

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

As part of that work the Sustainability Assessments of many sites have been updated. These assessments have always been considered as living entities, and have been updated as and when new information has been acknowledged. On this occasion, input from the AONB Unit has resulted in an additional factor, namely ‘medieval fields’ – one of five landscape character components.

You will be aware that a planning application for Jeffrey’s Farm has been submitted to Mid Sussex District Council, which will be discussed later. We are also aware that another planning application for land at Little Oddynes Farm may be submitted in the New Year.

Following discussions between our Clerk and the Mid Sussex Monitoring Officer regarding declaration of interests, Councillors Vince and Kirk will not be participating in tonight’s meeting.

Chris Bowden, our consultant, will begin the meeting by summarising the work he has undertaken recently. This will be a period of 30 minutes for the public to comment or ask questions – although this may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman. As no meeting of the Council should last more than 2.5 hours, please note that any extension of time granted will be limited to ensure that all business on the agenda can be transacted.

A member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business on the agenda and to ensure that as many members of the public as possible may speak, no supplementary questions may be put.

You are asked to raise your hand if you wish to speak and you should always address your comments through the Chairman and not to specific Councillors. Following this public session of the meeting, members of the public may not participate in the transaction of any item of business unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – CONSULTANT’S REPORT

Troy Navigus Consultant’s report was circulated prior to the meeting and was available on the Council’s website. Chris Bowden from Troy Navigus Consultants was in attendance.

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

Chris Bowden began by explaining to those present that the report was the professional opinion of Troy Navigus and he reminded the Council that the Neighbourhood Plan process allowed communities to shape their own plans. The report contained recommendations, but the Parish Council still had options and choices to make. Those present were reminded that at the end of the Neighbourhood Plan process there was a referendum whereby the local community could vote and accept or reject the Neighbourhood Plan proposals.

Chris Bowden informed the Council that the 111 comments received through the pre submission Regulation 14 consultation had been reviewed. Information with regard to the call for land and sites in Horsted Keynes had been reviewed and also the most recent information about these sites had been reviewed. This included the new information which had come to light concerning the site at Sugar Lane – Jeffrey’s Farm. The site at Jeffreys Farm was now being put forward as one large amalgamated site. Chris Bowden also informed the Council that in preparing this report Troy Navigus had met with Claire Tester who represented the the High Weald AONB Unit (AONB Unit) and West Sussex County Council Highways (WSCC)

Chris Bowden also referred to the OAHN (Objectively Assessed Housing Need) number for Horsted Keynes which was assessed as 120-126. He suggested that although Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) did not see it as a target that should be met, recent examiner reports suggested that every effort should be met to move towards the OAHN. In particular, Chris Bowden referred to the two recent examiner reports for Ansty and East Grinstead, whereby the examiner had ruled that the OAHN was a target. Chris Bowden reminded the Council that in the current Neighbourhood Plan for Horsted Keynes the housing number suggested for the village was 44 which in Chris Bowden’s opinion fell too far short of the OAHN.

Chris Bowden also referred to the High Court Decision in Henfield whereby the examiner suggested that all options should be considered when drafting a neighbourhood plan. If communities did not consider all options their plan could then be open to challenge.

Chris Bowden also suggested that the vision in the current Plan was contradictory and did not deliver on housing strategy. The smaller sites suggested in Horsted Keynes would not be able to provide affordable housing as suggested by the vision. Chris Bowden suggested that in his professional opinion, the current Plan would not meet the basic conditions of the Independent Examiner.

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

Chris Bowden explained in more detail about the new information received in the lead up to the preparation of the report. All landowners that had originally been part of the call for land were invited to update the Council on any new information. The suggested proposals on the land at Jeffrey’s Farm in Sugar Lane brought about a material change. Chris Bowden informed the Council that the AONB Unit and WSCC, although requiring more detail, did not have any fundamental issues with the proposals at Jeffrey’s Farm and the new amalgamated site being included in the Neighbourhood Plan. The land at Church Lane remained unsustainable. The land at the police field could remain allocated, but the AONB Unit did suggest that it was identified as a medieval field. The proposals for Birch Grove Road had not been put through the Neighbourhood Plan and so Chris Bowden suggested it was reasonable not to consider this site in this report as it had not been subject to any consultation.

