.
Apologies had been received from Cllr Easterbrook.
Cllr Harward was absent.

3426 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Spencer declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Item 3429 (Planning Application 26/00669/FUL, Sean Devereux Park), as he has been involved with the club for over 31 years, although he is not a member of its committee.

3427 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on 27th April 2026 were confirmed as an accurate record and were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3428 Public Participation

Firgrove Farm (26/00145/OUT) A member of the public raised concerns regarding Thames Water's capacity to support the proposed development.
Digital Phone System A resident expressed concern about the transition to digital-only residential telephone lines, particularly the potential impact on elderly residents and their ability to adapt to the change.

3429 Planning Applications

It was **RESOLVED** that the following comments / observations be forwarded to Hart District Council.

Planning Ref.	Location	Proposal
26/00145/OUT	Firgrove Farm Firgrove Road Eversley Hook Hampshire RG27 0PE	Hybrid Planning Application for residential-led development seeking: Outline planning permission for construction of up to 169 residential dwellings (Phase 2), provision of public open space, pedestrian links and other associated works with principle. Only access to be considered (layout, scale, appearance and landscape for subsequent determination-reserved matters); and

		Full planning permission for Phase 1 for the construction of 131 residential dwellings, provision of a 10ha SANG and access from Firgrove Road
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Comment: OBJECTION

Yateley Town Council maintains its strong objection to the proposed development. Having reviewed the applicant's response, Members conclude that the substantive concerns previously raised remain unresolved. In several key areas, the applicant's submission relies on incomplete evidence, unsupported assumptions, or misinterpretation of planning policy.

1. Highways, Traffic and Accessibility

The applicant's position on highways is incomplete and potentially misleading. While it is suggested that HCC Highways has accepted aspects of the modelling and mitigation, this fails to reflect the overall position: HCC has issued a formal holding objection and has not agreed key elements of the assessment or proposed mitigation, with several junctions, modelling assumptions, and design details remaining unresolved.

- **Hampshire County Council Highways does not agree with aspects of the proposed mitigation at key junctions, raising concerns about both design and effectiveness, and concluding that some measures are unlikely to deliver meaningful improvements in operational performance.**
- **Members also have concerns regarding the robustness and credibility of the traffic modelling, noting that Hampshire County Council disputes elements of the baseline modelling and considers that it does not adequately reflect observed conditions.**
- **Key junctions, including Marsh Lane and Coopers Hill, have not been robustly assessed, and in some cases the impacts of development traffic are not fully addressed.**
- **The site has limited accessibility to sustainable transport options, with no railway station and only limited bus provision, increasing reliance on private car use.**
- **It is reasonable to expect a high level of car ownership, likely including multiple vehicles per household, which would further increase traffic generation and pressure on the local highway network.**
- **Local roads, including Marsh Lane, Firgrove Road and Kits Croft Lane, are unsuitable for HGV traffic, with existing parking on Firgrove Road causing pinch points and single-lane movement.**
- **Construction traffic will inevitably pass through Yateley, worsening existing road safety concerns at known blackspots.**
- **Kits Croft Lane is intended for emergency use only, yet access to Kits Croft Lane, with considerable width restriction, cannot be used by HGV's for conservation and maintenance access as reported.**
- **There is no safe pedestrian or bicycle access to the sites using either Firgrove Road or Marsh Lane.**

This proposal therefore fails to demonstrate a safe or sustainable transport solution.

2. Flood Risk, Drainage and Groundwater

The applicant has failed to address fundamental concerns from statutory consultees:

- **Both the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority maintain objections to the current flood risk and drainage strategy.**
- **The Flood Risk Assessment relies on hydraulic modelling from 2012, and the Environment Agency requires the applicant to demonstrate that this remains suitable or provide updated modelling.**

- Surface water discharge rates would increase substantially compared to greenfield conditions, with the LLFA identifying a rise from approximately 1.5 l/s to 16 l/s in smaller storm events. This is considered inappropriate within a sensitive downstream catchment and contrary to local policy.
- High groundwater levels across the site are a significant constraint, with the LLFA expressing concern that infiltration-based SuDS may not function effectively and that lined systems will be required, reducing their effectiveness
- The drainage strategy raises multiple design concerns, including the location of attenuation features, limited interception capacity, and reliance on engineered solutions in constrained conditions.
- Proposed engineering solutions, including impermeable membranes below the water table, risk displacing groundwater and causing flooding elsewhere, and may be difficult to implement.
- Dewatering of the site and mineral extraction risks:
 - Erosion and silt-laden runoff
 - Contamination from mobilised minerals
 - Lack of a lawful, coherent strategy for managing wet pit dewatering used to lessen construction dust build up.
- Earthworks may dry out the ecologically sensitive Castle Bottom wetland environment.

