



Barnham

Parish Council

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Member of the Arun DC Dev't. Control Committee

Dear Councillor

Planning Application BN/27/09

Barnham Parish Council supports this application, in which WSCC seeks outline planning permission for 95 new homes on the site of the former Angel's & Hyde End Nurseries in Yapton Road, Barnham.

The parish council's support for the application is unanimous, but was agreed with considerable reluctance. We feel it is vital that members of Arun's Planning Committee fully understand the background to our decision.

About 100 local people attended a meeting in Barnham Parish Hall on 1st March 2010 to learn more about the WSCC housing proposal and about Arun's alternative proposal to use this land to accommodate permanent pitches for gypsies, travellers and also travelling showpeople. After the meeting, 92 attendees completed a simple questionnaire that asked them to rank their preferences for use of the land. Two-thirds of respondents would like the land to be retained for horticultural use, with the second choice being housing. With only one exception, gypsy and traveller accommodation was overwhelmingly the least popular option. The Parish Council has also received some 20 letters from parishioners, half of whom want the land to stay in horticultural use, half of whom support the WSCC housing development proposal, and all of whom vehemently oppose gypsy and traveller pitches.

The County Council has made it plain that they have no intention of leasing the site of BN/27/09 again for horticultural use. Were their application to be refused, they would take it to appeal; and should they lose the appeal, they would leave the site dormant and apply again for housing development at a later date. Were this to happen, presumably Arun DC would compulsorily purchase the site for gypsy, and traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation, the option that everyone in our community emphatically opposes.

Owing to Arun DC's delay in completing its LDF, and its need to accommodate so many new homes in addition to those already in plan, potential developers/landowners are now very active. In Barnham parish we are feeling particularly vulnerable. In addition to the WSCC application BN/27/09 for 95 new homes, the Parish Council is aware of at least five other sites in the parish where the landowner/developer will be seeking planning permission for residential development this year, probably within a few weeks.

One application, BN/01/10 for 36 new homes at Lilly's Caravan Site in Yapton Road, has already been lodged. We estimate that were these existing and forthcoming applications all to succeed, they would add between 500 and 650 new homes to our small semi-rural parish that only contains around 500 homes at present.

Plainly, the parish cannot accommodate so many new homes. This would devastate our community and ruin the quality of life of all our parishioners. The Parish Council shares the very sound concerns expressed by many local people at the 1st March public meeting. The most significant of these is Barnham's already overstrained sewerage system, which is reliant on undersized, leaking pipes, often damaged by "running sand" geology & HGV traffic, and frequently supercharged by surface/groundwater

ingress.. Barnham village – homes in Eastergate as well as our own parish – have all too often suffered from inadequate sewer capacity, resulting in sewage in streets and gardens, overflowing into the Rife or overflowing out of the toilets. Surface water drainage, which all funnels into one small rife, is a closely related problem. The whole area is low-lying, and gardens, fields, roads, homes and other buildings are often flooded with contaminated water.

Other matters of concern include a shortage of primary and secondary school places. Barnham Primary School is full and has no room for further classrooms to be added. There is no GP surgery in the village, too few dentists, and very poor bus services. There are very few local employment opportunities, so further housing would generate commuter traffic, predominantly by car.

The B2233 main road (Yapton Road) is increasingly busy, dangerously narrow with no capacity for widening, inadequate footways, and chronic worries about traffic speed.

Despite these concerns, the Parish Council fully understands that with Arun's pressing need to provide for more housing, every village in the district must accept its share of new development. A moderate expansion may even have a rejuvenating effect, particularly with smaller & more affordable houses.

There are positive reasons to support BN/27/09. Were the Parish Council able to select a location for new development, the Angel's/Hyde End Nursery site would probably be the place it would choose. It is in the heart of the parish, not on the fringes. Although beyond the nominal “built-up area”, there is already significant housing on Yapton Road eastwards towards Yapton until just beyond Parsonage Farm, plus planning permission for more houses, so the site is not in the “rural gap” between Barnham and Yapton, which properly starts after Barnham Windmill. It is directly located on the main B2233 through-road, and in close proximity to Murrell's Field where we are in the process of building a new Community Hall scheduled to open by 2013. The new hall will no doubt alter the focus of the village, and new homes nearby would enhance this shift.

BN/27/09 is a sustainable well-designed low density housing scheme with a blend of standard and affordable 2 & 3 bedroom housing in a variety of styles and good use of open space, in keeping with the existing character of the parish. Whilst it is still somewhat concerned, Council believes that arrangements for sewerage and drainage are adequate. Our sewers can probably cope with 95 more homes in this particular location, but certainly no more than that without exacerbating the already serious problems in the northern part of the village.

Were the application to be successful, we would ask the County Council to consider installing a roundabout on Yapton Road for access to the site, because this would have a beneficial traffic calming effect on Yapton Road, where we have a persistent and serious problem with speeding.

The Parish Council is asking ADC and WSCC to arrange that it is fully involved in Section 106 discussions, to ensure that we achieve real benefit to the community. In particular, this could help with the funding of our new Community Hall and public open space on Murrell's Field, and possibly help us acquire land for allotments too.

In summary, Barnham Parish Council now has a firm policy of “thus far and no further” in relation to new housing development. We support BN/27/09 as Barnham's contribution to Arun DC's need to provide new homes. 95 houses represents a 20% increase of housing in the parish, which we believe to be the maximum organic growth that can be absorbed by the community. The Parish Council will forcefully oppose any other significant applications for development outside of the present built environment. We are aware that there is a risk that BN/27/09, if allowed, would set a precedent that may make it more difficult to oppose other applications, but take the view that the benefits outweigh the risk. Opposition to future applications will be based predominantly on overloading the already inadequate physical & social infrastructure, particularly sewerage and surface water drainage; sustainability; preserving the separate and rural character of the village; and where applicable, preserving rural gaps between Barnham village and its neighbours.

Yours sincerely

David Phillips, Chairman
Chairman, Barnham Parish Council
Council

Eddie Tarbard
Clerk to Barnham Parish

cc Karl Roberts, ADC
Neil Crowther, ADC
Graham Glenn, WSCC