

Please note: A 30 minute PUBLIC FORUM was held at 7pm in relation to planning application LW/21/0694 - Land Opposite Bishops Close, Ringmer, East Sussex. Erection of 68 dwellings, with associated access, drainage, parking, landscaping, and infrastructure works. The applicant and public were able to make their comments to aid RPC make their decision at point 7.1 a)

RINGMER PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Ringmer Parish Council
on Thursday 14th October 2021 at 19.30 in the Parish Rooms, Lucy Stone Room

- In attendance:** Cllr Matt Crisp (MC), Cllr Margaret Crompton (MMC), Cllr John Kay (JK), Cllr Gavin May (GM), Cllr Marcia Morgan (MM), Cllr Sarah Phillips (SP) – Acting Chair, Cllr David Terry (DT), Cllr Richard Turner (RT) and Cllr John Whitlock (JW)
- Also in attendance:** Emily O’Brien (EOB) – Lewes District Councillor
Carol Hodgson (CLK) – Acting Clerk
Gail Metcalfe (GPM) – Assistant Clerk
2 Representatives from Thakeham Group
- Members of the public:** Approximately 11

1. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Tara Barber (TB), Johnny Denis (JD), Clare Herbert (CH) and Gordon Sims (GS).

2. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS’ INTERESTS AND DISPENSATION REQUESTS

- 2.1 None.

3. TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9th SEPTEMBER 2021 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23rd SEPTEMBER 2021

It was resolved to accept the above two sets of minutes.

3.1 TO AGREE AN OUTSTANDING ITEM FROM THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24TH JUNE 2021 - ITEM 11.4 WHICH WAS DEFERRED AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS ON 15TH JULY 2021 AND 12TH AUGUST 2021

SP explained this was an administrative issue saying there had been a disagreement of the Parish Council’s response in that two had been submitted, one shorter and one longer version. The Clerk explained that the planning consultation period had now closed so the comments submitted cannot now be changed and it was necessary to “resolve that it is unresolved”. SP said this had to be accepted and it was now just a case of noting and accepting it as a learning curve and RPC need to make sure it is happy with submissions from today onwards.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

This item shall last not more than 15 minutes or at Chairman’s discretion and no contribution shall last more than 3 minutes.

Standing Orders were suspended at 19.40.

A member of the public representing the NRRG spoke about the **Thakeham** proposal, including the following points:

- The site is not designated for development in the Local Plan or the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan;

- NRRG will point out the many failings in the application relating to the design, lack of infrastructure and traffic issues and asked that Parish Council do the same;
- Villages such as Ringmer do not need their populations increased by more people who commute to work and are educated elsewhere;
- He supported EOB's view that we are in this situation because developers can take advantage of the requirement of the local plan to be reviewed every years. She is encouraging representation being made to Central Government and he hoped the Parish Council will address the issue of policy as well as the technical details of the application.

A second member of the same group noted:

- Bishop's Lane has been a nightmare for 2-3 years and he feared for the mental wellbeing of local people living with the disruption for so long;
- Many people in Ringmer had chosen to live in a village and don't want it turned into a town;
- the modifications at Earwig Corner are unlikely to be adequate to cope with increased traffic;
- there were insufficient car parking spaces;
- a large number of people would need to commute to Lewes train station where there is already pressure on parking;
- the amount of open space in Ringmer had already been reduced by recent development, including at the old football ground;
- there are inadequate facilities such as a supermarket, schools and doctor surgeries;
- the orchard and playground being offered by the developer were not needed.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 19.49.

5. **IF THE COMMITTEE WISHES TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FOR A PARTICULAR AGENDA ITEM, THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION MUST BE PASSED:**

'That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.'

None.

6. **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE FOLLOWING – Maximum 15 minutes**

- a) East Sussex County Councillor – Cllr Emily O'Brien (EOB) spoke as Johnny Denis (JD) was ill and had sent his apologies.

She said that she and Cllr Denis continue to represent residents who are concerned about traffic noise and the excessive traffic vibrations experienced by many houses. She said there had been an article about it last week in the Sussex Express. She felt that the County Council policy is much too skewed towards the movement of traffic and does not take into enough account the impact on residents' physical and mental health. They are asking the County Council again to review their policy. On a practical level, at the same time, the County Council are advising residents experiencing cracks in their houses to get a survey done but residents say there is no such thing and no surveyors who can do such a survey. EOB and JD are querying with County Council how residents are to get said survey and ask if they can assist with providing contact details so that the surveys can be undertaken. They will continue to press on this issue.

