

## CHALVINGTON WITH RIPE PARISH COUNCIL

### DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF

1<sup>st</sup> October 2018

held at The Hayton Baker Hall, Ripe.

64. Present: Cllr Webb (Chairman), Cllr Dunbar Dempsey, Cllr Dashfield, Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Ward and Cllr White.
65. Attending: A Stevens (Clerk) and forty five members of the public were also in attendance.
66. Public Session:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Maria Caulfield MP.

Ms Caulfield MP explained what is happening about the A27. She said;

- She is Chair of the A27 Reference Group. The Reference Group is currently lobbying Central Government for money to improve the stretch of the A27 East of Lewes to Polegate.
- Some small scale improvement has already been approved – This is known as Road Infrastructure Study 1 (RIS 1) and it will see improvements to the Polegate junction, Wilmington and some of the other junctions over the next two to three years.
- There is also RIS 2, which is the much bigger scheme and the Reference Group is bidding for £450m to improve the A27.
- There are three possible options which are;
  - i: Dual the existing road.
  - ii: Construct a new road.
  - iii: Dual as much as possible including a by-pass.
- Each option is expected to cost around £450m.
- There have been no route appraisals yet, the costings are based on certain criteria, which include the number of accidents and congestion.
- If the bid is unsuccessful there will be no further action.
- The RIS 2 bid has to compete with other schemes nationally but if it is successful there will be a Public Consultation, Public Inquiry, and a Judicial Review and residents would need to be fully on board. There will be no 'spades in the ground' for at least ten to fifteen years.
- RIS 1 will go ahead regardless of the outcome of RIS 2.
- We should hear if the bid has been successful or not later on this year/early next year.
- Documentation from the Reference Group should soon be available to look at on the ESCC website.

In answer to residents and councillors questions, Ms Caulfield said;

- No routes have been planned for a new dual carriageway, that's not how the bid is costed.
- Building off line does not necessarily mean a new road. She is not in favour of a new road and nor are some of the other members of the Reference Group.
- The bid is partly assessed on how it will affect the area economically and how it will affect tourism and that information can be shared in due course. The Business Case is case sensitive and cannot be shared at this stage because it would give other competing authorities an advantage. Once the result of the bid is known, however, she will share it.
- The Wealden Local Plan supports an off line road and implies the housing numbers cannot be met without it. It was noted work to the A27 would not start until after the new Plan has expired.
- The Reference Group consists of Local MPs, and the County and District Councils and the Group will disband when the funding decision is known.

- She is keen to include the Parish Councils which will be the most affected by any decision in discussions.
- An off line road does not follow the current road layout but could include a route that follows part of the existing road. An on line road would see the existing route followed.
- The Reference Group has no say in which option is chosen.
- Anyone wanting information can approach her direct.
- 60% of the traffic using the A27 is thought to be passing through.
- The graph said to have been circulated at the Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May shows the three options and not potential routes for a new road.
- Eastbourne Borough Council is said to want a new road and to be involved in the talks but it was acknowledged that it would not be affected in the same way as the Parishes would.
- There are realistically only a few places a new route can go.
- There will be issues with the Ashdown Forest.
- A similar scheme at Chichester where funding was secured five years ago has not got through planning yet.

Councillor White suggested that the Government should focus less on the Gross Domestic Product and take into account other factors such as quality of life but he accepted these other factors are more difficult to quantify.

The Chairman thanked Ms Caulfield MP who stayed for the rest of the meeting.

Mr Harding asked what the Parish Council's view is on anonymous correspondence. This was covered later on in the meeting.

The meeting was then opened.

#### 67. Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor N Bennett and District Councillor P Ede.

#### 68. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting which was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman

#### 69. Clerk's Report on any Matters' Arising:

Wealden Enforcement has found the wall at Kitty Hawk Farm is in breach of planning control and has ordered the owner to dismantle it and remove it from the site.

Wealden also asked if the Parish Council has any comments on a proposal to divert part of the path known as Chalvington with Ripe 18. Councillors agreed to let the Clerk know their comments within the next week.

#### 70. Disclosures of Interest:

There were no disclosures of interests nor were there any changes to the Register of Interests.

