

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

**NOTES of an Open Consultation Meeting to discuss Site Submissions held on
Tuesday 18 March 2014 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**

Present: Cllr T Lupton (Chair)
Mr Simon Cole, ABC
Ms Carly Pettit, ABC

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

The meeting was attended by: 41 Parishioners
(The afternoon session was attended by 45 parishioners)

1. Introduction by Cllr Tom Lupton, Biddenden Parish Council

Cllr Lupton thanked so many people for attending the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to consult the parish on local building needs until 2030. This evening's meeting should not be taken in isolation. The parish has been consulted twice about social needs houses and in the Community Led Plan. A questionnaire was delivered to each house in the parish and amongst other issues addressed housing.

The Chairman introduced Simon Cole and Carly Pettit from Ashford Borough Council to lead the meeting through the process and sites in more detail. After the two presentations there would be a Q&A session and opportunities to look at the maps and put notes on them. The meeting would wrap up with a summary.

2. Introduction / Presentation from Ashford Borough Council

- a. Local Plan 2030**
- b. Site Submissions**

Simon Cole stated that the Borough Council had been tasked with planning ahead to 2030. This plan had to be put together over an 18 month to 2 year timescale. A number of similar events to this evenings meeting in Biddenden have taken place across the borough and there are more to come. The views and guidance of residents are being sought on the site options put forward to the council by third parties. The sites have been submitted by landowners and developers in response to requests by ABC for sites.

This process is at a very early stage and one of the first needs is to establish what the overall requirements for housing, jobs, retail, leisure etc are in the borough to 2030. Absolutely no decisions have been made by the borough council about the quantity of new developments. The sites submitted are potential options, some which parishioners may like and some you may not. This is an opportunity to weigh up the pros and cons. This exercise will feed in with the borough council's own technical assessor. Over 200 sites have been submitted across the borough and the aim is to put together a technical assessment together with views of residents to each site. In Biddenden there has been a new and recent Community Led Plan which has done quite a lot of the work already. The borough council wants to try and look in more detail at the different areas, hear from local resident as to what their feelings are. Decision making is some way down the line and it may be that the borough

council will come back to Biddenden later in the year having looked at what residents have said in order to narrow down the range of options/opportunities.

Carly Pettit went through the 8 sites submitted in Biddenden, detailing the intended developments.

3. Q & A

Q: Can you give a better feel for what is planned on these sites, eg you have BD1 which says 4 Acres, Gypsy, No details?

A: At this stage the borough council is just looking at the location of the sites against certain criteria and where a site could be considered suitable against the National Government Policy Framework. It may be that a site is suitable for development but not on that scale or for a certain type of development. The information given is all that the council currently has.

Q: How do you decide?

A: The exercise is to see if you could accept any development at all.

Q: I am interested in how many submissions there were in response to the request by the borough council and to whom they were made and when. Can you be more specific?

A: Every local authority makes a call for sites. That is how it would be aware of what sites are available across the borough. The call for sites was done in September 2013. The borough council wrote to all existing landowners who submitted land previously and then placed an advertisement in the local papers and on the Ashford Borough Council website. It was a generic call for sites.

Q: In 2008, 7 or 8 sites were looked at which were better than these submissions and in 2003 there was the Parish Design Statement. Are these relevant now or disregarded?

A: The recent Community Led Plan will have been taken as an update. It is a good starting point. There are some sites considered previously. As the process continues the number of site options will reduce.

Q: BD8 is a mixed usage site. What does this mean?

A: We can find out.

Q: This afternoon I was told that AB was going to have to find 50 traveller sites. Is that correct?

A: The survey was for 57 and 10 were permitted but if you leave details we can get back to you.

Discussion took place regarding the type of housing identified by the Community Led Plan and the need for adequate infrastructure to cope with new housing. (A full version of the Community Led Plan and the relevant results can be found at www.biddenden.gov.uk).

Q: No timeframe has been mentioned in terms of a deadline for people to submit sites.

A: The final date is the submission of the plan which is sometime next year. If a site has not been put forward by then it will not be considered.

Q: What percentage of the parish responded to the Community Led Plan?

A: Just under 50%.

Q: Who has the final decision on a site?

A: In terms of putting the plan together, essentially me and my team will make the recommendations to the members of Ashford Borough Council as to which sites we feel we feel should be allocated in the plan and for what use. The plan is then published for comment and everybody can comment. The council will then consider these comments and decide whether it wants to change the plan. Any changes must then go out to consultation again. Once the borough council has made all the changes that it wants to make it will then submit the plan to central government and a planning inspector will then be appointed and they will be required to come down and assess the plan to decide if it is sound. The inspector will provide a report to the borough council stating whether the plan is sound or not, with or without changes, and whether it can go through. If an inspector says that the plan is sound but thinks changes need to be made, if the council is happy it needs to publish those changes in consultation. After all that the borough council may adopt the plan and that becomes the adopted plan. So, the final decision is Ashford Borough Council's but the planning inspector has a major part to play and residents have a major role to play in shaping that plan at an early stage and to comment upon the plan.