Traffic and parking around Bishops Lane – there have been concerns about traffic around Bishop's Lane, this is mainly, she believed, from the Diplocks site rather than Bovis. This has been raised with the District Council Enforcement Officer, the Head of Planning and also the local Police Officer who has been very helpful previously by undertaking some early morning patrols. She encouraged people to keep reporting if there is bad parking as it is more likely to be acted upon if collectively reported.

The other issue raised with County Council are the signs that have appeared either end of Ham Lane / Vicarage Way which are inappropriate and will conceal the village sign if that goes back in. She has asked them to review it and advised that JD is leaning quite hard on the above issues for review.

b) Lewes District Councillor

Fly-tipping incidents in the summer – she said she had thanked District Council Officers for acting promptly which seemed to have eased the problem. She asked people to carry on reporting any further incidents using the “report it” app or at <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/streets-parking-and-travel/report-fly-tipping>.

Thakeham application – she continues to be deeply concerned at applications such as Thakeham being submitted in Ringmer outside of local plan processes. She strongly believes these kind of major developments should be considered as part of local plans when issues like roads and transport are looked at as a whole – not piecemeal.

She was heartened by Boris Johnson’s recent announcement that there would be “no more building on greenfield sites”. However, she is concerned that unless the rules on local plans are changed this will just turn out to be empty words. She said if anyone would like to raise this issue with government, could they please sign (and share) the following campaign – <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/dear-michael-gove-please-end-the-5-year-rule-on-local-plans>.

A member of the public requested to ask a question. Standing Orders were suspended at 19.54.

The public member said he had sent a letter to Michael Gove as requested but was it a waste of time? He’d asked for an acknowledgment of receipt and confirmation his letter had been read. He asked if he was likely to get a reply? EOB advised that he might get a personal reply from Michael Gove but she felt it carry for weight if 200 residents sent a letter. EOB said she wouldn’t ask people to do it if she didn’t feel there was a window of opportunity to change government policies. SP suggested also writing to the local MP. The member of public advised that he had. EOB stated that these are government rules and it is, therefore, up to government to change them.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 19.56.

c) Ringmer Church and Village News re: Editor vacancy from January 2022 – Rosemary Colebourn (RC) outlined the situation explaining that Edwina Morris, the voluntary editor is retiring. They have someone they are trialling for the November 2021 issue but wanted to know if RPC would pay half a salary if they had to employ someone to do it. The amount would be £2,000. The Acting Clerk advised that they would need to submit a formal grant application and it would be considered at the next full Council meeting (date to be decided at point 10).

MM asked if they had pursued other forms of funding, but RC said they had not. MM advised that there is other possible Sussex-based funding available, i.e., the Sussex Community Foundation. It was agreed that MM would provide contact information to the Clerk and the Clerk would forward it on to RC. The Clerk advised she would also send an application form to Rosemary.

**MM
&
CLK**

d) To receive and accept any reports submitted -

7. PLANNING MATTERS

7.1 TO CONSIDER RESPONSES TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a) [LW/21/0694](#) Land Opposite Bishops Close Ringmer East Sussex
Erection of 68 dwellings, with associated access, drainage, parking, landscaping, and infrastructure works

Comments and observations:

RPC strongly object to this on the following grounds:

- The impact on Earwig Corner. The agreed Local Plan level of maximum development in Ringmer made possible by new work at Earwig Corner has already been exceeded. This would be significant additional development. No credible evidence is presented in the transport statement that Earwig Corner would be able to cope with the additional traffic generated.
- Bishop's Lane access. Bishops Lane could not accommodate the construction traffic necessary for this application. This application must be refused for this reason alone.
- The parking provision is not in accordance with the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan policy 8.3.
- The proposed development density is excessive. A substantial part of the site is accepted as unsuitable for development because it is too wet. In this proposal houses are being crammed onto the remainder of the site, with the overall density calculated as if the whole site could be used.
- Very poor design. The application proposes standard developer pattern-book units crammed into rows. This is the exact opposite of 'Building Beautiful'.
- Affordable housing is required by the Lewes Local Plan to be indistinguishable from market housing. In this proposal all the affordable-rented housing is crammed into 3-storey apartment blocks, which is extremely distinguishable from the housing for sale. The Design Statement in the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (policy 9.1) notes that houses of more than two stories will rarely be appropriate in a village setting, especially when, as here, right on the countryside edge of the settlement.
- Landscape impact. This would be negative because the eastern site boundary, which is entirely open to people using the B2192 or several footpaths of the Ringmer public footpath network, is just an ownership line across a field. There is no actual physical boundary on this side of the proposed development.
- The development size proposed exceeds the village scale for Ringmer required by Neighbourhood Plan policy 6.3, a policy which has been given weight by both a Planning Inspector and the Secretary of State in determining a previous Ringmer planning appeal.