Additionally:

- A playground is proposed within Flood Zones 2 and 3, supported on steel footings, which constitutes development in a flood risk area, which contradicts your reports of no building would be undertaken in the flood zones .
- The unfenced play area within Flood Zones 2 and 3, is in close proximity to the Duddesbrook watercourse, and therefore introduces a very worrying public safety risk.

These issues demonstrate that flood risk and surface water management has not been adequately assessed or mitigated.

3. Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure

The position regarding water and wastewater is fundamentally unsound:

- Thames Water confirms capacity for only 200 homes, and even this is conditional on no additional surface water entering the system, which is unrealistic.
- The remaining 100 homes cannot be accommodated without major upgrades, not expected until 2035–2040.
- Thames Water requires up to three years of modelling, which they will not commence until planning permission for phase 2 is granted, creating an unacceptable planning Catch-22.
- The local sewage system, which is Sandhurst Sewage Treatment System (STW) is already under significant stress, with known storm overflow discharges into the River Blackwater.

Granting permission would therefore rely on speculative infrastructure delivery, contrary to sound planning principles.

4. Misapplication of Planning Policy (“Tilted Balance”)

The applicant relies heavily on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 11(d) “tilted balance” to justify approval due to housing supply shortfall. This is a misapplication of policy:

- The site affects the setting of Firgrove Manor (Grade II*), a heritage asset of the highest significance.
- Under NPPF Paragraph 11(d)(i) and Footnote 7, the tilted balance does not apply where designated heritage assets or flood risk constraints are engaged.

The applicant cannot lawfully rely on housing need to override these constraints.

5. Heritage Impact

The development would cause significant and unacceptable harm as follows:

- Adverse impact on Firgrove Manor (Grade II*), Firgrove Farm Cottage, and other historic assets.

- The HDC (Hart District Council's) Senior Conservation Officer has already concluded the scheme would cause considerable harm and does not reference the rural and traditional nature of the area in the layout and housing design.
- The proposed housing (including three-storey affordable units) is out of character and contradicts earlier assurances regarding height limits.
- Construction impacts, including vibration, pose risks to nearby historic buildings.

The proposal fails to preserve or enhance the historic environment.

6. Environmental and Ecological Harm

- The proposed Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) is poorly located, encouraging access toward Castle Bottom Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), contrary to its purpose.
- Public rights of way across the SANG allow people to easily travel into the SSSI and this increases risk of disturbance from people, dogs, and domestic animals.
- Drainage and runoff proposals risk pollution of sensitive habitats.
- Mineral extraction, dewatering, and construction processes present significant ecological risks.

7. Noise, Air Quality and Public Health

- The applicant's noise modelling is disputed:
 - Environmental Health and Blackbushe Airport agree the impact of aircraft noise is likely underestimated.
 - Averaging noise over 16 hours obscures the reality of over 100 daily aircraft movements.
 - There is no reference to risk assessment for an aircraft accident within the development even though the flight path is directly over the housing planned
- Dust from construction presents a health risk:
 - Requires substantial water for suppression, further straining water resources
 - Risks creating standing water and additional surface runoff

In summary, the combined impact of aviation, construction, and traffic pollution are unacceptable.

8. Design, Layout and Deliverability

- Lack of clarity on garage sizes, raising concerns that they will not accommodate vehicles, increasing on-street parking pressure.
- Refuse collection arrangements are non-compliant regarding distances for residents to travel to put out and retrieve refuse containers.
- The housing mix does not reflect the H2 designation, which requires a higher proportion of affordable housing.
- Reliance on Section 106 contributions does not address site-specific constraints or community concerns.

9. Equality and Accessibility

- The layout and SANG access raise concerns regarding accessibility for elderly and disabled residents.
- The proposal does not align with Hart District Council's Equality objectives, particularly in relation to inclusive access to open space.

10. Construction Impacts and Practical Deliverability

- There are significant concerns regarding:
 - Construction traffic routing through unsuitable roads
 - Heavy Good Vehicle (HGV) movements on constrained rural lanes
 - Lack of provision for maintenance access
- The scale of earthworks, groundwater management and mineral extraction raises serious doubts about deliverability within environmental constraints.