Q: The Parish Council Minutes do not appear in the Parish Magazine in full anymore. Some of the minutes on the council website are unapproved. How do we get access to the minutes of this meeting?

A: The Parish Magazine decides what they put in the magazine so any concerns would need to be addressed with the Editor. The posting of unapproved council minutes on the council website is correct. It was agreed that the unapproved minutes may be put on the website after they have been seen by councillors but prior to being approved at the following meeting. They are then replaced with the approved version after the meeting. The minutes of this meeting will be on the notice board and on the council website.

Cllr Bell stated that the sites submitted were in addition to any infill sites within the parish, and ignored the development at Sandeman Way (10 houses) which already has planning permission, and the Local Needs Housing Project which is under discussion (12 houses) as an Exemption site.

4. Feedback from the Post-It exercise>

Carly Pettit did a short summing up on each site taken from the comments put on the post-its and placed on each site. The maps and comments were taken away after the meeting for a summary to be prepared. This is attached.

5. Close of Meeting

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He thanked Simon Cole and Carly Pettit for attending this evening and for organising the afternoon drop-in session.

The meeting closed at 21.06

Alison Swannick Tel: 07783223450
Parish Clerk

Biddenden Exhibition

14 feedback forms and post-its from evening meeting summarised:

Site	object	support	Summary of comments
BD1 – Priorywoods, proposed additional gypsy pitches	24	2	<p>Objection points:</p> <p>Highway objection, too close to Woolpack corner. Access is narrow Access already serving commercial activities No footpaths to walk into Biddenden safely. Site too large – very common theme (would accommodate almost whole of ABC’s requirement) Site is in the countryside. Should be a borough wide search, not just a call for sites. Scale of development would dominate nearby settled community. Too big Impact on woodland Harm to character of village. Too close to village. Crime rate will rise. Rubbish/rats increase Village does not need it. More than enough already Not on main drainage (although it is available) Harm to peaceful rural environment Impact on neighbours and countryside views. Already regular noxious bonfires. Ancient Woodland (at rear of site BMF). Traveller sites in headcorn should be taken into consideration even though outside borough Proposal needs to state how many pitches as not enough information Unsociable behaviour</p> <p>Support: Suitable extension to existing site</p>
BD2 – Rose Garden Paddock	12	1	<p>Should be a borough wide search, not just a call for sites. Other development not permitted in the countryside. Partial development would lead to incremental development. Harm to character of the village. No more gypsy sites in Biddenden Drainage system overloaded Springs in bank above existing dwelling Very busy road Spoil rural area Site should not have been allowed in the first place so extension not suitable 1 pitch could be allowed</p>
BD3 – land at	5	5	Access via narrow unadopted track.

Site	object	support	Summary of comments
Foxwood Farm			<p>Site set back far from main road. Impact on other residents detrimental Ancient woodland should be protected. No main drainage. Site too far removed from village No public transport. Access meets main road at blind spot. Private woodland could be opened up and enjoyed. Support housing proposal so more can enjoy the surrounding woodlands Not visible from highway – good site Not all of site should be developed – too big for 5 houses Good location – plenty of space</p>
BD4 – Land adjoining Gate House	7	1	<p>Previous application on this site refused on appeal as it was outside of village confines. Unacceptable impact on Townland Close Sewerage services cannot cope Loss of amenity of residents Access to the site is already narrow with lots of parked cars This is a good site in the village centre – beneficial for starter homes and sheltered accommodation</p>
BD5 – Newhouse Farmland	1	2	<p>How do you get access to site? Suitable for starter homes</p>
BD6 – Newcastle farm field	7	2	<p>Busy Main road and dangerous exits Too large Too far from village centre Inappropriate for large scale housing No infrastructure Flood risk Loss of farmland Suitable for housing/commercial to match surrounding if road issue resolved</p>
BD7 – Crampton Fields	8		<p>No public transport. Narrow country lane. Too far from village Too many houses on small site No mains gas or sewerage Good quality grazing land</p>
BD8 – Land at North Street	5	5	<p>Access is good x 2 Access is poor x 2 If site includes doctors surgery (or other community facilities) it would be a beneficial development x2 Cannot support without details of what the proposed mixed use is – this was a common theme. Small amount of development here would be acceptable but not whole site proposed x2</p>

Site	object	support	Summary of comments
			Site proposed is too big Access is not good – narrow This would be a good location for starter homes 2/3 bed No industrial use would be appropriate
General comments	Keep building out of the village. Outskirts better Centre cannot cope with more housing Sewage works won't cope with extra. Biddenden should remain a village not grow into a town. More sustainable housing needed in Biddenden and elsewhere in Kent. Sites should be chosen for 'greatest good', regardless of a few having their view compromised. Careful consideration should be given to housing styles and design to ensure development is in keeping with surroundings. Small developments of 10-15 houses would be most suitable		