Chris Bowden explained that in their professional opinion the land at Jeffrey’s Farm in Sugar Lane would potentially be a sustainable site and would go some way to meeting the OAHN. In view of this, Troy Navigus would recommend that the new amalgamated site at Jeffrey’s Farm should be allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. In their professional opinion this would allow the Neighbourhood Plan to have more chance at examination, although he conceded may fail at referendum as it would seem the Community as a whole was against allocating the amalgamated site at Jeffrey’s Farm.

Q & A SESSION – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASK QUESTIONS

The Chairman allowed Members of the public to ask questions concerning the report from Troy Navigus:-

Peter Foreman, a local resident asked whether the OAHN set by MSDC was not affected by larger developments in and around Mid Sussex for example in Cophorne.

Chris Bowden replied that the larger developments in and around MSDC were not taken into account at Parish level. The examiner in the Ansty Neighbourhood Plan went as far as to suggest that the OAHN was about local need which must be considered.

Andrew Ronaldson, a local resident referred to a letter that had been circulated to all residents concerning a questionnaire which was undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation some time ago. Mr Ronaldson reported that from

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

that survey it was concluded that 91% of households in the village said that there was no prospect of them outgrowing their current accommodation, 2% said they might outgrow their current accommodation in ten years. A large proportion of the village population had said that there was no housing need in the village. Mr Ronaldson went on to say that the questionnaire was well drafted and had been responded to well, with 60% of households in the parish responding.

Chris Bowden responded by suggesting that the survey was carried out by the Parish Council and not Troy Navigus, albeit they had had some input into the types of questions that should be asked. Chris Bowden suggested that through further engagement there could be differing views and that there was a balance to be had.

Phil Miles, a local resident suggested that this was the second report received by the Parish Council since pre submission. In Lindsay Frost’s report the OAHN was considered not to be a target, but the emphasis in the Troy Navigus report seemed to be that the OAHN was a target that should be reached. Lindsay Frost said at the meeting on 8 August that for a village like Horsted Keynes a figure of 30-40 houses might be a more realistic OAHN for a village of this size and nature.

In response, Chris Bowden referred to the examiner’s report from the Ansty and East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plans whereby the examiner is on record stating that the OAHN is a target.

Loz Allan, a local resident also made a point of clarification concerning the recently circulated leaflet “Our Horsted Keynes”. The leaflet referred to phase 1 of development at Jeffrey’s Farm which in turn is also referred to in the Troy Navigus report. The family concerned at Jeffrey’s farm have stated that this is misleading. Loz Allan explained further that the word “phase” in this sense did not mean to imply that there would be an immediate follow on of development. Loz Allan understood that the family as current owners of the land at Jeffrey’s Farm had made it clear that there was no intention by them to proceed with future development and the number of units would be fixed as in the application at 42.

Suzanne Sainter, a local resident stated that the examiner’s report for Ansty and the one for East Grinstead was one examiner and that Mid Sussex District Council did not agree with the examiners conclusions concerning OAHN. The chances were Horsted Keynes Plan would be considered by a different examiner.

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

Chris Bowden in response stated that it was the officer’s view at MSDC not to agree with the examiners conclusions, but that the overall Council response was to take the examiner’s reports to Committee.

Peter Willis, a local resident suggested that the Parish Council could take one of two options. The Parish Council could reword their vision and move ahead with the Neighbourhood Plan as it stands or they could include Jeffrey’s Farm in the Neighbourhood Plan and face the need to go out for re- consultation.

Paul French, a local resident suggested that there was a need for more low cost housing in the village.

