

Angmering Parish Council and Current Planning matters

The Parish Council has been working hard over the last year in relation to the various planning issues. The councillors on the Parish Council have worked extremely hard for the whole community of Angmering, including its silent majority.

According to the Census 2011 data, there were 7,615 people in Angmering, living in 3190 households of which 6,150 were adults. The Parish Council has a statutory duty to ensure that it works for the good of the whole population and not just the most vocal.

The following activities have been proceeding concurrently:-

- The Parish Council initiated the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, in order to be able to affect the position, extent and design of future development over 15 years.
- The Government adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In the absence of a Local Plan, this becomes the Planning Law with a presumption in favour of **Sustainable Development**.
- Arun District Council is going through the process of preparing a Draft Local Plan, part of which is to define the Strategic Housing numbers and where they should go. Angmering is one of only three such Strategic Growth areas in Arun, which is the main problem.
- District Councillors have further delayed the production of the Local Plan by questioning the evidence base for the population growth and movements, the result of which is the data verification of GL Hearn assumptions upon which the whole housing policies are based. **It is important to realise that the resulting numbers could increase rather than reduce.**
- Barratt/David Wilson Homes made a detailed application for 150 homes on Greenfield land. **Angmering Parish Council objected to the application on sustainability grounds.**
- VHB made an outline application for 227 homes on the current horticulture site. **Angmering Parish Council objected to the application on sustainability grounds.**
- JV Plants made a detailed application for 38 homes on the Pound Nursery site. **Angmering Parish Council objected to the application on sustainability grounds.**
- The Worthing Rugby Club has indicated that it would be moving its operation, but no planning application has been made to date.
- Chandlers made an application for the replacement workshop/sales area off the A259. **Angmering Parish Council objected to the application on protection of the strategic gap grounds.**
- Chandlers made a detailed application for housing on its current site. **Whilst accepting that development is inevitable here, Angmering Parish Council objected to the application because the design was just not good enough, particularly in the Conservation Area.**
- In order to provide support to the Local Plan and to delay the developers going to appeal, Arun District Council introduced the 'Garden Cities' concept as a Masterplan for the Roundstone Lane sites. This includes the Rugby Club, Pound House and

Manor Nursery as well as a proposed retail area to the south, next to Mayflower Way. **Angmering Parish Council has indicated its objections to the concepts within the masterplan.**

The unavoidable facts are:-

- The Neighbourhood Development Plan will have to adopt the Strategic Numbers finally agreed by Arun District Council. It cannot be used to try to restrict development, but just to manage it.
- The NPPF is being used by developers to justify applications where they should not go. This is particularly important when developers go to appeal.
- Once the by-pass was put where it was, the land between it and Roundstone Lane became vulnerable to development.
- Not wanting development is not a valid reason for not getting it. The arguments to avoid such development must be only on planning grounds. The main argument here has to be about sustainability.
- Angmering has an **infrastructure deficit** with local roads already being at, or beyond capacity already and schools, particularly Primaries, also being at capacity.
- Without negotiation, developers will not make good any infrastructure deficit as the NPPF says they only have to pay for the elements they cause.
- The planning applications previously made are all out of date and the applicants could go straight to appeal if they wish.
- If the applications are won on appeal, the Section 106 contributions would be the bare minimum. There would be no provision for either the A259 upgrade or a new Primary School.
- The local plan numbers will not be significantly different from those already published, over the life of the plan. What might be different is the timing of the build of the agreed numbers.
- Angmering is going to be a strategic area for development whatever the local feeling may be. Better to plan for the growth than hope for it not to take place.
- The Local Plan, despite what it says in the introduction, is all about numbers of houses. The words put in about the importance of jobs are just that, words. **Nothing** will be done within the plan to actively promote job creation.

In the light of the above a report for publication might be:-

Developments on the East of Roundstone Lane

The Parish Council Mandate

Angmering Parish Council has a mandate to represent all residents in the parish. Whilst the Parish Council is aware that some residents believe that its councillors are not acting in the interests of all residents of the parish, this is not the case. The objective of this communication is to explain the work being done by the Parish Council and to avoid any misunderstanding in this regard

The level of work being undertaken by parish councils generally, is at an unprecedented level, particularly since the Government's Big Society/Localism policies have started to have an effect. Angmering Parish Councillors are all working many hours, unpaid and in their own time, to do what they believe is best interests for our whole community.

