

## NOTES FROM THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING 10<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2022

I represented that parish at a meeting of the Focus Group (on Zoom) on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022. All 7 parishes in the group were represented.

### Reports from Parishes

- Chiddingly. A quiet period although an application for 205 houses was in the pipeline.
- East Hoathly & Halland. A number of medium size applications ongoing. Developers taking cavalier approach to detail.
- Heathfield. Faced with many applications, mostly relatively small . An application for 34 houses in Cross in Hand has been withdrawn, but probably for tactical reasons and will probably re-emerge. Wealden do not seem to be taking Heathfield's advice on suitability.
- Hellingly. An application for 370 houses was refused because of poor design and this was supported by Wealden.
- Horam. A quiet period. Commented on the poor standard of applications. A concern that a developer is working up a plan for 1,000 houses in the Coxlow area.
- Laughton. Very quiet. One appeal ongoing.
- Warbleton. I reported a quiet period and supported the view that some applications were very badly presented. I also reported that Covid concerns were a consideration in face to face meetings which, apparently is also a matter of concern elsewhere.

### Constitution of the Focus Group

It was decided to keep the membership of the Focus Group to the current 7 parishes.

### Campaign Group

While the Focus Group is concerned with matters of mutual interest, and especially planning, the recent initiative to write to the Secretary of State suggested that some form of Campaign Group be established similar to the one in Lewes with 10 outlying parishes to voice any concerns. It was agreed that the existing Chiddingly Action Group could provide the solution and parishes were asked to join on a voluntary basis. I am already the parish's representative but there has yet to be a meeting I could attend. It was of interest that there is, apparently, a strong groundswell of public opinion over the over development of our rural and agricultural land and I think that we would be wise to continue to be associated with the Chiddingly group to ensure that our voice is heard.

### Letter to the Secretary of State

As I reported earlier, a bland, cut and pasted, unsigned and undated response had been received from Gove's office. The group responded, suggesting that, as Gove had subsequently met senior Wealden Councillors, he should see our letter. Nothing has come back so far, but the group believe that we should continue to maintain pressure.

### Meeting with Wealden Planning Staff.

The next meeting with Wealden's Planning Staff is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022. If anyone has any questions for them, can you let me have them by the 4<sup>th</sup> February so that they can be processed. Proposed questions so far are:

- Poor quality and inaccurate planning applications that are supposed to be checked by Wealden before we get them.
- Sustainability Settlement Study – what has happened to our inputs to that?
- Comments on the SHELAA Map – most parishes had submitted that comments on their

Shelaa Map sites by the deadline but a revised map hasn't been issued as promised. I am not sure what has happened to our comments?

Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed, but after the meeting with Wealden on 14<sup>th</sup> February.

Councillor Michael Smythe OBE

11<sup>th</sup> January 2022