



NEWS BULLETIN No 4 SUMMER 2020

Introduction

We have tried to send you an up to date news bulletin but there is so much happening and so much that is changing that as soon as it is written it is out of date. It has all hinged on the publication of the Government's White Paper on Planning which finally came out earlier than expected and was as draconian as we feared. There has been a great deal said and written on its implications and none were positive – apart from it being a 'builder's charter'. We have been gathering responses from across the area and there seems to be a very strong unified reaction against.

SOSCA was approached by CPRE as to whether we would be interested in meeting a Guardian journalist who was reporting on the effects of the publication of The White Paper.

The area around Bracklesham and East Wittering was chosen as it represented many of the issues that this part of the world was facing over unwanted developments.

As a result of the article the number of supporters that got in touch via our web site was wonderful. We even had someone as far away as Poole in Dorset. It is very heartening to know that what we are trying to do with the Alliance is gaining such endorsement.

THE WHITE PAPER –

'Planning for the Future' August 2020

- Min of Housing, Communities & Local Govt.

The Prime Minister's mantra in the morning of going 'Green, Green, Green' has by the afternoon quickly changed to 'Build, Build, Build'. The many quangos and policies saying how important 'localism' is to the cohesion of communities across the land is completely shattered by the main thrust of this White Paper. At a stroke it wipes out all the years of hard work and conscientiousness of parishes in compiling their Neighbourhood Plans. These Plans were devised in good faith to provide the Government with what was needed and where it was needed within the constraints of settlement boundaries and layers of environmental protections. There was a strong commitment to ensure that whilst the right housing was delivered it was done so in such a manner that would protect the environment for future generations.

What does this mean then for this part of the country i.e. The Manhood Peninsula and the west of the City of Chichester. It means 995 houses ANNUALLY. Yes, 995

The Prime Minister talks the talk about 'building beautiful' but the reality is we get nothing but identikit houses that are the same in Newcastle as they are in Havant with no distinguishing details and no sympathy towards the local vernacular. They are often of dubious quality, have no true green credentials, and with dimensions in which one can hardly swing a cat. As for claims of biodiversity – it is often represented by a puddle which is described as a lake. And with climate change acknowledged worldwide the developers still have carte blanche to build on known flood plains. These issues are only the tip of the iceberg of what is totally wrong including the lack of power for Local Councils to demand good design.

All other issues that we have been concerned with throughout the summer months have been based on the inevitable consequences that this White Paper will have on the whole of the country. Incensed by the White Paper the SOSCA committee agreed to make a response to Government. It will also call into question the Conservative Government's moral responsibility of upholding local democracy. We are fortunate to have the expertise of Dick Pratt who prepared SOSCA's response with a well-documented and researched piece which the Committee is very proud of - we hope you agree. This paper has been circulated to all West Sussex MPs and we intend to spread the word to others across the whole of the south east.

As our much valued supporters we would urge you to help us spread the word across a wider field by asking you to contact as many family, friends, groups etc, no matter where they live to get in touch so that they too can be part of The Alliance. By sharing our understandable fears, we can together provide a unanimous voice to present direct to Westminster.

THE GUARDIAN Monday 24th August 2020 'Housebuilding Proposals hit a wall in rural England'

'A Betrayal of Localism' by Robert Booth
Social Affairs Correspondent.



In response to a referral from Kia Trainor at CPRE Sussex a group of people met with a journalist and photographer from the Guardian on Thursday 13th August. The reporter was looking to do a story on the Planning White Paper and how it will affect Communities in the South East.

We were joined by Sam Tate Clerk to East Wittering PC, Robert Carey from Earnley Parish Council a Wildlife and Flooding expert - he undertook a major flood alleviation scheme for Earnley Parish Council 5 years ago which has protected 46 houses in the Parish. There was a retired planner Peter Bedford who represented The Manhood Wildlife Action Group and ex parish Councillor for Sidlesham who joined as well.