One example of Parish Council activity is the Angmering Neighbourhood Development Plan, which was initiated by the Parish Council, then worked on by members of the wider community, but with the current work mostly being undertaken by councillors. This plan will not be able to stop developments, but will be able to help determine where they should go, what they should look like and what needs to be provided for the community, if and when they are built. Work on this Plan is a priority.

The Arun District Local Plan is being drawn up by the district planners and the drafts show that Angmering is a 'Strategic Development Area' which means that it is where it is intended most of future housing will be placed. As the Arun District Local Plan labels Angmering in this way there will be pressure from developers to allow building here. This is what is causing the current pressure for development. The Arun Local Plan will not be finalised until mid-2015, which highlights the reason for getting the Neighbourhood Plan in place as soon as possible.

The Arun District Council-commissioned 'Vision Statement' or 'Masterplan' for the area east of Roundstone appears to have caused confusion because it covers the whole area from Manor Nursery in the north of the village to the VHB site in the south, together with some land in the south on the other side of Roundstone Lane. There are planning applications outstanding on three parcels of land from Barratt/David Wilson homes, VHB and Pound Nursery. No applications have been received from the Rugby Club, Manor Nursery, Pound House or the additional land mentioned in the Vision Statement.

The Parish Council position for the applications received was that the proposals were unsustainable and they were consequently rejected for a number of reasons. These reasons were documented in great detail by a Working Group commissioned by the Parish Council and comprising councillors and other residents of the village and the decisions were approved by the Parish Council. **The Parish Council position on these applications is unchanged.**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has a presumption in favour of sustainable development, particularly where there is no adopted Local Plan as in Arun. For this reason, the Parish Council responses dealt with the sustainability of the proposals. Simply not wanting development is not an acceptable reason for developments being refused and such a response will be ignored.

What does sustainable development mean?

The following is a quote from the NPPF:-

'There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.'

All applications need to be measured against these roles.

What is the Parish Council doing currently?

The Parish Council still believes that the building of large developments on land outside the built-up area is fundamentally wrong, and this is reflected in the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan. This does not mean that the Parish Council should refuse to engage with either the developers or planners on the potential large-scale developments. To refuse to do so will not force their hands and make them go away.

The Parish Council has to consider all scenarios and these include the risk of losing the battle to limit development. The evidence for this scenario is provided by considering recent planning appeals, statements by Government Ministers and the fact that Angmering is clearly seen by Arun District Council as being a strategic growth area. Consequently it is appropriate that the Parish Council consider the scenario that if development takes place, what benefits can be obtained for our community.

As a result of this the Parish Council has forced Arun District Council to give it a place around the table in meetings with developers and the County Council when potential community benefits are being discussed. There is already an acceptance that major highways and education concessions are essential before any such major development takes place. Other crucial infrastructure improvements are also now being put on the table.

The Parish Council presence at these meetings will make no difference to the eventual outcome of the planning applications, whether or not they go to appeal, but it will provide a back-stop position. We do not want to repeat the Bramley Green situation where little or no involvement meant there were very limited benefits to our community, other than the land for a school that was not built and a community centre that the Parish Council had to finance the building and maintenance of.

Angmering Community Land Trust

The Parish Council has also instigated the setting up of the Angmering Community Land Trust (ACLT), which is also discussing options with Arun District Council. One of the purposes of this Trust is to be able to meet some of the targets that appear to be driving the need for many new houses by providing 'Affordable Homes' for the people of Angmering, but reserving them just for local people. These homes are otherwise provided on the back of large developments and, taking the need away, reduces the argument for the major developments. The ACLT will be independent of the Parish Council and will look to hold and provide land for the community as well as building and running affordable houses.

Future Communication

The Parish Council hopes that the residents of our community find this communication helpful. You are of course invited to ask any questions, an invitation extended to all residents of our parish. You can do this by email or by coming along to one of our Parish Council meetings, the dates for which are published on the Parish Council website.

Further communications will be provided as and when we have news to share.