

Burwash: Save our Fields
Response to the Rother District Draft Local Plan 2025-2042
Part I The Response



Clover Leys Site Allocation No BC 1

Introduction

1. Burwash: Save our Fields (known in this document as the group) makes the following response to Rother District Council's Draft Local Plan 2026 to 2042 consultation document, published in January 2026.
2. There are six proposed sites for Burwash parish. Four of them are in Shrub Lane and two of them are in Burwash Common. This would create 80 new houses.
3. On Saturday 10 January 2026, the group held an exhibition to publicise the proposals and help people understand them. In late February 2026, the group distributed a leaflet with the group's provisional views to all the houses in Burwash parish. Accompanying the leaflet was a questionnaire. On Saturday 7 March 2026, there was an event to discuss the proposals and the questionnaire. The filled in questionnaires accompany this response.

Burwash: Save our Fields' response to the consultation document

4. The answers to the questions are as follows.

Q1 Do you have any comments on the amended Rother Local Plan Strategic Spatial Objectives shown in Figure 1?

5. The objectives are aspirational rather than directive. This means they will generally be ineffective. It is appreciated the policies of central government undermine the opportunities for local authorities to have effective plans by discouraging making the plans directive. It is suggested that 'Strategy 2' should be divided into two parts. Preserve the historic landscape should not be linked with a separate policy of allowing communities to thrive. The combination makes the document confusing.

6. The policy should read, 'Preserve the historic landscape character of the High Weald National Landscape, protect the Special Protection Areas (SPAs), protect the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), protect the Protected Habitat areas and all protected sites in the Rother District.' Nature and the environment should be in separate policies.
7. Currently the policy does not deal with Special Protection Area (SPA) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is anticipated the Bewl Water would become both an SPA and a SSSI this year. Rye Bay is currently an SPA. Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay, Rye Harbour, Pett Level, Camber Dunes, Brede Pit and Cutting, Dallington Forest, Northiam and Marline Valley Woods near Battle are SSSIs. The current policy gives the impression these designated sites are not important.

Our ancient field system

8. The medieval field layout of Burwash with its woods and watercourses is unique and is an important historical survivor which gives residents and visitors an environment of great beauty and historical importance. The ability to walk along its footpaths is much valued and provides important well-being benefits. The surrounding countryside is also important for the visitors to Bateman's and those who travel sometimes hundreds of miles and from abroad to enjoy the spectacular countryside.
9. English Heritage, East and West Sussex County Councils and Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority commissioned a report about Sussex's Historic Landscape. Dr Nicola R Bannister AIFA published the report, Historic Landscape Characterisation report in 2010. The report concluded that the parish of Burwash had the greatest landscape survival from the medieval period in East Sussex, see page 51 of the report.
10. If over 200 years each generation uses the fields for houses, the historic landscape will disappear. It is like the Peak District, the Lake District or Snowdonia, it needs to be kept as a whole.
11. The group considers that the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the 2026 draft NPPF and the Draft Local Plan provide inadequate protection for such an important national asset. None of the other planning rules provide this survivor with an effective protection from inappropriate development either.
12. There should be a new policy to protect Burwash's fields, because it is a unique survivor. While all the villages in Rother District have in part been ruined, the best protected landscape should be protected from development.

Q2. Do you have any comments on the Council's proposed housing target for the Local Plan of 8,427 dwellings over the 17-year plan period, or 495 dwellings annually?

Q14. Do you have any comments on the proposed Vision and development strategy for Northern Rother, including the development figures shown in Figures 26 and 27? (Please note that comments on individual sites should not be made in response to this question, please see questions 53 to 63 instead)

13. The figures for an area with over 90% with a protected status of some sort is too high. There is a group of local authorities, including Wealden District Council, who are considering a group response for these high figures in the South-East. In Burwash the new houses provide no assistance to Rother or the local community. A list of the unsold houses is in section IV of this response. The housing remains unsold until a London borough decides to people dump.