We were introduced to Robert Booth the journalist who came accompanied by a photographer Martin Godwin. We started with a wide-ranging discussion in The Barn in Bracklesham the village hall. Sam Tate, Parish Clerk, had prepared well for the meeting and displayed a considerable knowledge of the white paper and how it will affect East Wittering Parish and the Manhood Peninsula which was helpful.

Pieter Montyn, not only County Councillor but a member of the Regional Flood Defence Committee representing West Sussex. drew the reporter's

attention to the Flood Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy produced by DEFRA and EA which was published the same day as the White Paper but with little reference to either of each other's paper which demonstrated a serious lack of linked up Governmental Departments. Pieter sent this link to the journalist.

Louise Goldsmith, who was joined by Carolyn Cobbold and Libby Alexander from SOSCA, raised the issue of the lack of available development land in the District due to the SDNP and AONB which put enormous pressure on the Manhood Peninsula and western corridor. Also, the very centralised approach to planning and the allocation of housing numbers. The 'localism' of power from District Councils would now be stripped away.

There were three site visits - Earnley/East Wittering, East Wittering, and AL6. All these sites, as were many others in the area, were of prime agricultural green field land all under threat from hundreds of identikit houses and all with the potential to be impacted by flooding. Unfortunately, this angle of flooding did not seem to be of so much interest.

It was interesting to see that the Reporter, Robert Booth, had researched the area such as speaking with Seawards, one of the developers. He also showed a good knowledge of the White Paper and understood planning, mentioning that of course developers like greenfield sites as they are easy to build houses on.

Many photos were taken of all sites and they spent just under 3 hours including travel to the sites. The Article was published 24th August in The Guardian newspaper and in The Guardian online. The articles differed slightly with the newspaper print article exceptionally generous in the page layout.

NB. Following our meeting with the Guardian we were approached by a group of people from Earnley who are opposing further development in Clappers Lane. SOSCA is delighted to help and support them. Typical of the situation across our whole area - there

is approximately over 1400 homes proposed for development in the Earnley and East Wittering area - but with no additional infrastructure.

A copy of the entire article can be seen under Media in our web site top menu.

POLITICS

We regularly write to and keep in touch with many organisations not least various Members of Parliament and even the Secretary of State for Housing and of course Gillian Keegan MP. We were delighted therefore to learn that there was to be a Debate on the subject of housing numbers.

It is widely reported that many backbenchers in the House of Commons regard as highly controversial the changed standard methodology dictating the annual housing requirements. This has resulted in a huge increase to be implemented across parts of West Sussex. The MP for Arundel and South Downs, Andrew Griffith, held a debate in the House of Commons on Monday 7th September. Some of the comments he raised:

"... the planning system creates huge amounts of blight and burden on communities without delivering the volume, quality or even type of homes that we need."

"...there were fundamental flaws in the standard methodology as it was entirely blind to geography....and must only work in dry weather as much of his constituency lies on floodplains."

Also speaking at the Debate was Crawley MP Henry Smith who raised the issue of having to build 10,000 in unsustainable circumstances on a floodplain.

Sir Peter Bottomley MP for Worthing West suggested the Secretary of State should visit the area and explain where the land was coming from for development between the South Downs and the coast.

In light of the huge outcry SOSCA has written a response to the White Paper. It sets out our many

and crucial issues and how they will impact our special part of the country. This, together with a letter, will be sent out to all the South East MPs who will hopefully continue to fight against the methodology and the 'zoning' which, if enacted, will in effect take away all control, all localism, from District Councils who will have to defer to a Westminster centralisation. SOSCA's report and letter will also be sent to the Secretary of State for Housing.

A copy of SOSCA's response to The White Paper can be seen under our **RESEARCH** section in www.sosca.org.uk

Contact

If you have any comments or ideas on the above, please do get in touch. We welcome any input, any links, any connections.

Email us via contact@sosca.org.uk