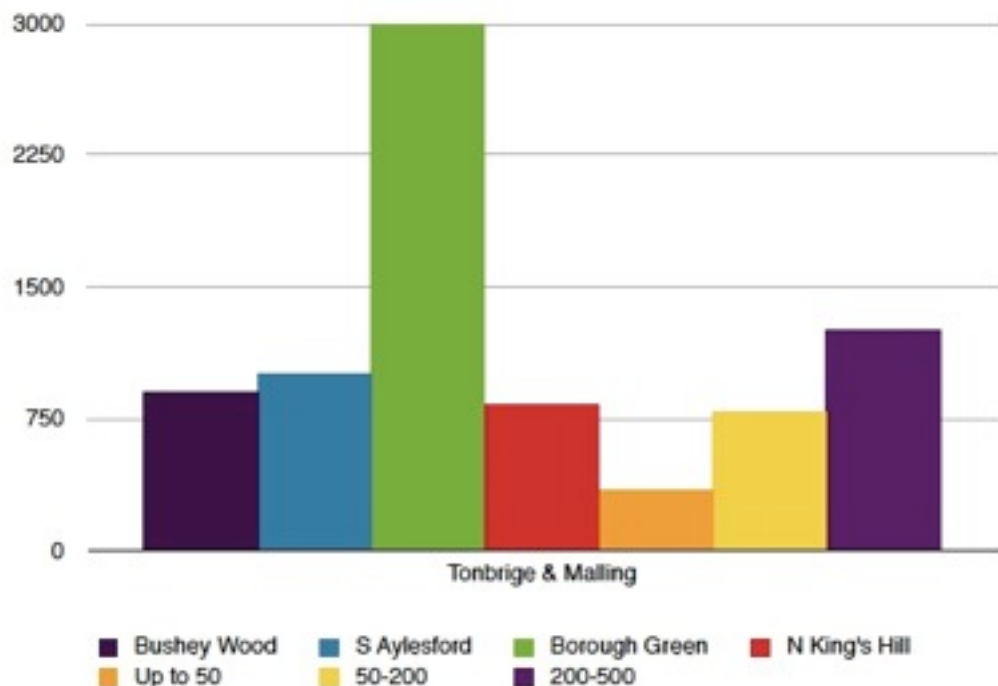


Minutes of Public Meeting

Fantastic attendance at the public meeting on 13 July - circa 150 people...!

Philippa Parker, Ightham resident and Councillor for Wrotham Parish Council, opened up the meeting with a short introduction, followed by the moderator, Councillor Wendy Palmer, Parish Councillor for Platt and Local Committee Member for the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

The first speaker, Councillor Robin Betts, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and Wrotham Parish Councillor, began his talk advising the audience on the Local Plan - Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area; he then brought attention to the proposed disproportionate aspect of the housing allocation, Borough Green Garden City, which is expected to provide at least 3,000 homes according to TMBC's Master Plan. This figure brings the disproportionality to around 40% compared to the rest of the borough.



Borough Green - Phase 1a and 1b - 1,720 Homes, followed by 380 Homes and finally, Phase 1c 900 Homes
19 Areas within the Borough allocated between 5 and 50 Homes
8 Areas within the Borough allocated between 50-200 Homes
4 Areas within the Borough allocated between 200-500 Homes

He also took a personal approach as he is a rural farmer and has been effected by the present traffic issues in and around Borough Green; how his business is effected by the congestion found on the A227 and how he and other local businesses have to change their methods of delivery to and from their locations in order to protect their produce. He also expressed how it effects his family when they are travelling to work and school using present train services, and are caught up in the present traffic congested roads. He advised that there are no plans to update or change any current roads and junctions which are bursting at the seams. The proposed Relief Road, does provide some reduction of traffic in the centre of Borough Green but could significantly move the problem to other areas and in particular the proposed junction near the school. The biggest impact of the proposal is the amount of traffic that 3,000 dwellings would have on the A227 north past Wrotham and south

through Ightham and along the A25 west of Darkhill Roundabout. Councillor Betts went on to discuss the issue surrounding AONB and Metropolitan Green Belt; the destruction of these designations within Ightham, which will change the setting and impact of the Kent Downs, currently protected.