14. To get rid of the surplus stock in Burwash and surrounding countryside, the developers have done deals with Hastings, Croydon, and Newham Councils. There are many problems with this. Firstly it creates anger in the village as local people, who are in work, cannot afford houses, and people who choose not to work are able to ensure that the state takes the houses that should be for local people. Secondly, the problem families that move in cause issues with their neighbours. One area in Burwash is blighted by vandalism now and the police have no interest in doing anything about it. The third problem is that this is an unsuitable place for people used to an urban environment. The families find great difficulty in settling down as the area does not have the facilities that they expect. The families are cut off from their friends in a world they don't understand. A large problem is that the reason why the councils are so keen to dump their problem families in rural settings is that means that they are transferring the costs of the problem families from the urban councils to East Sussex County Council. The large number of people being dumped in the country is having a terrible effect on East Sussex Council's finances. This people dumping, which is driven by finances, is a form of modern slavery. The families have no option but to take up residence in the villages and so they're forced to move out of their communities into a different one. It should be seen as modern slavery.
15. Rother District Council should make clear the policies that are akin to modern slavery should be ruthlessly removed and joining with the other councils to reduce these housing targets.

Q14. Do you have any comments on the proposed Vision and development strategy for Northern Rother, including the development figures shown in Figures 26 and 27? (Please note that comments on individual sites should not be made in response to this question, please see questions 53 to 63 instead)

16. See also the earlier answer about Q14.
17. The vision for Northern Rother from para 6.80 to para 6.95 is almost entirely descriptive. There is virtually no proposed vision or development strategy. A major part of the strategy should be to protect the National Landscape.

Q15. Do you have any comments on the proposed Vision for the Countryside?

18. The vision includes 'new development will be with strictly limited to ...housing needs.' That cannot be described as a vision. Housing needs implies that you can put houses wherever you like. Vision should be to protect the countryside should be about putting the right house in the right place and not being beholden to the Financial aspirations of developers.

Assessing the proposed allocations

19. The group notes that Rother District Council is putting these 'proposed sites in draft form which means that further evidence will be required to inform the details of some of the sites and determine if they are appropriate and can be justified,' see para 1.16 of the Draft Local Plan. The group hopes our response provides such evidence.
20. The group accepts that Rother District Council is directed by central government to provide so many housing units. It is noted that many other villages will lose their distinctive identity if the allocations are accepted. Flimwell would have a percentage increase more than most while many settlements have no housing allocation at all.
21. The group makes no complaint about what would be an imbalance between settlements, because it sees the allocations should not be shared equally among the villages and settlements but should be determined on a site by site basis. The author of the plan determined with others that Bodiam, a significant settlement, should have no sites allocated

to their area. A similar approach is taken for Ashburnham, Dallington, East Guldeford, Mountfield, Pett, Rye Foreign, Udimore and Whatlington.

22. This shows a correct approach. There are other areas without such a spectacular landscape, views and historical context which on a site by site basis have been awarded more houses than the size of the settlement would suggest. In the Burwash Neighbourhood Plan 2024, the Inspector and the High Court team considered it was appropriate that Burwash had no housing allocation at all. Looking at the figures it is assumed this site by site approach is the approach Rother District Council has taken. If so, it is an approach that is to be commended. It would also mean that places like Burwash of such historic and environmental importance would not have sites awarded simply on the need to keep the numbers up. The group agrees the proper approach is whether on all the evidence the site merits allocation and is not dependant on the size of the settlement.

Q3. Do you have any comments on the identified employment needs, or needs for retail and main town centre uses?

23. Policy 2 needs amending in line with the answer to the first question. None of the policies will actually make any difference to employment. The policy should be about infrastructure and Wi-Fi etc.

Q4. Do you have any comments on the identified accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people?

Q16. Do you have any comments on the proposed strategy for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople? (Please note that comments on individual sites should not be made in response to this question, please see question 64 instead)

Q64. Do you have any comments on the proposed site allocations for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, detailed in Policies GYP1 to GYP6? In your response, please state which site your comment relates to.

Q65. Do you consider that there are any other possible sites for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites which should be allocated in the Local Plan?

24. The policy should include the requirement that the sites should not be on protected landscapes. Currently the allocation of gypsy sides is being abused. The site at Pashley Road in Ticehurst is a clear example.

Q5. Do you have any comments on infrastructure needs or priorities to support the proposed Development Strategy?