Yateley Town Council concludes that:

- The applicant has failed to address fundamental objections from statutory consultees.

- Critical issues relating to highways, flood risk, drainage, wastewater, heritage, ecology, and public health remain unresolved.
- The proposal relies on speculative infrastructure delivery, misleading interpretation of consultee responses, and a misapplication of national planning policy.
- The scale and severity of impacts are compounded by 635 resident objections, demonstrating significant community concern.

Accordingly, Yateley Town Council strongly recommends that the application be refused.

<u>26/00473/HOU</u>	15 Mill Lane Yateley Hampshire GU46 7TE	Erection of a two storey side and first floor rear extension, replacement side porch, alterations to fenestration and rendering of side and rear walls and removal of chimney
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Comment: OBJECTION

Members reiterate their previous objections as detailed below. They also draw attention to the Conservation Officer's comments that the proposal is not in keeping with the character of the area. Furthermore, as the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3, a Flood Risk Assessment should be provided; however, none has been submitted.

Previous objection:

The site is located on one of the town's oldest residential streets and lies within a designated Conservation Area, where development must preserve or enhance the historic character and appearance of the area. The proposal represents overdevelopment of the site on a narrow plot. The proposed side elevation windows would directly overlook the neighbouring property at No. 17, resulting in a loss of privacy. The scale and proximity of the development would also be overbearing to neighbouring residents, causing harm to residential amenity. For these reasons, the application should be refused.

<u>26/00537/LBC</u>	Adsyst Automation Ltd Yateley Lodge Reading Road Yateley GU46 7AA	Installation of security lighting and cameras to upgrade existing (retrospective)
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Comment: OBJECTION

Members express disappointment that this application has been submitted retrospectively once again, demonstrating a lack of regard for the listed building and insufficient consideration for both its historic significance and neighbouring properties.

The proposal represents a commercial use within a rural residential setting and is considered inappropriate in this context. The installation is intrusive to neighbouring residents, particularly due to the lighting; moreover, the lighting to the rear of the building appears unnecessary given the absence of equipment in this area.

Members are also concerned that the cameras have been affixed directly to the listed building. It is considered that such equipment should instead be free-standing to avoid harm to the fabric and character of this prominent building, which forms a key gateway site at the entrance to Yateley. Members therefore urge the Local Planning Authority to require stand-alone installations to preserve the integrity of the listed structure.

<u>26/00669/FUL</u>	Sean Devereux Park, Yateley United Community Centre Chandlers Lane Yateley Hampshire GU46 7SZ	Laying of a synthetic turf pitch and pathway, erection of goal storage, perimeter and spectator fencing, siting of a storage container for pitch maintenance equipment, installation of LED floodlighting and construction of a bund
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Comment: NO OBJECTION

Members raised no objection to the application. However, they recommended that the applicant obtain an appropriate environmental licence and follow all advised precautions when accessing the landfill site. Members also expressed concern regarding the potential for light pollution arising from the proposed LED lighting.

3430 Correspondence relating to Hybrid Planning Application Ref: 26/00145/OUT (Firgrove Farm)

Members noted correspondence from the developer.

It was **RESOLVED** that no formal response would be submitted; however, a copy of the response outlined above would be forwarded, noting that the previous concerns raised had not been addressed

3431 Licensing, Enforcement, Appeals & Phone Masts
Enforcement

No further updates.

3432 Schedule of Accounts

It was **RESOLVED** to approve:

The list of payments emailed to the Committee prior to the meeting:

Page 2080 & 2081 are May invoices

Cashbook

May salaries –

Net pay - £14,559.84

Pension - £4,306.86

HMRC - £5,343.14

April Pension contributions (paid 13th May) £3,949.88

3433 Information Items

Obstruction of Right of Way – Welsh Drive

Hampshire County Council provided a response, including planning history; however, it does not address the issue of common land or clearly set out the proposed diversion. Members noted that the route is a public right of way and a historic named path which should have been diverted many years ago, in line with an earlier condition that was not enforced.

The Town Clerk was instructed to write to Hampshire County Council, as the authority responsible for rights of way, to strongly request action and to urge that legal enforcement be considered, given the prolonged delay.

Former Sims Metals Site, Vigo Lane

There was no further update.

Date of next meeting: 1 June 2026 at 10am in the Oak Room, Council Offices, GU46 7RP

Meeting closed at 11.51am.