

Kingsbridge Town Council (KTC)

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE, COUNCIL CHAMBER, QUAY HOUSE, AT 5.45 P.M. ON TUESDAY 23rd June 2026

Present:

Cllr Anne Balkwill, Cllr Philip Cole, Cllr Martina Edmonds (Chairman),

Cllr Graham Price, Cllr Julie Taylor

In Attendance:

0 members of public

Katharine Harrod (Town Clerk)

26/31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllr Jennings.

THE MEETING CONVENED

26/32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – No declarations of interest were received.

26/33 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following application was received from South Hams District Council for consideration:

1. 0379/26/FUL, Land At Sx 737 449, Wallingford Road, Kingsbridge, Erection of residential dwelling with access, parking, landscaping, drainage & other incidental works. Response date 26th June

Kingsbridge Town Council strongly object to the application for the following reasons:

Principle of development and use of the land:

The Design and Access Statement notes: The proposal relates to land at the upper part of a wider vineyard holding. The site is not under cultivation, is non-productive in nature, and does not contribute to the operational requirements of the vineyard. The proposed dwelling is a single open market residential unit and is not required for, nor functionally dependent upon, agricultural use.

To clarify: This is agricultural land grade C and the quality of the land was degraded by its recent use as a temporary site for the building spoil, building materials and machinery for the nearby development referred to as the Dennings, also owned by this applicant - see application reference 1386/22/FUL (allowed on appeal). The applicant will have been well aware of his duty to return this land to its former state. This protection for agricultural land is reiterated in the Joint Local Plan, policy SPT1, section 3, iv. - The best and most versatile land is protected for agriculture use.

It is untenable to believe that the applicant can knowingly degrade the land then apply for planning permission stating the land is no longer suitable for agriculture use as it's been spoiled. The applicant has previously stated the land was used for growing grapes; it is now apparently "not good enough" to grow grapes, which is inconsistent and raises concerns about the true intention for the land.

The application also refers to the land occupying a transitional position, being settlement edge environment and being a logical evolution of the landholding. To be clear, this is agricultural land, located outside the formally defined settlement boundary. The applicant intends to sell it on the open market for the best price without any need or requirement for permanent residence by agricultural workers. All this despite it being clear that the land should be protected for agricultural purposes.

The D&A statement goes on to discuss the recent Planning Inspectorate decision. Planning permission has indeed been allowed for the conversion and use of an existing barn within the vineyard landholding. However, the conversion is for commercial use with no residential element to it what so ever. It would be entirely incorrect to assume that agricultural land with approval for a commercial building should therefore also be approved for residential settlement.

There is no existing track as claimed: The Design & Access Statement refers to “access through existing track.” There is no existing track. Any track associated with the vineyard was for agricultural purposes only and should be treated as such, not as a pre-existing residential access. Vineyard parking is proposed along the track, implying that no separate parking was required. Introducing residential traffic and parking here risks impeding emergency vehicle access.

No separate change of use application appears to have been submitted. The land was formerly a paddock with no stables, barns or residential use. By the applicant’s own admission, it is agricultural land. The proposal is therefore an attempt to maximise the use of agricultural land for a non-agricultural, open market dwelling, which is contrary to policy.

Scale, design and character:

The application is entirely out of keeping and mis described as “modest.” In reality, it is large in footprint and volume.

The application claims a two-bed property, yet the plans show a substantial “void” of approximately 8m x 6m, plus a boot room and office. The internal layout and volume, with dining for at least eight people and seating for at least nine people, are more akin to a far larger dwelling than a genuinely modest two-bed unit.

Car parking provision is also inconsistent with this “modest” two bed. The drawings show five parking spaces (three vehicles and two bicycles) for a two-bed property, which is excessive and suggests an intended higher intensity of use than stated – as does the internal layout.

Inconsistencies in drawings (roof treatment), there are inconsistencies between drawings regarding a green roof versus rooflights. If rooflights are proposed, there will be additional visual and amenity impacts on properties behind, and this must be clearly shown and assessed.

The application form reportedly states that the site cannot be seen from a public footpath, road or bridleway. This is factually incorrect. The site is clearly visible from a variety of locations and public vantage points.

Highways, access and parking:

The Highways statement is not visible/available within the documents. Without a clear, up to date highways assessment, the impact on highway safety, access, and visibility splays cannot be carefully considered.