25. It is well drafted.

Q6. Do you have any comments on the Council's assessment of the additional Development Strategy options?

26. The A21 corridor policy will encourage poor development in the wrong area. It is appreciated that the idea has come from central government. However, that source does not necessarily mean it's a suitable policy.

27. The Strategic gap option does not affect Burwash.

28. A section on reviewing development boundaries does not contain a new policy. There could be no objection to certain development boundaries being reviewed, but the principle of development boundaries has served the district well in the past. It should not be undermined in the dash for houses.

Q7. Do you have any comments on the preferred approach for housing density shown in Figure 9, or on the updated Density Study (2026)?

Densities

29. The group notes the table of densities in the Consultation document at para 5.18 states the following.

Figure 7: Density Options by Settlement Type (Policy LWL1, Draft Local Plan 2024)

Area Type	Density Range (dph)	Notes
Urban areas in Bexhill, Battle and Rye	60–90+ dph	Strong infrastructure and public transport
Suburban areas in Bexhill, Battle, Hastings Fringes and Rye	45–75 dph	Residential character, service proximity
Live Well Locally (Urban Edge of Bexhill)	45–60 dph	Planned strategic growth with new infrastructure
Villages with development boundaries	25–45 dph	Sensitive to historic and landscape context
Countryside (including villages and hamlets without development boundaries)	To reflect the existing character of the area	Rural character and policy constraints

30. The group also notes the density change from HELAA 2024 to HELAA 2026 and the Draft Local Plan.
- The Denton Homes site, BW1, has increased from 30 to 35 dwellings.
 - The 44-49 Shrub Lane field site, BW3, has increased from 10 to 15 dwellings.
 - The 84-89 Shrub Lane field site, BW4 has increased from 6 to 8 dwellings.
 - The Clover Leys site, BC 1 has increased from 6 to 7 dwellings.
 - The Old Orchard Nursery site, BC2, was not in the HELAA part 1.
31. The Draft Local Plan para 5.19 states the densities have increased to ‘optimise housing delivery.’ The group considers the densities should be determined on a site by site basis. A housing target which was to last two decades should not be determine by inappropriate density figures because the housing targets may cause the wrong type of house to be built. Houses are likely to last over 100 years and long after the targets have been forgotten. It is noted however that medium and high densities will deter the building of executive homes for people who don't live in the local community and also lower the number of sites required.

Q8. Do you have any comments on the Council’s proposed Overall Development Strategy?

Overall policies.

32. The Draft Local Plan set out the proposed Overall Development Strategy’, see para 6.1. The only principle that applies to Burwash (which in this document included Burwash Weald and Burwash Common) is, ‘sensitive development in other rural settlements of the district’. The group thinks this test is appropriate as long as sensitive means one which will not damage the High Weald National Landscape. It might have been better if that had been specifically

added to the test, namely the degree of damage the development would inflict on the High Weald National Landscape.

33. The Draft Local Plan at para 67.4 lists the Vision for Northern Rother section which includes Burwash. This vision includes a strong emphasis on protecting the landscape character and scenic beauty of the High Weald National Landscape. This statement is welcome and is similar to national policy. However, looking at the sites selected for Burwash and Burwash Common it appears that the strong emphasis was not strong enough to resist the demand for more houses shortly before the draft plan 2025 was published in November. Rother District Council is invited to stay loyal to this 'strong emphasis' commitment.

Q9. Do you have any comments on the proposed growth opportunities in the sub-areas as shown in Figure 10?

34. One can see quite a lot of works gone into this but the problem is it is only a guess. Unfortunately, it will have no impact on employment at all. The effort put into this section would have been better placed in having policies to encourage growth, like Wi-Fi and infrastructure.

Q10-Q13

35. These questions do not deal with Burwash.

Q14. Do you have any comments on the proposed Vision and development strategy for Northern Rother, including the development figures shown in Figures 26 and 27? (Please note that comments on individual sites should not be made in response to this question, please see questions 53 to 63 instead)

Q15-16

36. See earlier answer.

Q17-Q52

37. See earlier answer.

Q53. Do you have any comments on the proposed site allocations in Burwash, detailed in Policies BW1 to BW4? In your response, please state which site your comment relates to.

