

- a) **DOV/20/00589 – Change of use of land for wedding and events venue with marquee and works to the single storey outbuilding to facilitate conversion to a toilet block - The Old Rectory, Mongeham Church Close, Great Mongeham**

Reason for report – Submission of Sustainable Travel Plan and number of contrary views.

- b) **Summary of Recommendation**

Planning permission be granted.

- c) **Planning Policy and Guidance**

Core Strategy Policies

DM1, DM11, DM13, DM15 & DM16

Draft Local Plan Reg 18

The Consultation Draft Dover District Local Plan is a material planning consideration in the determination of this planning application. At this stage in the plan making process however the policies of the draft Plan have little weight and are not considered to materially affect the assessment of this application and the recommendation as set out.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

Paragraphs 2,8,11,12, 47, 83, 177 & 180. Chapters 9 (sustainable transport), 12 (well-designed places), 15 (natural and local environment) & 16 (historic environment)

National Design Guide 2019

Kent Design Guide

- d) **Relevant Planning History**

As per previous Planning Committee report of 24 June 2021 meeting (attached at Appendix 1).

- e) **Consultee and Third-Party Responses**

As per previous Planning Committee report of 24 June 2021 meeting (attached at Appendix 1).

The following consultee comments have been received since the previous report was produced (June 2021):

KCC Highways – I refer to the Travel Plan Statement (TPS) submitted for the above on 6 August and confirm I have no objections to the proposals subject to the TPS being implemented and maintained, and subject to the other matters to be covered by condition as requested in my comments of 30 April 2021.

KCC PROW - I have no further comments to make. Highways are the Higher Authority here and I am happy with their response.

## Public Representations:

All representations can be found in full on the online planning file. A summary has been provided below of the all the public representations received to date.

129 letters of support received making the following comments:

- Given the current economic situation in the UK, due to COVID 19, I can fully see the benefit to the local economy (i.e. job creation, use of local produce and suppliers, accommodation, restaurants and pubs, taxi firms).
- It is a beautiful venue which seems ideal for the proposed plans.
- It would bring much needed funds in helping to maintain and repair the 14th century church financially through extra wedding fees
- In addition to direct employment each event will require supplies from local businesses,
- predominantly catering but also other services.
- There will also be secondary spending by travelling guests, not accommodated on site, before and after the ceremony, in the local hospitality and accommodation sectors particularly but also in the wider visitor facing economy.

131 letters of objection received raising the following relevant planning matters:

- I do not see any contingency plans for when a wedding is held at both venues or a wedding at the old rectory and funeral at the church or an 'event' at the old rectory
- Vehicle Swept Path Analysis drawing are for a short wheelbase Transit van or similar, and not for a bus on extra long wheelbase chassis
- There will be insufficient parking spaces , the calculations are incorrect and vehicles will be arriving and leaving throughout the day causing congestion.
- The idea of a minibus for all staff is impractical
- Request a site visit to assess the poor visibility of the junction, parking and narrow road
- Increase in traffic
- Increase in vehicles along this narrow lane could cause problems for people accessing and leaving their homes by car and for pedestrians, including the elderly and young residents, and walkers accessing the footpaths to the fields beyond the church.
- The noise levels generated by weddings with late night music & revellers will disturb local residents, especially in the close and carry across the rear field to neighbours living on Northbourne Road.
- This is a quiet, residential Conservation area with a mixed population from very old to very young and is totally unsuitable for such a venue.
- Unsuitable access
- Will lead to dangerous parking on Northbourne Road
- Mongeham Church Close is a very narrow residential close which will not support the number of cars that can be anticipated at a wedding.
- There will also be significant disruption for the residents of the Close on non wedding days with catering lorries and other vehicles bringing supplies for forthcoming weddings.
- There is no room for cars to pass each other apart from a small turning area.
- When leaving Mongeham Church Close onto Northbourne Road there are always residents cars parked especially at weekends. Any additional parking would not be possible.
- There is inadequate parking at The Old Rectory for guests, catering staff, security attendants etc. and the overflow would be forced to park elsewhere.