Kevin Copper, a local resident, asked for further clarification on what would happen if the Parish Council decided to stick with the current plan.

In response, Chris Bowden informed the Parish Council that the first step would be the examination. If the Parish Council decided to submit the current plan to MSDC, MSDC would then send to the examiner. The Examiner would then ascertain whether the Plan met the basic conditions. The examiner depending on their findings would either suggest moving to referendum or proceed with the Plan with amendments. If the Examiner reached the conclusion that the Plan did not meet the basic conditions then the Parish Council would have to rethink and go back out for consultation.

Sue Karle, a Local Resident informed the Parish Council that she had been involved with the Neighbourhood Plan at Ardingly and the Parish Council there did not want two sites, but MSDC would not fund going to appeal.

David Bolton, a local resident requested further information about surrounding villages similar to Horsted Keynes which had been through the examiner and what their OAHN was.

In response, Chris Bowden explained that in the MSDC Local Plan, Horsted Keynes was a category 3 village (a medium sized village). Ardingly and Bolney were also category 3 villages. He went on to explain that the OAHN is a challenging subject, but as a community, Horsted Keynes must decide whether their Plan would hold up to examination. If it does not meet basic conditions the village would be open to speculative planning applications.

Nick Schymyck, a local resident explained that if the development at Jeffrey’s Farm goes ahead, many residents remained concerned about the possible “domino effect”.

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

In response, Chris Bowden indicated that MSDC had not indicated that they were concerned about the possible domino effects.

Tony Abrahams, a local resident, stated that there had been enough development in Horsted Keynes with development in Hamsland and Lewes Road.

Adrian Woods, a local resident stated that the whole point of a Neighbourhood Plan was for the local community to have a say. Even if the Plan gets past the examiner, it could then fail at referendum as local people would not vote for it.

Ann Lock, a local resident stated that unlike Horsted Keynes, most villages have a main road going through it. The increased traffic from a potential site at Jeffrey's Farm would be huge.

Chris Bowden explained that they had discussed highway implications with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and their opinion was that a development at Jeffrey's Farm would not amount to a position of severe impact, which was the test used.

Paul Welsh, a local resident asked whether the Parish Council would be able to take into account organic growth when looking at their OAHN. In other words, could the Parish Council take into account future windfalls when assessing their OAHN.

In response, Chris Bowden explained that when developing a Neighbourhood Plan you were not supposed to take into account possible windfalls when assessing the OAHN. Only actual windfalls could be taken into account.

Q&A SESSION – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARISH COUNCILLORS TO ASK QUESTIONS

Councillor Webster asked for further clarification from Chris Bowden about whether Troy Navigus had been involved in preparing the Ansty Neighbourhood Plan. She also stated that the Neighbourhood Plan was the only opportunity for local people to vote on what was wanted in Horsted Keynes, but if nobody voted in the referendum then the process would have been a waste of time. Cllr Webster also sought clarification on whether the Parish Council would need to re-consult with the community if they changed the vision.

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

In response, Chris Bowden confirmed that he was the consultant used by the parish council in the Ansty case. He continued by stating that nothing was certain when considering the OAHN, but in his opinion, an examiner may question why the community was not consulted on such a material change as amending the vision. Chris Bowden also suggested that in his professional opinion, the examiner would expect the Parish Council to have undertaken a further regulation 14 consultation if the vision changed.

Cllr Webster also sought clarification on whether if the Parish Council included a policy on rural exception sites into the current plan would this not assist with the vision.

Chris Bowden, in his professional opinion, did not see this as a way forward as no land had come forward which would be seen suitable as a rural exception site.

Cllr Humphries- Davies suggested that the examiner would look at the whole Plan and see the 111 responses to pre-submission and note the distinct rural identity of Horsted Keynes and on balance would see that the vision was trying to reflect this.