The allocated sites

38. The group's decisions are as follows.

39. **The Denton Homes site in Shrub Lane (BW1 and BUR 3) (35 houses) (1.1 ha [hectares])**

This is inappropriate because:

- a) There is no access from Shrub Lane or anywhere else to the site. Inquiries have been made and the access which was available when planning permission was applied for in 2017, RR/2017/456/P, is no longer available. The problem with regard to access is not one that can be overcome by requests or payment of money. Whatever view is taken of the site by Rother District Council, there is no access to the site from any road. If the site is confirmed as an allocated site it is inevitable that the Inspector will remove the site from the list.
- b) There would be substantial damage to the National Landscape. Rother District Council rejected the site in 2017 because of the impact the proposed development would have on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, now called the High Weald National Landscape. Para 1 of the Decision Notice was as follows.

- 1 The proposed development, by reason of its extent and location beyond the built boundary and established edge of the village, will form an undesirable extension of the village. The built development would intrude into open land and be harmful to the landscape character and scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB in this location. While acknowledging the enclosing effect of the line of the leylandii trees, this is an uncharacteristic and incongruous tree form that should not be relied upon either to screen the development or justify extending the village into what would otherwise be open countryside. The planting of a new woodland buffer to screen the development would take many years to achieve an effective new built village edge and would not in any event mitigate the intrusive form of development. The resulting development would result in substantial harm to the landscape character and scenic beauty of the High Weald AONB and would therefore not meet the test for sustainability as set out at paragraph 14 of the NPPF. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies OSS3, OSS4, EN1 and, EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and paragraphs 14 and 115 of the NPPF.
- c) Rather District Council found that the damage to the National Landscape was substantial. There is no evidence or material to undermine that finding.
 - d) Advocates of the scheme might rely on the leylandii barrier that was planted to encourage a grant of planning permission. The trees are now dangerous and ugly. Some are near the end of their life. Whatever conditions were imposed the developer for profit or the future residents would remove them. The leylandii would also make it difficult for building because of the roots. When considering the site it is important to visualise the site without the leylandii. The Decision Notice was correct to point out that the leylandii barrier should not be relied on, see above.
 - e) As stated by the HELAA reports dated April 2024 and January 2026 multiple ownership is a factor. The Land Registry in March 2026, lists the registered owners of the field part of the site as [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The Land Registry in March 2026 The registered owners of Shrub Wood, the other part of the site, as [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] also own the trip of The concern about multiple ownership was well made.
 - f) The site specific development requirements in the consultation document for the site, at page 479, fail to overcome the obvious problems of the site. The vii. requirement about providing a new vehicle access is incapable of being met. That requirement is listed as a 'must' happen. The rest of the requirements are ecological, housing affordable and infrastructure requirements. The list of requirements need is not capable of making an unacceptable site into an acceptable site.
 - g) The SHLAA report had a similar list of mitigation and that mitigation did not overcome the problems for the same reasons.
 - h) As the 2017 Decision Notice points out any development would 'be beyond the build boundary and [beyond the] established edge of village [creating] an undesirable extension to the village.' That comment remains true today.
 - i) As the HELAA report dated April 2024 and January 2026 points out there is an ancient woodland and a Priority Habitat to the west.
 - j) As the HELAA report dated April 2024 and January 2026 points out there is surface water flooding in the east and west boundaries.

- k) The proposal is contrary to the Overall Development Strategy sensitivity test at para 6.1.

40. **The Greenfield Road corner site** in Shrub Lane (BW2 and BUR 10) (6 houses) (0.18 ha)

This is worthy of consideration. Factors that point to the site being suitable.

- a) There would be minimal damage to the National Landscape.
- b) The development would be using an existing residential area rather than ribbon development.

Other factors:

There is no footpath and it is 0.80 miles from the village centre (Londis/entrance to car park).

On the information that is available, the site should be considered for an allocated site.

