

# RINGMER PARISH COUNCIL

## Newsletter Autumn 2011

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*Published by Ringmer Parish Council*

*This is your invitation to Ringmer's important*  
**Neighbourhood Development Plan Meetings: "Ringmer to 2030"**  
to be held at the Caburn Pavilion at 7.30 p.m. on  
**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November (Vision, Key Principles, Countryside)**  
**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November (Housing & Employment options)**  
**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December (Housing & Employment options)**  
**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December (Community, Leisure & Infrastructure needs)**

### **RINGMER TO 2030:**

#### **The Local Development Framework (LDF) and Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

*These documents will affect everyone who lives in Ringmer over the next 20 years, and what our village (if it is still a village) will be like at the end of this period. This newsletter is going to all households to make everyone aware of what they involve and how you can influence them.*

#### **What are they?**

The LDF is Lewes District Council's development plan for the district, including Ringmer. The key element is the Core Strategy, and you now have until 2nd December to comment on it.

It asks a range of questions including whether you think either 176 or up to 647 new houses should be built on Ringmer and Broyleside greenfield sites between now and 2030. The lower number is thought to reflect Ringmer's own needs over this period; the higher number adds 471 new houses for new commuters "as a contribution to meeting the wider District's needs".

As part of its planning process LDC undertook a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA - updated in 2011) which identified the following greenfield sites for housing in Ringmer. These are shown on the map later in this Newsletter, but the main sites proposed are:

1. Along the length of Bishops Lane, (285 houses).
2. Along the south side of Lewes Road, between the community College and the Kennels (154).
3. In the fields around Fingerpost Field, between Broyle Lane and the Green Man (100).

Your Parish Council supports some new housing in Ringmer, including new affordable housing, making it easier for young families to live in the village, and more accommodation for the increasing numbers of elderly people likely to live here by

2030. If Ringmer took its fair share of the new housing planned for Lewes District, this would amount to fairly near to the 176 houses of the District Council's lower total – about 8-10 new houses per year, on average, over the period.

Your Parish Council is opposed to any houses being built in the Green Gap separating Ringmer and Broyleside. Development on the south side of the Lewes Road would make it impossible to prevent later development along the north side too, creating a continuous two mile built up area along the B2192 & B2124. That would destroy Ringmer's "village feel" and our village would become a town (but with only village facilities).

The Parish Council is also opposed to a large new estate on the fields around Fingerpost Farm. The Broyleside has very few facilities, and no other equivalent community is being asked to take anything like this number of new houses.

Regarding proposals for the north side of Bishops Lane, the principle of having some new development here was fought and lost at two successive public inquiries many years ago. We also believe that the existing business estate here should be maintained.

As a general principle we would wish to see Ringmer's housing needs met progressively by a series of smaller developments over the 20 year planning period and not by a single large monolithic development. Any housing should be mixed and embody designs compatible with a village setting.

The Core Strategy also proposes a large new industrial estate on the fields east of the Broyle Business Park, running up to Lower Lodge and most of the way to Half Mile Drove. The parish council wishes to see a substantial increase in Ringmer employment opportunities, but has suggested alternative, better screened, sites, further away from people's houses and less disruptive to the community.

We believe that under the new principle of Localism, the choice of sites for both types of development should be made

by local people through our forthcoming Neighbourhood Development Plan (see below), not imposed from above. The full District Council proposals for its Emerging Core Strategy can be viewed online at: <http://www.lewes.gov.uk/corestrategy/index.asp> Paper copies are available in local libraries.

### ***So what can I do?***

If you agree with the parish council, or if you take a different view, you still have the chance to make your views known.

You can respond online (but only to the questions that they choose to ask).

Alternatively you can email your response to [ldf@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@lewes.gov.uk),

or you can mail a response to:

Lewes District Council Planning Policy Team  
Southover House, Southover Road  
Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1AB

***PLEASE DO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN.  
SILENCE WILL BE SEEN AS AGREEMENT.***

The formal deadline for the consultation has recently been extended from 11<sup>th</sup> November to Friday 2nd December. It is best if in your response you both state your views and also explain your reasons. (You may wish to send a copy of your response to the Parish Council.)

### **Will my response make any difference?**

Well, if you keep quiet, you certainly won't be listened to.

Two very recent developments confirm that a strong and well-argued campaign can make all the difference. The following proposals have been abandoned following strong local representations in the former case and a public inquiry in the latter at which local opinions played a major role:

1. **Waste Disposal by Landraising**
2. **Clay Hill Reservoir**

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## **Ringmer to 2030**

### **The Ringmer Neighbourhood Development Plan**

In the Spring Ringmer parish council applied, in partnership with Lewes District Council, to become one of the first 17 "frontrunners" piloting the new Neighbourhood Development Plans in England.