- The disturbance caused would be unbearable both during the day setting up and when the guests arrive and leave late at night.
- There are plenty of other venues locally licensed for Weddings and Events and another is definitely not required in Mongeham Church Close.
- Having to put up with loud music for more than 6 months of the year is very disturbing.
- This is a peaceful, residential close and the quiet will be shattered by the noise of loud music, people partying, cars coming and wedding guests leaving late at night.
- Would cause considerable traffic problems and congestion on surrounding roads.
- Visibility splays are inaccurately shown.
- Consideration of local wildlife especially to the Bats
- Will have an adverse effect on the nesting birds and general wildlife.
- Out of keeping with this residential area
- Up to 200 guests yet the most the church gets is maybe once a year 100 people for the Christingle service.
- A shuttle bus would be problematic.
- At St Martins we also have various regular events, IE Music evenings, Art displays, Bell ringing, Flower festivals, Visiting bell ringing teams, and other functions as well as the usual regular services per week. There is absolutely no way that the access to the church which is shared with the old rectory could cope with the amount of traffic that would be involved.

An update on any additional representations will be provided verbally to Committee Members at the Committee meeting.

### **Addendum to Committee Report of 24 June 2021**

#### 1. Update on Application

- 1.1 This application was presented to Planning Committee on 24 June 2021 when it was recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions. A copy of the Committee Report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 At the meeting, members resolved to defer determination of the application, *“pending further details of the traffic management plan and to enable the applicants to explore options for additional on-site parking.”* The previous report remains germane to the determination of this planning application. A copy of the Minutes of the June Planning Committee is attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.3 Following the Committee’s resolution to defer determination of the application, a Travel Plan was received 06<sup>th</sup> August 2021 from the applicant’s agent. The travel plan seeks to ensure that the majority of the parking associated with any event is accommodated within the forecourt parking area of The Old Rectory; promotes alternative, sustainable transportation; seeks to minimise the use of the private car and promote car sharing. Following the receipt of the Travel Plan Statement, KCC Highways were formally reconsulted on the application. This report reviews this additional information and also considers other matters raised by the members during the previous committee held on 24 June 2021.

#### Travel Plan Statement

- 1.4 The revised parking plan makes provision of 24 car parking spaces (an increase by 3 parking spaces, albeit it is noted that one parking space would

be reserved for the applicant's car) including one disabled parking space. The Travel Plan provides details of deliveries and staff access i.e. the vehicle movements likely to occur a day before the wedding and on the day of the wedding (before and after the guests leave). It is noted that the marquee and sound system would be set up the day before the wedding and would be delivered in three vans resulting in 6 vehicle movements. On the wedding day, the catering staff would be collected and returned by minibus organised by the wedding venue. The flowers would be delivered to site by van; hair and makeup artists would arrive in their cars and leave the site before the arrival of guests. The DJ, photographer and wedding celebrant would arrive in their respective cars. However, it is also proposed that if need be, the DJ and photographer would be collected and returned by a taxi at the expense of the venue. On the day after the wedding, the marquee and sound system would be taken down and associated equipment would be returned in 3 vans resulting in 6 vehicle movements.

1.5 To prevent the parking of cars on the surrounding public roads, the applicant has proposed the following be put in place:

- The wedding invites will require an RSVP which will include booking of car parking spaces, advising that car parking spaces are limited and on a first come first served basis, and include notification and bookings for the free minibus pickup service (see below).
- There will also be stewards on site so in the event that anyone turns up to the site without having booked parking space, and no spaces are available, they will be given instruction as to where to park for the free minibus pickup.
- Depending on demand for on-site parking, alternative arrangements can be made for the owner's cars or for the DJ, photographer, or celebrant.
- Free Minibus service to be promoted and booked by guests prior to the wedding to encourage use of this facility and maximise efficiency of service. It is proposed that the wedding venue would operate a 16-seat minibus service offering free collection and return for all wedding guests. The collection and return service locations would be coordinated with the wedding organisers and it is envisaged that collection points would be a central location in Deal, such as Deal train station, which links into national rail services, but could include other specific locations, such as guest accommodation, as may be necessary.
- The venue website and wedding invites to provide details of travel arrangements including: Venue location and best vehicle routes; parking arrangements and parking space booking; minibus collection and return service and booking; access via train and minibus collection; a request to respect the surrounding neighbourhood and to refrain from parking on the surrounding public roads.

1.6 The applicant has also taken into consideration the possibility of the use of the buses, train and cycles in the best way possible. There are north and south bus stops within 100m of the site entrance connecting into Route 81A: Sandwich (via Deal) to Dover, Route 541 Tilmanstone (via Deal) to Dover; Sandwich Connect Service: Upper Deal (via Betteshanger) to Staple. The applicant

acknowledges that it would be unrealistic to expect wedding guests to use this service, however, it is proposed that staff associated with the venue could be encouraged to use the bus by reimbursing the bus fare.