Chris Bowden explained in response that it was a difficult balance between what the community hoped for and what planning development requires. In his professional opinion if the Plan does not address housing need then the village would be subjected to speculative planning applications. The examiner only has a duty to consider whether the Plan meets the basic conditions.

Cllr Hersey referred to all the recent emails that had been received from the local community since the Troy Navigus report had been published, and it was clear that if the Plan was changed the Parish Council would run the risk of it not getting through referendum.

Cllr Colville suggested that criteria based policy which focused on the small sites could be included which would help with the Plan's vision. It was noted that the examiner in the Antsy Plan had even suggested this as a way forward.

Chris Bowden agreed that this would be a useful way forward, but suggested that in his professional opinion, the Parish Council would need to re-consult under Regulation 14 again. Chris Bowden suggested that the Parish Council could seek the advice of MSDC on this matter.

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

Cllr Colville also sought clarification about the Jeffery’s Farm site which was now amalgamated. Cllr Colville sought clarification as to what had changed since the sites had become amalgamated to change Troy Navigus view on its sustainability. Cllr Colville also requested further information on the recent list of AONB components. Cllr Colville also stated that MSDC have said that 126 OAHN is not a target and that constraints means that the village should deliver on a lower figure as long as it could be justified.

In response, Chris Bowden explained that it would be hard to justify a lower number now that a potentially sustainable site had come forward in the amalgamated Jeffrey’s Farm site.

Chris Bowden explained further that the site at Jeffrey’s Farm was only potentially sustainable and more detail would be needed and more input from the AONB would be required.

Cllr Colville sought further clarification on the requirements from WSCC Highways that they would need a full visibility splay. The only way to achieve a full splay would be to remove hedgerow.

NEXT STEPS

The Parish Council then considered the next steps to be taken. It was noted that there was a planning application already submitted for Jeffrey’s Farm and the Parish Council had been asked for their comments. In normal circumstances all planning applications were considered by the planning committee. In this instance, the Clerk had suggested that the full Parish Council should consider the planning application.

Cllr Webster proposed that the Full Council should consider the planning application and this was seconded by Cllr Wheatley. The Parish Council voted and 7 voted for with one against.

RESOLVED – that the Full Parish Council would consider the Jeffrey’s Farm planning application at their next meeting on 13 December 2016.

The Parish Council then went on to consider the Neighbourhood Plan and what the next steps should be taken following the report from Troy Navigus.

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

Councillor Webster proposed that the Parish Council should move forward with option one from Lindsay Frost’s report which would mean that they continue with the current Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Clarke seconded this proposal.

Option one from Lindsay’s Frost’s report was summarised as follows:-

Option 1

3.26 Option 1 is where the additional work still drives the parish council to the conclusion that no additional sites are “suitable, available and achievable” and so are not sustainable as housing allocations. It accepts that the draft NDP will fall well short of the OAHN, but justifies this in terms of evidence that the sites rejected do not meet perform well enough against the criteria in the sustainability assessment and that their development will cause overriding harm to planning objectives. This option will yield only a few small units/affordable housing to meet local needs, necessitating a further look at the vision and objectives to make the plan more coherent and robust.

3.27 The advantages of Option 1 are:

- *it provides the greatest degree of protection to the village’s rural setting , the*
- *it does not make any additional allocations , which are likely to prompt further objections*
- *it retains the existing well defined built up area boundary*

3.28 The disadvantages of Option 1 are:

- *it provides only a small amount of housing to meet local needs*
- *the marginal benefit of additional housing to support of community facilities and activities is least of the three options*
- *a significant body of local opinion is likely to continue opposing the plan vigorously at both examination and referendum , with risk to successfully completing the plan*
- *pending formal “making” of the plan after referendum , it will leave the area more vulnerable to speculative planning applications for housing development*

Chairman

Date

**Full Parish Council – Minutes
Unconfirmed**

RESOLVED That the Parish Council proceed with option one and move forward with the current Neighbourhood Plan.

Meeting ended at 10:30 pm

Chairman

Date