#### 71. Reports from Outside Meetings:

Councillor Lawrence and the Clerk attended a meeting at SSALC on the 7<sup>th</sup> September about the A27 which covered the same points as those described in the Public Session by Ms Caulfield.

## 72. Planning Applications:

WD/2018/1613/LB - The Old Cottage, The Street, Ripe, BN8 6BD - Replacement of contemporary rear extensions with a more coherent single-storey extension, with associated internal and external alterations including small first floor extension to rear, removal of tile hanging to south and west elevations, new wet room at first floor, new rooflight, and installation of wood burning stove and flue – Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council voted by three to two (there was one abstention) that it has no objections to this Listed Building application as long as it meets the Listed Building requirements.

WD/2018/1708/FR - Pepperham, Mark Cross Lane, Ripe, BN8 6AW - Retrospective application for minor fenestration alterations to part of the east elevation and internal layout change to a domestic outbuilding and for continued use to also provide occasional holiday accommodation – Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council has no objections to this planning application but Councillors would like to have seen a Business Case included with the documentation.

## 73. Wealden Local Plan:

Councillors agreed to send an official response to the Plan and agreed the second draft which is as follows;

We consider the plan to be legal.

We do not consider the plan sound in terms of sustainable development nor is it the most appropriate strategy for rural areas. We give below our reasons for the lack of soundness.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Wealden Local Plan. We have focussed our response on how the plan impacts the Parish of Chalvington with Ripe.

### 1. Is the Plan consistent with achieving sustainable development in relation to the parish of Chalvington with Ripe?

This is a small rural parish with 3 distinct settlements (Ripe, Chalvington and Deanland Wood Park); there is no local employment, an extremely limited off peak bus service to and from Ripe\*, no cycle paths, no primary or secondary school, no pub in Ripe, very poor C roads, no train station, mains sewage at capacity and no pavements. More houses mean more car movements (as this is the only way people can travel to work) and increased pollution. This is an unsustainable geographical area with nothing in the plan to tackle the infrastructure issues. And yet an additional 15 houses have been allocated to Chalvington/Ripe. This is completely unsound.

\*Bus 38 (to Brighton) operates only twice a month, one service per day in each direction  
Bus 42 (to Hailsham) operates 3 times per week, with one service per day in each direction  
Bus 44 (to Eastbourne) operates 1 per week, with one service in each direction

### 2. Does the Plan seek to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities?

We do not consider sufficient attention has been given in the plan to developing infrastructure in the Wealden area, particularly that relating to Transport. We note with dismay that the Plan supports a new off line dualled A27 but that there is nothing concrete about improving bus and train services, nor about reducing the need for car journeys. An offline A27 would merely create log jams in Polegate and Eastbourne; it would create significantly more pollution and traffic noise in the district and cause irreversible environmental damage including the loss of valuable farmland and wildlife habitats. Furthermore, we are concerned that the housing allocations in the Plan are based on the assumption that an offline dualled A27 will be forthcoming even though nothing has yet been agreed

(and note that there will be massive and sustained opposition to this). Whilst the "growth" argument will always hold sway at business level, it is now being challenged; e.g. the useful recent evidence-based report commissioned by Campaign to Protect Rural England that (it is claimed) 'reveals that road-building is failing to provide the congestion relief and economic boost promised, while devastating the environment'.

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4543-the-end-of-the-road-challenging-the-road-building-consensus>

Additionally, the villages have important cultural, leisure and economic value for the wider community, as seen in the music festivals, rambling and, increasingly, cycling including stops at the cafe in the village shop. The A27 cutting a swathe through our environment will spoil it not just for the villagers but for the wider population. To reduce the need for car travel, there needs to be: an increase in bus services serving villages; instead of buses 28 and 29 both going through Ringmer and then onto Lewes and Brighton, thought needs to be given to one of those buses going round villages in the Low Weald in peak times to serve commuters – a minimum of x 2 per day; additionally the Southern Rail services that have been axed to and from Berwick and Glynde need to be reinstated as a matter of urgency.

