

## **LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC MEETING 14th October 2022 Borough Green Village Hall.**

**Mike Taylor** Chair BGPC, TMBC, opened the meeting welcoming the public, and introducing the various speakers and the prospective 2023 Election candidates for BG & Platt ward; Pilgrims Ward consisting of Wrotham, Ightham, Stansted, Addington & Trottiscliffe: and Bourne Ward, Hadlow, Plaxtol and Shipbourne.

**Matt Boughton, Leader of TMBC** gave a brief rundown on the Plan, his main points being:

1. The 15941 houses are imposed on TMBC by Government, and he and others are lobbying through the Local Government Association for these figures to be reduced to manageable levels. In the meantime, without a Local Plan in place they are at the mercy of developers applying for permissions wherever they feel like.
2. He did not agree with previous administrations drafting a "take it or leave it" Local Plan, hence his wide ranging consultation, so the Plan will be developed with a combination of Planning Rules and Public Wishes.
3. He was happy to pledge that it would be Brownfield land first, and that Greenbelt had to be protected.

**Wendy Palmer**, Chair of Platt PC & TMBC dismissed the claim that Greenbelt has to be pretty to be important, its purpose is to be open, and to maintain Green Wedges between Parishes. Our local sandpits are temporary, and will be restored, but their value as Greenbelt is in no way diminished.

AONB is highly protected, as is its setting. This means development in the AONB is restricted, as is development outside that can harm the view of the AONB Setting.

**Tim Shaw**, Vice Chair BGPC & TMBC discussed the terrible problems in our villages of traffic hazards and congestion, and its impact on Air Quality. The purported "Relief Road" will require so many roundabouts that with the traffic generated by the construction and habitation of 3000 houses, it will increase traffic in our villages rather than take it away.

**Harry Rayner** KCC and Wrotham PC, spoke about the importance of KCC's Mineral Plan, and its allocated Soft Sand Safeguarded area. The extended time for excavation of Clubb's Nepicar Sandpit, and the Safeguard area east of that, effectively mean the Eastern end of the Relief Rd cannot reach the A20. There are currently NO PLANS to fund this £100M road from Government, KCC, TMBC or the Developers Consortium.

**Pete Gillin**, Chair Wrotham PC, was unable to attend, and MT made his presentation, which centred mainly on the illegal toxic waste dumped in Ightham Sandpit in the late 90s, that sits right on top of our drinking water aquifer. This has to be remediated urgently, whether or not any development comes forward. This effectively blocks the Relief Rd from reaching the A25 at Darkhill.

Summing up Mike pointed out that the Relief Rd cannot connect at either end with the existing A25 & A20, as it is the sole Exceptional Circumstance for Greenbelt Removal, the Greenbelt remains and no development can take place.

There was then an extensive public questions on a wide range of topics, answered by all the speakers.

**Mike Taylor** in summation pointed out that a single Parish is weak and poor, but a group of Parishes has political and financial strength. The Parishes of BG, Platt, Wrotham, Ightham, Stansted, Plaxtol and Shipbourne are bound together in the Parish Alliance, and have considerable funds set aside for this purpose. The Local Plan will be decided by Independent Planning Inspectors at a Public Inquiry, and when TMBC and the Developers have their high powered teams of Planning and Legal advisers making their case, we will have an equal place at that table with our team led by an eminent Planning Barrister, so we go into this fight on an equal footing.

Mike thanked the speakers and the public for attending, and closed the meeting to allow informal questions around the site plans.

( Informal note: We told the developers and the TM Planners in 2016 that this scheme could not be implemented within the time frame of the Local Plan. 6 years later the Timetable has been moved up to 2040, and we have another two years before a Plan is approved, but the site is no nearer availability within that timeframe.

TMBC Planners accepted the developer's gift of an "oven ready" 3000 house scheme, 43% of their work done without lifting a pen. But they never checked that over optimistic scheme. Council grabbed it because 3000 of their

Government imposed houses would be dumped on us. Now they will have a serious problem trying to persuade the rest of the Borough to take those extra houses back onto their patches)