These NDPs are intended to give local people a bigger role in deciding the future shape and design of their own communities. The process of developing an NDP is designed to give everyone in the community – Ringmer businesses and their employees as well as residents – the opportunity to contribute to the developing plan. In villages such plans will normally be led by the parish council. Ringmer already has a Village Plan (2003) with its own Employment (2006) and Housing (2009) policies, but while Lewes District Council is supposed to take note of these, it can ignore them if it so chooses. Unlike a Village Plan, an approved Neighbourhood Development Plan has legal status, as part of the District LDF.

Our successful application to become a "frontrunner" was based on a simple concept. Fifty years ago Ringmer was already a large village, but one where most of the people who lived here also worked here. Then, in a previous planning cycle, the population doubled, with most of the new residents commuters. Since that time the main village employer (the Ringmer Building Works) has closed, and commuting has become much more widespread and more ambitious than was ever envisaged back in the 1960s. This has tested our local road network to and beyond its limits and, as most of this commuting is by car, it is also not at all good for the environment.

The key concept is that we should seek to attract more employment to Ringmer, so that village residents will have improved opportunities to work locally. We think that new house building in the village should be designed to help those people who work here or have strong local connections to live here too. We are thinking particularly of young people priced out of the local housing market, and older people who wish to downsize while still remaining in the village in which they have lived. We should avoid building the type of housing that is inevitably going to attract more commuters. We shall of course continue to have many residents who need to commute, but overall the aim is to rebalance Ringmer towards a more sustainable direction.

You may well be thinking "Well how does this fit with plans to make Ringmer accommodate 647 new houses to meet a District need (i.e. for new commuters)?" The answer is simple: it doesn't fit at all.

We have done some initial work on the broad shape of our new NDP "Ringmer to 2030". Like the Core Strategy it starts with a Vision of Ringmer as we would like to see it in 2030, and Key Principles to guide us along the route. These are followed by detailed policies, and we have divided these into five broad areas:

- Policies for Ringmer's Countryside & Heritage
- Policies for Employment
- Policies for Residential Development
- Social and Leisure Facilities in Ringmer
- Infrastructure Requirements

As "Ringmer to 2030" develops through various draft stages, up-to-date versions will be available on the parish council website: [www.ringmerparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.ringmerparishcouncil.org.uk)

As drafts for initial discussion of options become available, they will be published on the website. We hope that many of you will be able to attend our discussion evenings listed on the front page of this Newsletter, but if you can't make these, we plan to hold a drop-in exhibition at the end of the series (probably in January). You can comment by email or letter to the Parish Council's Clerk, or talk the issues through with any of your Parish Councillors.

### **Ringmer to 2030. Progress to Date**

Our first step has been to address the Vision and Key Principles sections of the NDP. The Vision is styled on the LDF Core Strategy's Vision for Lewes District, and for the Villages of the Low Weald (which include Ringmer). We strongly support these parts of the Emerging Core Strategy.

Our draft Vision and Key Principles are printed below. They will be discussed at the first of the four planned meetings, on 21<sup>st</sup> November, when we shall also be discussing our policies on Ringmer's Countryside and Heritage, which underpin the policies on employment and residential development. An NDP allows communities to protect countryside of particular importance to them, and we suggest taking advantage of this.

### **The Draft Vision**

Our vision for Ringmer in 2030, below, is entirely in conformity with the District-wide visions of the Core Strategy.

*By 2030, the Low Weald village of Ringmer and the wider countryside within the parish will have retained, and where possible enhanced, its attractive character and identity. Although the majority of recent development will have been directed to the urban areas of the District, development that meets Ringmer's housing and community needs and supports the rural economy will have been sensitively accommodated.*

*Development of new and improved employment opportunities in Ringmer parish will have reduced the need for out-commuting, thereby supporting local services. To enable this, existing employment sites will be maintained and improved, new sites will be identified and established as necessary, and businesses, including homeworking, will be supported by the provision of modern business accommodation and access to high quality and high speed e-communications.*

*Ringmer, as a Rural Service Centre within Lewes District, will continue to meet the demand for local services, including secondary education, healthcare, social care, and informal recreation and leisure facilities, for a wider area than just Ringmer itself. Where possible such services and facilities will be enhanced, or new ones created. This will have resulted in better facilities for the Low Weald communities and a much needed stimulus to the economy in this area.*