This was voted on with all councillors recommending refusal, apart from Cllr Richard Turner who (as a member of the Lewes DC Planning Applications Committee) declared an interest, took no part in the discussion and abstained.

- b) [LW/21/0667](#) Land East of The Orchards Uckfield Road Ringmer East Sussex BN8 5RX
Outline application for 8 dwellings concerning access only

Comments and observations:

RPC strongly objects on the grounds that the travel plan is inaccurate as no busses are running from A26 into 'central' Ringmer and this is "salami-slicing" - 7 of the 8 properties should be affordable housing if counted with the previous application. This was voted on with all in favour apart from Cllr Richard Turner who abstained.

- c) [LW/21/0733](#) 5 Broyle Paddock Ringmer East Sussex BN8 5NT
Loft conversion including east and west facing side dormers

Comments and observations:

RPC offer no objection. This was voted on with 7 wishing to offer "no objection". One Member voted against no objection.

- d) [LW/21/0757](#) Pear Trees Rushey Green Ringmer East Sussex BN8 5JB
single storey rear extension

Comments and observations:

RPC make no objection to this application. This was voted on unanimously.

- e) [LW/21/0477](#) 22 Delves Close Ringmer East Sussex BN8 5JW
Extension to existing porch

Comments and observations:

RPC make no objection to this application. This was voted on unanimously.

7.2 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ACQUIRING THE LAND AT BROYLE GATE FARM COVERED BY RINGMER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY 7.4 8.4

The Clerk reiterated that this had been discussed at 12th August 2021 meeting but had not been acted on and read out the action point as follows:

“It was proposed that RPC contact the owners of the land expressing an interest in acquiring ownership of the land. The questions of: can we afford to acquire it, can we afford to put anything on it, and can we afford to run it were raised. This was voted on with 6 in favour of going ahead and 1 against. Action: The Clerk to express RPC’s interest in acquiring ownership of the land upon her return from holiday to the office.”

Action: CLK

CLK

7.3 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO LEWES DC’S INVITATION TO PROVIDE FACTUAL INFORMATION ON ADDITIONAL SITES FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE LEWES DISTRICT LAND AVAILIBLTY ASSESSMENT

Potential new sites:

This item was considered in accordance with Neighbourhood Plan Policy 7.2

65RG – Land at 4 Half Mile Drove – 1ha in size - dwelling yield of 25.

66RG – Land at Ham Farm, Ham Lane – 20ha in size - dwelling yield of 250.

59RG – Land to the East of Mutley Hall – 0.5ha in size - dwelling yield of 6. Land North of Ham Lane, Ringmer. (Not on the original consultation map)

Action: It was agreed to submit JK’s prepared responses to LDC with the necessary amendment to the incorrect titles.

JK

8. FINANCE MATTERS

- 8.1
- a) To receive a Cost Centre report – received.
 - b) To receive Bank Reconciliation(s) – received.
 - c) To approve payments – approved.
 - d) To receive any quotations – received.
 - e) To receive the external audit report for the year ended 31-Mar-21 by PKF Littlejohn – received.

The Clerk explained that the date on the report should have been the day **before** it was issued, not the same date it was published, and this had given RPC a blackmark but she confirmed that otherwise the accounts were all in order.

CLK advised that there is £139k in CIL money due by end of October and she will send the email out as it lists the developments it relates to.

- 8.2 To receive Grant applications / Donation requests
- a) Victim Support (Sussex) - £200 or as appropriate – It was proposed and seconded to give them £200. This was voted for unanimously.

Action: CLK to organise the £200 donation.