- 1.7 Walmer Station is the closest National Rail station, which is 1.3 miles (2km) from the venue. According to the Institute of Highways and Transportation's guidance Providing for Journeys on Foot, journeys of up to 2km can acceptably be taken on foot. It is acknowledged that it would be unrealistic to expect wedding guests to walk from this station, however, it is proposed that it is a very short taxi ride and could be included in the free minibus collection route, although Deal station is only one stop on the same line and is a more likely collection point.
- 1.8 Cycling is always to be encouraged, but again, it is unlikely that a wedding guest would use this form of transport. The existing Bed and Breakfast at The Old Rectory already operates a bike hire service for guests and offers electric bike charging. It is proposed that staff associated with the wedding venue will be encouraged to cycle to and from the site, receiving the equivalent bus fare as an incentive.
- 1.9 The applicant has confirmed that there would be the Transport Plan Co-ordinator (TPC) who will monitor adherence to the protocols by all parties, will record modes of transportation used and take up of the free transportation offers and will review the Travel Plan in the light of this information on a 3 year cycle.
- 1.10 KCC Highways have reviewed the Travel Plan Statement submitted by the agent and raise no objection. They have advised that they're content with the submitted travel plan subject to it being secured by appropriately worded conditions. Further to this, it is advised that the conditions recommended in the previous report (24 June 2021) would still apply and should be secured in the event of grant of permission.

#### Other Matters

- 1.11 The possibility of grant of temporary permission was a matter of discussion during the previous planning committee (held on 24 June 2021). Further discussion has been had with the applicant in this regard and the applicant has confirmed that they would be willing to accept a temporary permission for at least 3 years.
- 1.12 Another matter discussed was the potential reduction in the number of events. The applicant would like the application considered on the basis of 30 events a year with 50 heads per event.
- 1.13 In respect of conditions, members recommended deletion of condition 6 which required the provision of the bus stop clearway at the stop in Northbourne Road. This condition has been removed from the recommendation. The wording of the condition in respect of number of events has been amended to include both weddings and events to avoid any ambiguity. Finally, the condition in respect of the removal of marquee within 2 weeks of the event has been amended to accord with the submitted Travel Plan Statement which confirms that the marquee would be removed a day after the wedding.

## 2. **Conclusion**

- 2.1 On assessment of further information received by the applicant, together with reconsultation response received from KCC Highways, the previous conclusions drawn in relation to the current application remain largely unchanged.
- 2.2 The proposal would cause no harm to the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would bring back a disused listed outbuilding back into use and would not cause harm to the setting of the principal listed building or the character of the Conservation Area. It would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring occupants. It would promote expenditure within the local economy and contribute towards the social viability and functioning of the local area. No harm to wildlife/ecology interests have been identified. In the previous report, the benefits were weighed against a potential periodic short-term increase in traffic and competition for on-street parking. Following the review of the new Travel Plan, it's felt that the measures proposed within it, including management/oversight of parking per event and provision of a viable mini-bus service, would be likely to significantly mitigate any concern in respect of periodic increases in competition for on-street parking. Any limited residual harm arising would in any event be more than outweighed by the economic and other benefits of the scheme. The proposal would therefore accord with development planning policies and the NPPF and is therefore recommended for approval.

## f) **Recommendation**

- I. PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, subject to conditions which include:
- 1) 3-year standard time limit
  - 2) Approved plans
  - 3) Samples of materials for the outbuilding
  - 4) Joinery details
  - 5) number of weddings/events restricted to 30 per year and number of heads to 50 per event
  - 6) Provision of 24 car parking spaces as shown on the plans
  - 7) Implementation of Travel Plan Statement: includes parking provision, use of minibus service and vans and other sustainable transport.
  - 8) Bat sensitive lighting scheme
  - 9) Landscaping scheme
  - 10) Installation of a noise limiter prior to first use
  - 11) Submission of a detailed noise management plan prior to first use.
  - 12) Restricting hours of use (amplified music during the reception, which will be turned off at 11:15pm and all events will finish at 11:45pm).
  - 13) Marquee shall be removed the day after the wedding as confirmed within the Travel Plan Statement.
- II. Powers to be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Development to settle any necessary planning conditions in line with the issues set out in the recommendation and as resolved by the Planning Committee.

## **Case Officer**

Benazir Kachchhi