*Travel by the private car will still be the predominant way of travelling around this part of the District. Adequate parking will have been provided for homes, employment sites, services and recreational facilities. Improvements to road safety will ensure that this form of transportation is undertaken in the safest possible manner. Public transport services by bus will have been maintained and, where possible enhanced. There will be a cycle network connecting Ringmer to Lewes, connecting the main settlement at Ringmer Green to the Broyleside, and allowing cycle access to major employment sites within the parish. The present network of rural lanes and footpaths heavily used for informal recreation will have been preserved and enhanced.*

*In 2030 Ringmer will retain the essential 'Village feel' of a sustainable rural community. The built and natural heritage of the parish will have been protected and retained. The most highly valued countryside areas in Ringmer parish will have been recognised and conserved. Ringmer will have become a healthier, more inclusive and more sustainable community.*

### **Draft of the Four Key Principles**

The four key principles proposed below will form the basis of the initial community consultation process on the Ringmer NDP. The current evidence that they reflect community aspirations is briefly summarised for each.

#### **Key Principle 1: Ringmer is, and should stay, a village**

Ringmer is a large village, with two main settlements at Ringmer Green and the Broyleside. The surrounding countryside is highly valued and extensively used by residents, and includes a significant rural population. Ringmer Green has a good range of services. Despite its size, Ringmer maintains a "village feel", and this is prized by residents as a key asset.

**Evidence:** Surveys for the 2003 Ringmer Village Plan and the 1988 Ringmer Village Appraisal. Policies proposed are largely those approved, with full consultation, in the 2006 Ringmer Employment Strategy and the 2009 Strategy for Residential Development in Ringmer.

#### **Key Principle 2: Ringmer should regain sustainability**

Up to the mid-1960s Ringmer was a large but sustainable village community. The overwhelming reason for living here was that you worked here. Since then planned changes have doubled the size of the village by allowing commuter development, while the major local employer closed in the 1980s. Commuting from Ringmer has become far more ambitious and extensive than was ever envisaged. The NDP will seek to redirect the community towards sustainability by (a) increasing employment opportunities within the village and (b) ensuring that new housing is on a scale and of a type to meet village need.

**Evidence:** Policies proposed are largely those approved, with full consultation, in the 2006 Ringmer Employment Strategy and the 2009 Strategy for Residential Development in Ringmer.

#### **Key Principle 3: Ringmer should be a balanced, healthy and inclusive community**

There was serious concern, expressed in the 2003 Village Plan, that in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Ringmer community became unbalanced. The traditionally high proportion of affordable housing was greatly reduced, and young families were priced out of the village housing market. Recruitment to the village Primary School plummeted. The 2003 Village Plan sought to correct this, with partial success – the Primary School is now full again. The NDP will seek to ensure that Ringmer returns to being a fully balanced, healthy and inclusive community.

**Evidence:** Survey for the 2003 Village Plan. Policies proposed are largely those approved, with full consultation, in the 2009 Strategy for Residential Development in Ringmer.

