

Consultation Form

Rother Local Plan 2020-2040 draft

Re: Page 126, Guestling Green

Land Proposed to be made available for development GUE0012

Home Meadow Farm, now called Wild Meadows, with house, paddocks and outbuildings. The land is sited in Chapel Lane, Guestling, Hastings, East Sussex, where the owners once ran a riding school and livery. Since that no longer exists, the land provides grazing pasture for horses. In the 2006 Rother District Plan this land was not available for development. Now, in 2024 the above draft proposes that GUE0012 is made available for development, to build 14 houses within the next 5 years.

I wish to make representation opposing this proposal.

- 1. The parish of Guestling and Three Oaks lies about 4 miles NE of Hastings on and around the A259 within the High Weald National Landscape, an Area of Outstanding National Beauty, AONB.**

Over the past 1000 years, the High Weald National Landscape with its medieval countryside of rolling wooded hills, scattered farmsteads with small irregular fields and ancient route ways, has been shaped by its geology, by nature and those who lived and worked here over the centuries. It was given the status in 1983 and is now protected by law, to conserve and enhance its natural beauty and this must be given highest priority.

‘Wild Meadows’ is a small part of this AONB, a quintessential English Pastoral Landscape and it is difficult to see how a change of use from agricultural to housing development would conserve or enhance its natural beauty.

- 2. Location and Access: The parcel of land GUE0012 runs NW to SE alongside Chapel Lane, an attractive, narrow, winding country lane. Further building development, requiring access, will increase traffic and hence hazards.**

The speed limit along the lane is 30mph, with no central white lines, no pedestrian footways or refuges, just some roadside bramble verges and hawthorn hedgerows.

Opposite the site under consideration, is a pretty, grade 2 listed, thatched cottage, and further along beside the stream, are more listed, charming old cottages, creating a delightful, country lane that could be easily spoiled if there were to be more building development and become dangerous to pedestrians and drivers alike, Chapel Lane links the busy A259 trunk road with Friars Hill. At each end of the lane the junctions are particularly hazardous.

At the A259 junction, where there are five more listed dwellings, residents park roadside and on footways if there are any, leaving little space for cars to pass. At times when the local primary school begins and finishes the space becomes even more crowded, dangers increase, as parents leave their parked cars in order to take or collect their children from school.

Chapel Lane is far too narrow to accommodate the vehicles and heavy plant required to build new homes. Associated with the proposed new housing development we can expect further increase in domestic traffic. Any existing access from Wild Meadows site to Chapel Lane is not suitable for the proposed development. It may be possible to create access from Higham gardens, but new access roads would contribute to further congestion.

At the Chapel Lane junction with Friars Hill, there is a 40mph speed limit, bringing different hazards. The road approaching from the left is totally unsighted and traffic coming down the hill on the right often increases speed. It's an accident waiting to happen!

- 3. One of Rother's listed priorities is "Green to the core". They pledge to consider the impact of planning decisions on the biodiversity crisis and natural recovery and yet this beautifully positioned meadow is to be considered for near-future housing development, (ie. within 5years).**

The best place to view the site and consider its position within the AONB is partway along the public footpath GUE36 (an ancient right of way), starting opposite Guestling C of E Primary School and leading to Guestling St Lawrence Parish Church. The school has strong links with the church and on certain festival days the pupils walk in pairs in a crocodile, with their teachers to the church for a service.

From this path, looking south, the Wild Meadows site can be seen, together with an existing housing estate, Higham Gardens, of 21 houses. These houses nestle down a slope and partially fit into their landscape, but even so are not invisible and do not enhance the High Weald National Landscape.

However, the land at Wild Meadows, stands even higher, along one level and any housing development there will be much more obvious, not only seen from the public right of way but also from the main road, A259.

The view is wide and wonderful across ancient woodland; Glebe Wood and Mallydams Wood, up to Fairlight where the distinctive church tower can be seen, perched on the skyline, surveying all the parishes below, and looking towards the North Downs. It would be shameful to alter this view in any way by creating new buildings or chopping down trees and deny the children of the parish their future inheritance

4. Public Right of Way. GUE 37 crosses the site from west to east.

The public footpath Chapel Lane to Church Lane, avoids roads and associated traffic and is safe for pedestrians. The route is used regularly by local dog walkers and sometimes by hikers linking to the 1066 Long Distance Walk from Hastings to Rye and beyond. If the land were made available for development, permission would have to be given and money change hands in order for the path to be moved and made suitable for public use.

To whom it may concern:

I trust anyone who has read this objection relating to the Rother Local Plan will take it to heart and help to protect Wild Meadows (GUE0012) from being included in the list of sites available for building over the next 20 years.

Signed Inga Chapman. Guestling resident for 49 years. Date

Please: Keep the name Wild Meadowsbut abandon the proposal to build.