### 3. Contradictions in the Plan

a) In the 'SHELAA Potentially Suitable Sites Summary' Site Reference 345/3230, it identifies Follengers Field in Ripe as suitable for housing up to a total capacity of 12. But in the 'Core Areas and Boundary Review Background Paper' it states that same site reference 345/3230 as deemed unsuitable for any housing:

"The site comprises of a single agricultural field located to the east of the centre of the settlement. The site is within the Conservation Area and is visible in the wider landscape as part of the attractive rural setting of the village. The Grade II\* Listed Eckington Manor is located to the east of the site . Housing development would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the landscape, and would be likely to have a harmful effect on the historic character of the village of Ripe"

Furthermore, when the Old Coach House site was approved for 6 houses by Wealden we were told that the density of that development would be mitigated by the significant Open Space at Follengers Field. We need to remember that this significant open space was one of the reasons this part of Ripe was adopted as a conservation area. We have raised this contradiction with the Planning Policy team but have not received a satisfactory response. How can these 2 statements sit together in one Plan? We request that Follengers Field is removed from the SHELAA, as building on that site has been assessed as harmful to the setting of Ripe.

b) The Parish of Laughton has been allocated a settlement capacity of 10, none of which are designated as windfall, whilst Ripe has been allocated 15, all of which are windfall. Laughton is located on a main road, Ripe can only be accessed via lanes. Laughton has regular and frequent public transport, Ripe does not. Laughton has a state primary school, Ripe does not. Laughton has a pub, Ripe does not. We have asked Wealden for an explanation why we have been allocated so many more homes when we are clearly a much less suitable location for building. We have never received a comprehensive reply.

c) The paucity of information in the Economy Background paper makes it impossible to assess if the new forecasts are any better than the previous forecasts which resulted in a mis-allocation of employment space. It is impossible to link up or reconcile the impact of 2300 fewer residents forecast (p11) to be in employment by 2028 with the housing supply number which should surely be lower but instead there is a higher number.

#### 4. Is the Plan the most appropriate strategy?

In determining the windfall allocation to the parish of Chalvington with Ripe, it appears no account has been taken of the number of new dwellings that have been approved or built in the last 10 years. In 2008 there were 397 houses in Deanland Wood Park; in the last 10 years an additional 26 have been approved, equating to an uplift of 6.5%. In 2008 there were 160 dwellings in Ripe & Chalvington; in the last 10 years an additional 28 new dwellings have been built or approved, equating to an uplift of 17.5%. This means we have contributed a massive 54 new dwellings to the housing stock in the district, punching well above our weight in terms of % increase.

In the penultimate draft of the Plan we were allocated 10 homes backdated to April 2013. Now we have been allocated 15 in the plan back dated to September 2017. This is a substantial change and yet, despite questioning the logic, no plausible explanation has been given. The granting of 6 homes on The Old Coach House site in Ripe is a clear example. The parish fundamentally objected to this application on the grounds of density. At the Parish Planning Panel meeting held on the 12th July 2018 the final draft of the Local Plan was presented and the point was made that under the new proposals the density of building would be reduced and The Old Coach House site was given as an example. Developing planning policy in such a haphazard way will lead to harmful development and unnecessary destruction of our beautiful villages. Nor have we received an explanation as to why our housing allocation went up so substantially between the penultimate and final versions of the plans (especially since in that period we lost an amenity – our pub). Another factor that has changed is that when the new windfall allocation of 15 was published we were told clearly that the 6 houses on the Old Coach House Site and the 3 houses at the Lamb Inn site would count towards our allocation of 15 but this is not reflected in the Plan.

Latest position: we recently took this issue up with the Planning Policy Team and it has now been confirmed in writing that 9 out of our windfall allowance of 15 have been used up, reflecting the 6 houses currently being built on the Old Coach House site and the 3 about to be built on the Lamb Inn site (cf. email dated 7 Sept 2018 from LDF to Geoff White ). We are pleased that this adjustment has been made but still consider a windfall allocation of 15 to be excessive for this small rural parish.

