

Agenda Item 12 July Agenda

Planning Committee

Cllr Seeley reported a downward trend in planning applications at the Annual Village Meeting in May. In the year to June 2025, 26 new applications have been received – an average of just over 2 per meeting. Of these only 7 applications were rejected or returned for further information. Average duration of a planning meeting is just over 30 minutes.

It may be more efficient use of both the Clerk's and Councillors' time to merge the meetings and *usually* include planning applications with the main parish council agenda.

The applications which take time are generally those which are recommended for refusal, particularly if there is likely to be public representation at the meetings. It should be possible to identify these cases in advance.

In this scenario a special meeting could be called to allow time for detailed debate and resident involvement.

Advantages

- The change would save perhaps 10 meetings per year.
- Ease of forward planning as there is only 1 date to remember - 1st Thursday of the month
- Planning committee is technically full council anyway as all Cllrs are members
- Only 1 chair is required.
- From a purely selfish perspective, it would allow the Clerk to take occasional 2-week holidays! Currently Week 1 is council meeting, week 2 is agenda prep for planning, week 3 is planning committee and week 4 is council agenda prep. Taking a 2-week break would require the services of a Locum.

Disadvantages

- Potential for long council meetings
- Individual bookings required for special meetings

Proposal:

To consider absorption of the planning committee into parish council or retain the existing process.

Phil Burgess
Clerk to East Dean and Friston