#### **Key Principle 4: Ringmer and the South Downs National Park**

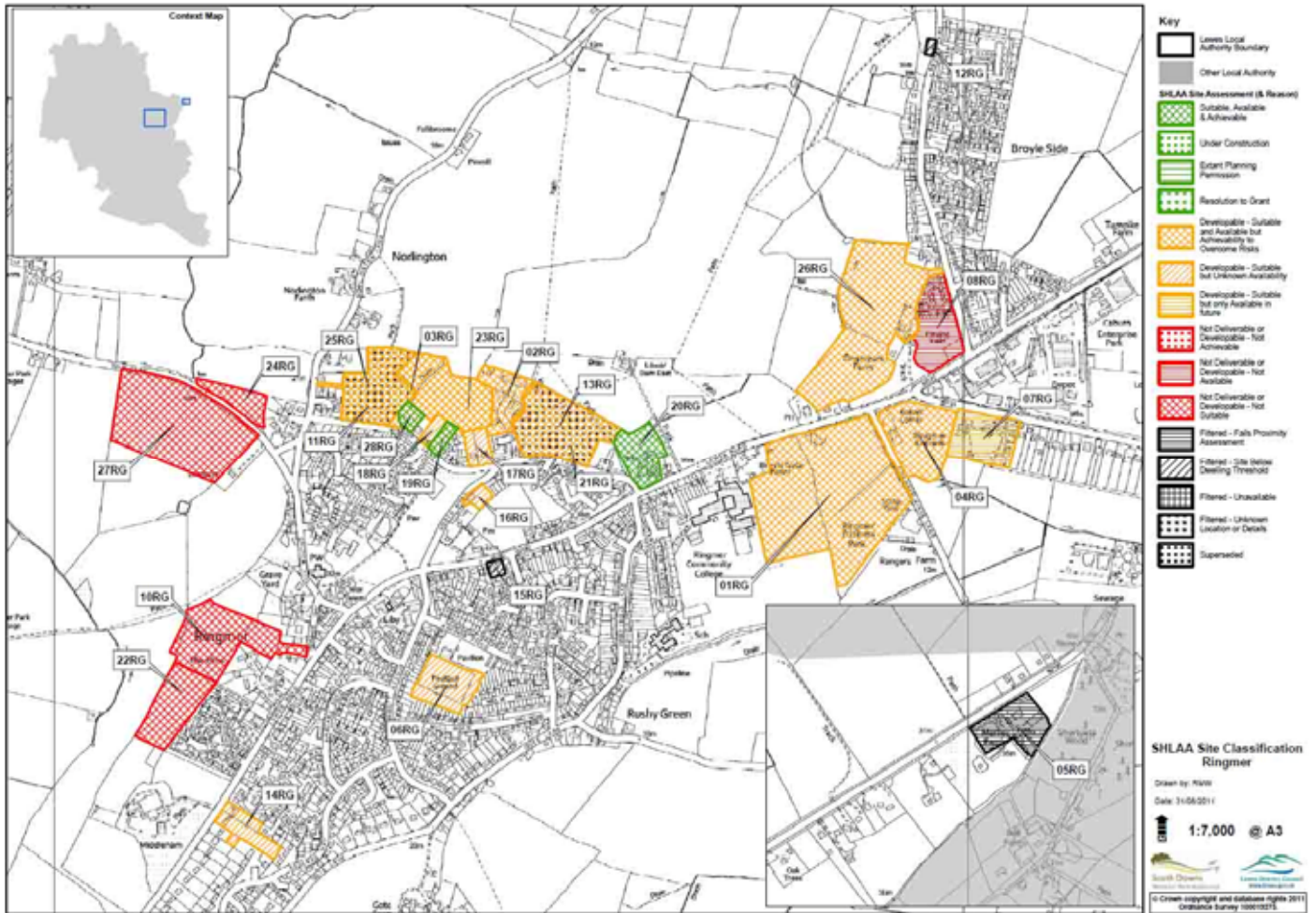
After hearing detailed evidence, the Inspector drew the National Park boundary tightly around the south-east and south-west boundaries of the Ringmer Green settlement, leaving the parish partly within and partly outside the SDNP, but almost all residents living outside the boundary. The NDP

will include policies to respect this decision, ensuring that only development that supports the National Park objectives takes place within the Ringmer section of the SDNP.

**Evidence:** Ringmer Parish Council and other local organisations campaigned in support of the SDNP boundary as finally agreed, with no evident community opposition. However, these are new policies that need to be tested.

**August 2011 SHLAA map of Ringmer, showing the revised classifications:**

(Larger scale coloured versions on display in the Village Hall & on the notice board in front, and on the Lewes District Council website at [http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan\\_SHLAA\\_map\\_ringmer.pdf](http://www.lewes.gov.uk/Files/plan_SHLAA_map_ringmer.pdf).)



**RINGMER’S COUNCILLORS**

PARISH COUNCILLORS: Chairman: John Kay - Fair Meadow, Rushey Green.  
 Vice-Chairman: Martin Whitlock – 16 Hayes Close \* Chairman of Greens Committee: Ron Wilcox – 5 Gote Lane \* Chairman of General Purposes Committee: Alan Grindley - 25 Springett Avenue \* Chairman of Planning Committee: Richard Booth – The Old Cottage, Lewes Road

Sharon Gunde – 50 Delves House East, Delves Close \* Nick Hall – 1 Harvard Road \* Jenny Hill – 39 The Forges \* Veronica Humphrey – 45 Springett Avenue \* Ron Livingstone – Upper Broyle Farm, The Broyle \* Bob Peters, MBE - Plashett Park Farm \* Bob Truman – 1 Cheyne Cottages, Lewes Road \* Richard Turner - Spiders Cottage, Station Road, Glynde

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS: Chris Bowers, Paul Gander, Peter Gardiner      COUNTY COUNCILLOR: Rosalyn St. Pierre

**COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Full Council and Planning Committee Meetings are held respectively on the second and fourth Thursdays of most months at 7.30 p.m. in the St. Mary’s Room, Ringmer Village Hall and Committee Meetings on some other Thursdays. The Clerk can provide full details or see our website. **Council Office:** This is almost invariably open to members of the public from 10am – 12 noon on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On other weekday mornings there is usually someone available to receive your telephone call or email.