Highway safety concerns: Given the intensification of use, the lack of a clearly demonstrated safe access, and the potential for on track parking, there are unresolved highway safety issues.

Residential amenity and neighbour impacts:

Due to the height and massing of the proposed building, there will be an adverse impact on neighbours’ light and general amenity.

The scale, position and potential rooflights raise concerns about overlooking and loss of privacy for neighbouring properties.

The proposal offers insufficient detail on landscaping to mitigate visual and amenity impacts. In an exposed area, the absence of robust, specific landscaping proposals will leave neighbours more exposed, with reduced privacy and no meaningful screening.

There is no clear information on external lighting. This is a sensitive rural location where dark skies are important. Any approval would need strict control of lighting, but at present there is insufficient information to assess compliance with dark skies policies.

Trees, ecology and environment:

Trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders must be fully protected. The application does not provide sufficient detail on how these trees will be safeguarded during construction and in the long term.

The environmental report contains limited detail on what is actually proposed on site and appears, in parts, to be out of date. There is no clear, up to date ecology report setting out baseline conditions, impacts, and mitigation.

There is no robust ecological assessment or biodiversity enhancement strategy. Given the rural, agricultural context, this is a significant omission.

Landscaping proposals are vague and lack specifics. Given the sensitivity of the area and the visual impact of the building, full and detailed landscaping proposals should be required and agreed before any permission is granted - not left to condition.

Drainage, runoff and utilities:

While the site itself may not be at direct risk of flooding, runoff from the site has already had an immediate and direct impact on nearby roads and properties. Any further hard surfacing or building must be fully assessed in terms of downstream flood risk and runoff management.

South West Water has raised no objection in principle but has requested more information and drawings. Until this information is provided and assessed, the application is incomplete in drainage terms.

The capacity of drainage and water systems appears to be calculated on the basis of a simple two bed property, which under represents the true scale and potential occupancy of the building (given the large void and additional rooms). This could lead to under designed infrastructure.

Accuracy, compliance history and documentation:

A comprehensive report from the South Hams Society has already been submitted, raising detailed concerns. We support and endorse the points made in that report.

There is a record of previous compliance requirements on this site. There is a legitimate concern that the applicant has not complied with previous terms and conditions, which should weigh against granting further permissions without strong safeguards.

Misleading or inconsistent statements:

- Claim of an “existing track” where none exists.
- Statement that the site is not visible from public viewpoints when it clearly is.
- Conflicting information about the agricultural use and suitability of the land for grapes.
- Application described as a two-bed property, yet drawings and parking provision suggest a much larger, more intensive use.
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), Schedule 2, Part 4, Class A (temporary buildings and structures) is cited, but this proposal is not a temporary structure. It is a permanent open market dwelling and should be assessed as such, not by reference to temporary PD rights.

In summary:

- The proposal represents an unjustified open market dwelling on agricultural land, with no proper change of use and no genuine agricultural need.
- The scale and design are out of keeping with the rural character and are mis described as “modest.”
- There are unresolved highway, access and parking concerns, including emergency access.
- There will be adverse impacts on neighbours’ amenity, including light, privacy and outlook.
- Environmental, ecological, landscaping and drainage information is incomplete or inadequate, and some appears out of date.
- The application documents contain inaccuracies and inconsistencies, undermining confidence in the submission.
- The following policies should be considered when reviewing the documentation: Joint Local Plan - TTV1, TTV2, TTV26, DEV23, DEV25, DEV32. KWAC Neighbourhood Plan – ENV1, ENV4, ENV5, ENV6, ENV7, ENV8, ENV10, BE3, T1, T3

For these reasons, we request that South Hams District Council refuse this application. If, notwithstanding the above, the Council is minded to approve, then it should only do so subject to:

- A separate and explicit change of use application
- Full, up to date ecology and environmental reports
- Detailed landscaping and lighting schemes agreed in advance
- Revised South West Water approval based on the actual size and realistic water usage/foul water drainage of the property as opposed to consideration of a two-bedroom building.
- Robust conditions protecting TPO trees, controlling external lighting, and managing surface water runoff; and
- Clear enforcement of any conditions, given the concerns about past compliance.

26/30 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 7th July 2026

The meeting closed at 18.20 hrs.

Signed as a true record: _____

Print Name & Date: _____

Distribution List: All current Town Councillors, Kingsbridge Town Council Website.

For Information: e-circulation to: South Hams District Council Councillor representatives.