The second speaker, Honorary Secretary of CPRE and Chairman of Wrotham Parish Council, Councillor Pete Gillin spoke about TMBC's traffic assessment compiled by Barton Willmore which brushes vaguely over traffic figures without committing to any real figures or possible issues. He also mentioned that the huge increases in traffic combined with existing roundabouts at full capacity will cause significant traffic queues which will exacerbate air quality to the detriment of all but in particular children's health. Les Henry Associates, experts in highways engineering have been commissioned to model traffic impacts on the surrounding area. Their forecast for Wrotham and Ightham are as follows:

Wrotham Bypass by 2036 will increase in traffic by 58 per cent
Ightham Bypass by 2036 will experience a 47 per cent increase
Ightham Village by 2036 will increase in traffic by 35 per cent

He then went on to highlight that although Ightham's AONB where the proposed Relief Road is to be built, while looking quite beautiful and recovered from the partial backfilling of the old sand quarry in the 1990s, has been contaminated in the past. During the Public Enquiry of 2006/7 information came to light that this area is highly [contaminated with toxic waste](#) (see article) dumped during the partial backfill process. This calls into question the remediation aspect prior to building any form of road. He also highlighted that the proposed housing site is wholly in Metropolitan Green Belt as well which will mean destroying beautiful fields and woodland.

The third speaker, Councillor Harry Rayner, KCC Councillor and Wrotham Parish Councillor spoke about BGGC from a minerals and waste planning perspective; how the surrounding areas are safeguarded for mineral extraction, namely sand and any proposed building development will sterilise this area. There are current sand quarries with planned extensions and all these areas will have to be backfilled in time for any prospective Relief Road and housing development. So much so, that it doesn't seem viable when considering the millions and millions of tonnes of backfill needed to complete the task and make it "sound" for any housing consideration. He touched on the current infrastructure within the area, being currently deficient in school and medical services which are already bursting from the current pressure. He also advised that Borough Green train services will not be able to cope with the extra housing population and that other train stations such as Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Hildenborough will be pursued by commuters trying to find alternative routes to meet their train travel needs. He also advised on the Local Plan initiative allowing for neighbouring districts/boroughs to seek from others the "Duty to Co-operate" in which they can share their housing quota if it cannot be fulfilled by one district, the neighbouring district/borough should be obliged to take on a percentage of their additional housing requirement.

Public Qs & As followed afterwards, which ranged from concerns about current traffic problems, how lanes surrounding Ightham and Ivy Hatch are already sought after by commuters, driving at the current 60mph allocation, being already at dangerous levels, how will BGGC effect these country lanes in the future; J5 Slips should be helpful to alleviate traffic effecting villages such as Wrotham, Platt, Borough Green and Ightham; Councillor Tim Shaw from Borough Green Parish Council & TMBC added to the J5 Slip question and discussed the increasing air pollution (while explaining what is meant by AQMA - Air Quality Management Area) that would result from the development; another question arose over the Local Plan process and enquired about timelines, how will the public know when and what to write, who is the inspectorate and how will he/she be impartial to which was answered that it is more than likely the inspectorate will be from

Public Meeting - 13th July at Ightham Village Hall

Bristol, in order to keep impartiality and information will be made available to the public who would like to be advised hereon as to when and what to write when the public consultation process is open for 6-8 weeks, (expected in mid-September this year). Councillor Robin Betts clarified that there is another Planning & Transport Advisory Board Meeting on 24 July at which members of the public can attend but cannot speak, in which the Local Plan will be taking into consideration Members of TMBC's thoughts and comments on the current Draft Local Plan which will then be "tweaked" accordingly; public consultation will take place during the month of September and this is when the public can write in their comments and/or objections.

A member from Sevenoaks District Council, as well as an Ightham resident raised the issue regarding the duty to co-operate and clarified that TMBC would not be taking on any additional housing quota from Sevenoaks District and she also thanked the organiser of the meeting to bring the Local Plan to the attention of local residents. Another member of the public raised the issue of the withdrawal of Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) from this area for BGGC's housing, while on the other hand TMBC were allocating new MGB to the area between West Malling and King's Hill, how this could be justified and whether it was driven by Members of TMBC who wanted to protect their "neck of the woods".

Councillor Mike Taylor, Chairman for Borough Green Parish Council & TMBC spoke about the Parish Alliance that had developed over the years stemming from the Celcon Inquiry, and how the Alliance has become much more powerful as a group rather than individual Parishes pursuing issues on their own, both politically and financially. Councillor Rodney Willingham pledged Ightham Parish Council's commitment to the Alliance, joining Wrotham, Platt and Borough Green in the joint funding proposal to employ professional advice. The meeting drew to a close just before 9pm. It was quite apparent how the audience are truly concerned over the Local Plan and were very grateful to have been given the opportunity to learn about the proposal.