CLK

- b) Foundry Healthcare - £500

Request received 1st June 2021 – decision deferred pending further information

Action: The Clerk to write to say RPC decline the offer this time around but suggest they are free to submit a fresh application at any time but to be a bit clearer on the information provided to support the application. **CLK**

- 8.3 To receive an update on amending bank signatories

The Clerk suggested a clean slate and to start again. Action previously agreed was for Cllr Sims to become a signatory. The previous Clerk now needs to be taken off.

Action: CLK to find out what needs doing and Cllr May to come into office once this is known. **CLK**

- 8.4 To receive an update on obtaining quotes for Parish Council's Office signage

MC apologised saying he had been away for three weeks, so he hadn't discussed this with GM. He said they will hook up before the next meeting and will come back to us with a price. **GM/ MC**

- 8.5 To consider any other financial matters which cannot be held over until the next meeting

None.

9. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON USING THE LUCY STONE BEQUEST TO ENHANCE THE SHOPPING PRECINCT**

GM said he had spoken to a couple of companies who are interested in coming and telling us what they can do. He is hoping they will have proposals with us in the next couple of months.

JW mentioned that a member of the public had criticised the shopkeepers for being untidy but that this had been rectified with the exception of a few. MM asked who had not been tidying up as she had spoken to them all. JW said it was the café who had not been sweeping up.

10. **TO REVIEW THE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021/22 FOR ALL COMMITTEES**

It was proposed and seconded that the meeting schedule presented be agreed with the proviso that the Chairs of the various committees need to get together to agree their dates and times. This was voted on with all being in favour. The Clerk clarified that individual committees are to decide the time and dates of their own committees at their next meeting.

A proposal for full council and planning meetings to stick with the 19.30 start was made and seconded. All voted in favour of the 19.30 start.

11. **REPORTS, CORRESPONDENCE, QUESTIONS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- a) To receive any items for noting from the CPRE AGM – 25th September 2021

JK confirmed that he had responded.

- b) To receive the response to the 'Improvement of Bus Services' consultation – 14th September

JK confirmed that he had attended and he invited everyone to the Lewes CPRE AGM on Saturday 23rd Oct 2021 at 14.30 in the Kings Church building (opposite Homebase). He said they would be discussing the issue COB had spoken on i.e. the reason why Lewes finds itself with a new housing target of 12,000 on top of the existing one of about 39,000. He said all were welcome to attend.

- c) To consider any correspondence received after this agenda has been published for noting or action

Amateur Dramatics –JW and JK explained that this happens every year and involves 3 signs being put up on the Green for a week.

Action: CLK to confirm they can put the signs up.

CLK

Gliding Club – they have applied for an extension of their works causing another 2 years (potentially) of lorries going up and down the road. There are still vehicles going in and out of the site although their permission expired on 30th September 2021, so they are in breach and not permitted to do this. SP queried whether RPC should write to the Enforcement Officer (rather than SP doing it as an individual). This proposal was seconded and agreed.

Action: CLK to write to the Enforcement Officer.

CLK

Road signs end of Ham Lane and Vicarage Way (Conservation Area) – EOB had discussed this with ESCCH, and their feedback was that it would carry more weight coming from RPC. It was proposed that the office write a letter and all were in favour.

Action: CLK to write to ESCCH.

CLK

Bovis site - footpath 22 across Bovis site was to be closed until August but they have been granted permission from the Secretary of State to close for another 9 months.

Upper Lodge Farm, renew slurry pit – proposal to bring 2,300 lorries in there, got it deferred, much reduced number of lorries up that driveway, or build a new road through from access further up so as not to disturb the neighbours although it will still affect Ringmer residents.

New industrial units – the computer read-out of employment figures here are as follows:

2015 –1 person
 2016 – 13 people
 17 – 30 people
 2021 – 74 people

The site is very quiet, there are good businesses there and all either live in Ringmer, Lewes or Uckfield.

Office letterheads – Grant applications are going out with Village Hall address on and the advert in the Village News magazine needs updating.

Broken Noticeboard on the Green –it was confirmed that this is in the process of being fixed.

12. **URGENT ITEMS AT THE CHAIRMAN’S DISCRETION REQUIRING DECISIONS WHICH CANNOT BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING**

None.

The meeting ended at 21.16.

THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS HAVE A RIGHT AND ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND
Date of Next Council Meeting: Tuesday 9th November 2021 at 19.30
in the Parish Rooms, Lucy Stone Room