



Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross,
Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
PLANNING AND BUILDING COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 31ST AUGUST AT ROTHERFIELD VILLAGE HALL AT 19:30**

PRESENT

Cllr D Hiles (Chair)

Cllr P Kember (Vice Chair)

Cllr G Watson-Smith

Cllr R Harris

Cllr N Wickenden

Cllr L Henrick

Cllr A Martin

Cllr J Kitchenham

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr L Buck, Cllr P Dixon (Wealden District Council),
Cllr K Obbard (Wealden District Council), Adam Hardy (Deputy Clerk) &
85 members of the Public

1. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING: -

a) Public Forum:

The Chair invited members of the public to address the committee and to put forward any questions that the developers may choose to answer as part of their presentation. Points raised are summarised as follows:

- What is Sigma Homes relationship with BECG?
- Why has the land at Court Farm been chosen?
- Concerns regarding water supply and sewage and how the site will be affected by this.
- How many people would this proposed development add to the parish?
- Concerns about the development being built in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the effect it will have on the surrounding countryside.
- How will local schools cope with the additional population if the development were to proceed. It could potentially have a knock-on effect on sibling places at local schools.
- Concerns that local infrastructure, particularly the Doctors Surgery, will not be able to cope with the increase in number of residents this development could bring.
- Concerns that there are already a number of larger planning applications proposed for the Village and approval of the Court Farm application could lead to more.
- Concerns that the traffic situation in the Village of Rotherfield is already unbearable and that this development will make it even worse.
- Would the approval of this development open the door for further applications on the Court Farm site?
- How will the proposed development fit in with the surrounding area and countryside?
- A lack of understanding from the developers that once land has been built on it will be lost forever.
- Concerns that the Village identity will be lost and that Rotherfield will end up being part of the town of Crowborough.
- Concerns that the development will destroy the environment and provides no protection for Habitats already on the site.
- Could a relief road for the Village be considered as part of the application?

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. **Email:** clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

Parish Council Website: www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk **Twitter** [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on **Facebook**

- Traffic and pollution will be important considerations to parishioners.

b) Apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85):

Apologies had been received from Cllr J Richardson, Cllr P Beach & Cllr N Glynn

It was **RESOLVED** that the reasons for the absence be accepted.

c) Declaration of personal, prejudicial, and disclosable pecuniary interests on items on the agenda, and updates to members' register of interests.

None

d) To resolve that the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on Tuesday 24th August 2021 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

It was **RESOLVED** that these minutes represented a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

2. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM BECG PLANNING CONSULTANTS IN RELATION TO LAND AT COURT FARM

The attendees from BECG presented their outline proposal to the committee.

- BECG are a communications consultancy for the built environment working for sigma planning. If planning permission is obtained the rights will be sold on. Role is to obtain planning permission only.
- They are keen to understand what the residents of the parish would like included as part of the planning application.
- Although the application site is large, not all of it will be developed and once agreed a condition will be imposed so that the rest of the site cannot be used for further housing developments.
- The application will include heavy landscaping creating a clear barrier between Rotherfield and Crowborough.
- The approximate size of the development will be 18 acres.

At this point the Chair had to remind public that object of the evening was to receive the presentation.

- The landscaping of the site will protect the character and appearance of the AONB. This would include a view corridor towards the Grade 1 Listed church of St Denys'
- Heritage concerns would be addressed by protecting the entrance to the village and protect the view of the site.
- The number of housing units will be approximately 80-90. The composition of these housing units has not been agreed yet.
- A public consultation will take place over the next few weeks to see how the development can be softened with ideas being put forward by residents of the village.
- A lot of the questions raised in the public forum can not be answered yet as investigations and reports are still being undertaken and commissioned. Nothing is yet set in stone.

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. **Email:** clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

Parish Council Website: www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk **Twitter** [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on **Facebook**

- An application will be submitted, before Christmas and will be pursued through to appeal. The developers feel that the application will be better with input from members of the public than without.
- It is our understanding that not all the land in the site is within the agricultural tie of the farmland. The existing house will not be demolished as part of the proposed application.

At this point those giving the presentation offered to take questions from councillors and members of the public. Answers are summarised below.

- The development will take approximately 1 year to build. During this period there will inevitably be an increase in construction traffic and some of it will pass through Rotherfield and use Church Road.
- No consideration has been given to include a relief road as part of the development.
- A Traffic Movement Study will be conducted to predict the increase in traffic that a development of this size will bring to the parish. The development will look consider options for increasing walking and cycling into the Village.
- 35% of the development will be affordable housing. The types of using units for affordable housing will be derived from looking at the housing register and ascertaining the need for the area. The definition of affordable housing will follow that in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The type and size of housing units have not been decided yet. It will be relative to the building site area.
- The types of housing units proposed – houses or two-story flats – is not yet agreed. It is hoped that an answer will be available for the forthcoming public consultation.
- The development will not cover the whole farm land.
- A construction management plan will form part of the application and this will include Highways management for the construction period.
- No pollution study has been undertaken for the development and the developers will consider this.
- Access will be off Church Road at the north of the site. There is a footpath which will provide pedestrian access via Court Meadow.
- The Agricultural Tie does not encompass the whole of the land owned by the seller.
- There will be a Community Infrastructure Levy on the development and money from this may be used by Wealden District Council to improve the local area.
- Anyone has the opportunity to comment on the application when it is presented.
- It is agreed that the development is within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but as per the National Planning Policy Framework the argument will be made that the development will help to conserve and enhance the area.
- When submitted, the application will be for Outline Planning Permission and the aim is to submit the application before Christmas.

At this point the Chair drew a close to the Publics Questions. He reminded those present that a further opportunity for comments on the application would arise when the application is considered and at that point comments should be submitted to: Wealden District Council, Rotherfield Parish Council and Cllr Dixon (Wealden District Councillor). Wealden District Council are the decision makers on the application. Cllr Dixon addressed the meeting and gave out his email address: cllr.Phil.Dixon@wealden.gov.uk

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. **Email:** clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

Parish Council Website: www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk **Twitter** [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on **Facebook**

The meeting was then suspended at 20:49 to allow the public to depart.

The meeting resumed at 21:06

3. TO RECEIVE NOTICE OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE.

Tuesday 14th September – Mark Cross Community Centre

4. TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF ANY URGENT ISSUES FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDA.

- The Deputy Clerk informed the committee that he had received communications that Wealden District enforcement will be visiting the site of the Mobile Home at Treblers Road.
- It was agreed that wine and nibbles would be served at the Annual Parish Meeting on the Wednesday 29th September. St Denys' Church had agreed to serve the refreshments.

Chair declared the formal business of the meeting closed at: **21:08**

.....Chair.....Date