#### 5. Does the Plan meet objectively assessed development?

We are not aware that there is a list of eligible applicants awaiting housing in the Ripe/Chalvington area. We undertook an assessment of need some years ago and identified only one applicant eligible for housing in Ripe. So we are at a loss to understand why any additional houses are required over and above the 28 that have already been approved or built. We do however recognise that Ripe and Chalvington are desirable places to live but we need to be clear why they are desirable – peacefulness, lack of ambient light at night meaning we can see the stars, a rural harmonious community, open green spaces which uplift the spirit. Building on our open spaces will destroy the very things that residents have moved here for, and there is a danger of building more and more in what is already an unsustainable community. Building in rural areas merely adds to the environmental problems that we understand Wealden and the Government are both committed to reducing. Further, the Government's planning policy is to build in towns where living, employment and education can all be accessed without a car.

#### 6. Remedies/Solutions

We have been asked to put forward remedies/ solutions to Wealden's housing need and requirement for a 5 year land supply.

- i) We feel one solution lies in thinking creatively about housing and building more blocks of flats in urban areas and on brownfield sites. This is the practice in towns and cities across Europe – they build upwards in urban areas and create open spaces beneath for play and

leisure. We feel it is a fundamentally flawed policy to keep building on greenfield sites and we need to counter the expectation that everyone in Wealden will have a garden and a front drive.

ii) A further solution is that no new homes in Ripe and Chalvington are approved by Wealden for the next 5 years; this would then allow some barn conversions/PDRs to come through the system (as they surely will), thus adding to the housing supply that Wealden seeks. If this is not done, the moment the allocations in the Plan are agreed developers will bag the land, apply for planning permission and we will end up with well in excess of our windfall allowance.

iii) A third remedy is to rebalance the housing allocations between north and south Wealden. In the plan because North Wealden is classified as being an AONB all the houses have been allocated to the south of the district, thus putting undue pressure on the south. But this ignores the fact that villages and towns in the north have identified a need for housing and would be happy to accept small scale, well designed vernacular developments.

## 7. In Summary

We would like the following changes made to the Plan:

- i) Remove Site Reference 345/3230 Follengers Field from the list of Potentially Suitable sites summary.
- ii) Reduce the windfall allowance for our Parish to Zero, reflecting the points made above and reflecting that other villages are more sustainable than Ripe
- iii) Strengthen the plan to include much greater partnership with the bus and rail companies to bring about public transport improvements and so reduce the need for car journeys
- iv) Requiring a district to meet a 5 year land supply immediately is having a deleterious effect on our region and undermines the careful thought that has gone into developing and drafting the Plan. A commitment to meeting the land supply over the course of the plan would be more realistic.

## 8. Attendance at the Public Examination

We would like to attend the public examination.

### 74. Co-Option of New Councillor

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council resolved to co-opt Lady Susan Conway onto Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council. Lady Conway will replace Stephen English.

### 75. To consider commissioning a study of the lanes in accordance with the County Council's Policy on the control of heavy goods vehicles

Councillors deferred discussing whether or not to commission a traffic survey until March after which time most of the construction traffic should have left the village because it was felt the construction traffic would distort the figures.

### 76. Defibrillators

Councillor Webb will apply for funding from the National Lottery Fund and the British Heart Foundation for money to provide a defibrillator in the Parish.

#### 77. Ripe Christmas Tree

Councillors resolved unanimously to apply for a licence for the Ripe Christmas Tree as long as the Committee adheres to the terms of the licence and the tree is included on the Parish Council's insurance.

#### 78. Cheques for Payment:

The following cheques were approved for payment;

101044	A Stevens – Salary
101045	ESCC – Pension

#### 79. Questions from Parish Councillors:

The Parish Council recently received an anonymous letter which made allegations which related to two planning applications in the Parish. Anonymous letters cannot be acted upon or replied to. Residents are asked that if they write to the Parish Council they leave their name and address. Their name and address will not be forwarded on to anyone else without their permission.

Councillors asked if there is any CIL money due from planning application WD/2017/1909/F, if the Parish Council needs to claim it and if the Parish Council knows how much it will be. CIL is paid out twice a year by Wealden District Council. It is not known at this stage when it will be paid or how much it will be. The Clerk will let Councillors know when the Parish Council has received it.

There were no further questions from Parish Councillors and the meeting closed at 8.45pm.