

Hooe Parish Council

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Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 26th January 2026

Attendees: Cllr D. Carey (DC), Cllr. J. Manlow (JM), Cllr J. Fuller (JF)

In attendance: J Scarff – Locum Clerk (Proper Officer/RFO), District Cllr Mark Fairweather.

12 members of the public were present. Meeting opened at 19.06

Public Questions

There were discussions and questions about the application, there was reference to the previous application which had been refused by Wealden District Council officers. Residents refuted information in the applicants planning statement. Residents were encouraged to write to Wealden District Council with their evidence

Public participation ended.

Business Transacted

1. To Receive nominations for Chair of the committee
Cllr Fuller nominated Cllr Manlow who indicated he was willing to take the role. Cllr Carey seconded.
Resolved; Cllr Manlow is Chair of the planning committee.
2. To receive apologies and reasons for absence in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 S85 (1)
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. Loyd, Crittall, Siddall-Ward. Cllr Thorpe was absent.
3. To consider accepting apologies and reasons for absence.
Resolved apologies were accepted.
4. Disclosure of Interests
Interests in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Council code of conduct.
To receive councillors' declarations of interest regarding matters on the agenda and consider any written requests or dispensation as a result. Any changes to register of interests should be notified to the clerk.
None declared.
5. Minutes of the Previous Meetings to be agreed and signed as a true record.
There were no minutes to approve.
6. To consider the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee and agree any actions required
Resolved: The Terms of Reference were agreed.
7. To provide a written response to Wealden District Council on the following planning application received:

[WD/2026/0009/LDE](#)

Mobile Home Park R/O Red Lion Ph, Denbigh Road, Hooe, TN33 9EW
Existing use of land edged red as a caravan site together with car parking and amenity areas

Councillors discussed the application, the resident's comments and the difference in this application compared to the previously refused application.

Cllr Manlow proposed that the council object to the application, that a summary of the evidence showing that the LDE certification be refused be written up and circulated to cllrs before its submission for final agreement. JF seconded, all agreed.

Resolved: the cllrs would submit evidence to Wealden District Council showing that the LDE certificate should be refused. The final written report would be appended to the minutes.

Hooe Parish Council comments on Planning Application WD/2026/0009/LDE

Background

The Red Lion Caravan Park was established in the 1950s and occupies a relatively small site at the rear of the Red Lion pub garden, Hooe. Access to the Park is over a track owned by the public house. This track is also used by the lease holder of the Red Lion pub to gain access to the pub field beyond the Caravan Park. The pub field is agricultural land, used in recent years as grazing land for horses and, most recently, for the keeping of sheep.

As car ownership increased over time, the caravan park site proved to be too small for the parking of all of the residents' cars. Cars consequently spilled outside the site, including into the Red Lion car park and elsewhere. This was found to be a particular problem for the Red Lion pub, and they sold a small strip of their field to the owner of the Caravan Park for use as a car park. Subsequently planning permission was granted in 2001 for the use of the northeastern part of the newly acquired land for the parking of cars. The remainder of the land purchased by the caravan park owner was not included in the planning application for the car park. It would appear from the evidence of the former owner, that this small piece of agricultural land was not intended to be part of the Caravan Park, as he states that he had no need of it.

In 2024, the new owner of the Caravan Park sought to incorporate this small area of agricultural land within their Caravan Park by labelling it an "Amenity Area" and claiming that it was therefore part of the Caravan Park. An application (WD/2024/1859/LDE) was submitted to Wealden District Council in order to obtain a Certificate of Lawful Use Development for all of the land in the ownership of the operator of the Caravan Park.

The Parish Council considered the 2024 application and consulted with caravan owners. The Council concluded that the application was flawed and that all of the land in the ownership of the applicant was not a single planning unit as claimed, since it had not been used extensively, intensively or continuously as an "amenity area". The small area of land was never intended to be part of the Caravan Park and was never integrated into the Park. It remains outside the Park to this day.

The 2024 application was subsequently refused by Wealden District Council, on the basis that the applicant failed to demonstrate that all of the land in question had been in continuous "amenity use" for the relevant 10-year period.

The New Application

The 2026 application appears to repeat much of the evidence of the previous application, the only notable addition being a signed affidavit from the previous owner of the Caravan Park. The Parish Council have examined this new evidence and make the following observations:

- In addressing the question of the small area of agricultural land next to the car park, the previous owner claimed that he had "no use for it". The Caravan Park already possessed a central green area in the middle of the Caravan Park, i.e. the established Caravan Park "Amenity Area". The previous landowner therefore did not consider the need to incorporate this small left-over land in his ownership into the Caravan Park.
- Although the small area of remaining agricultural land was not within the Caravan Park, the owner noted that a resident set up a dog agility course, although he does not state how long that activity lasted. The resident who set up the "agility" course has stated that it was small, temporary affair comprising a few ropes and poles and in situ for less than a month.
- The previous owner also states that he employed a gardener to look after the communal areas of the Park. These included the central green area between the caravans, i.e. the established Caravan Park "Amenity Area". He states that he also arranged for the small area of land next to the car park to be mowed in the maintenance schedule. But he does not claim that this was done specifically for the benefit and amenity of the Caravan Park residents. Moreover, some residents dispute that this area was

maintained by the owner and we were told that the grass sometimes reached 3 feet in height. Residents occasionally mowed the area, partly to keep the grass down so that they gain easier access across from the car park to their caravans.

- As noted above, the Caravan Park already had an area of green space in the centre of the park performing an Amenity Area function at the time of the car park application. Thus, it did not require an additional area of “amenity land”. The new parcel of land is on the edge of the Park and less accessible than the central area. It is understood that any community events are held on the central green area, thus performing the Park amenity function. The only people to occasionally use the small piece of land were the few caravan owners close by. And even then, their use was only occasional.

The new 2026 application repeats many of the previous arguments. The photographic evidence shows that over time the small area of land has not changed to any significant extent and remains agricultural land. The path that has been worn diagonally through the area, connecting the car park with some nearby caravans adds weight to the residents contention that the land has not been used for any meaningful “amenity purposes” as stated but merely as a short cut from the car park to one or two residents living on the northern edge of the Caravan Park. In recent years the small area of land in question has deteriorated markedly, and has been used for the dumping of sweepings, grass and tree cuttings and unwanted items. This demonstrates that the current landowner clearly does not regard the land as having amenity value for the residents. The “Amenity Area” label applied by the Applicant to this small area of grazing land could hardly be less appropriate.

Conclusions

The current application to enlarge the Red Lion Caravan Park does not present any significant new evidence to suggest that the previous decision (WD/2024/1859/LDE) should be overturned. The residents and the photographic evidence strongly suggest that the land next to the car park has not been used to any great degree for amenity purposes. The land has always remained peripheral to the Caravan Park and is not integrated into the Park in any way. Use of it was only ever made on an informal, occasional basis by caravan owners adjoining the small piece of land. This can be attested to by residents who have lived on the Park for the period under consideration. Neither the previous or current owners have lived on the site and seldom visit. They therefore cannot have more reliable information as to use of this piece of land than the residents do.

The Caravan Park planning unit is the existing caravan park plus the car park. The small area of left-over agricultural land that the previous owner had no use for has occasionally been used for amenity purposes. But not on a continuous, intensive or formal manner. The previous owner never considered this small area of land as part of the Caravan Park and did not treat it as such. Nor did the Park residents. The Certificate should therefore be refused again.