41. **The field near 44-49 Shrub Lane** (BW3 and BUR 31) (15 houses) (0.59 ha)

This is inappropriate because:

- a) There would be significant damage to the National Landscape.
- b) The site is 0.75 miles from the village centre.
- c) There is no footpath at the site. If one were created it should not destroy the ancient hedge. If a footpath was created on the field side, it would not connect with another footpath and so create traffic hazards.
- d) It would be ribbon development.
- e) It would remove an important green gap in the lane.
- f) The site specific development requirements fail to mitigate the problems of building on the site.
- g) Burwash Parish Council discussed BW3 and BW4 with Rother District Council in 2016 and received this response from Norman Kwan, Principal Planning Officer on 26th April 2016:

‘You asked if there was a possibility that the ‘gaps’ along the south-eastern side of Shrub Lane (forming the northern part of the large SHLAA site BU10 that relates to much of the valley) could be infilled. I am aware that one of those gaps have been filled with an ‘exception site’ and was chosen because it related better to the village centre and there was a footway back to the village at this location (i.e. Morris Close). Further east along Shrub Lane the landscape character becomes increasingly rural. The rural setting and character of the village, landscape setting and lack of footways all weigh against development in the gaps further east to the Exception site. The gaps along Shrub Lane provide short and medium views into the valley, which serve to emphasise the rural location.’

- h) The proposal is contrary to the Overall Development Strategy sensitivity test at para 6.1.

42. **The field near 84-89 Shrub Lane** (BW4 and BUR 32) (8 houses) (0.32 ha)

This is inappropriate because:

- a) There would be significant damage to the National Landscape.
- b) The site is 0.66 miles from the village centre.

- c) There is no footpath at the site. If one was created it should not destroy the ancient hedge. If a footpath was created on the field side, it would not connect with another footpath and so create traffic dangers.
- d) It would be ribbon development.
- e) It would remove an important green gap in the lane.
- f) The site specific development requirements fail to mitigate the problems of building on the site.
- g) Burwash Parish Council discussed the BW3 and BW 4 with Rother District Council in 2016 and received this response from Norman Kwan, Principal Planning Officer on 26th April 2016:

 'You asked if there was a possibility that the 'gaps' along the south-eastern side of Shrub Lane (forming the northern part of the large SHLAA site BU10 that relates to much of the valley) could be infilled. I am aware that one of those gaps have been filled with an 'exception site' and was chosen because it related better to the village centre and there was a footway back to the village at this location (i.e. Morris Close). Further east along Shrub Lane the landscape character becomes increasingly rural. The rural setting and character of the village, landscape setting and lack of footways all weigh against development in the gaps further east to the Exception site. The gaps along Shrub Lane provide short and medium views into the valley, which serve to emphasise the rural location.'
- h) The proposal is contrary to the Overall Development Strategy sensitivity test at para 6.1.

Q54. Do you have any comments on the proposed site allocations in Burwash Common, detailed in Policies BWC1 and BWC2? In your response, please state which site your comment relates to.

43. **The field near Clover Leys Cottage**, Heathfield Road, Burwash Common (BC1 and BUR 27) (7 houses) (0.36 ha)

This is inappropriate because:

- a) It is an ancient field. There would be significant damage to the High Weald National Landscape. The HELAA 2026 and the Draft Local Plan points out the historic field boundaries are significant.
- b) The site is a raised site and therefore views to the site would become more prominent.
- c) The Draft Local Plan suggests the houses would 'front the road', so the development would be ribbon development.
- d) The Draft Local Plan raises the issue of access and suggests removal of the ancient hedgerow to facilitate a safe access point. If one visits the site one can see a very significant part of the hedge would have to go before there would be sufficient sight lines for safe vehicular access onto the road. The Draft Local Plan indicates that a new hedge would have to be created and so the damage to the ancient field system and the ancient hedge would be very significant.
- e) As the HELAA 2026 states Burwash Common has limited services.
- f) The site specific development requirements fail to mitigate the problems of building on the site.

- g) The proposal is contrary to the Overall Development Strategy sensitivity test at para 6.1.

44. **The Old Orchard Nursery site**, off Heathfield Road, Burwash Common (BC2 and no BUR 39) (9 houses) (0.3 ha)

This is worthy of consideration. Factors that point to the site being suitable are.

- a) The site was formerly used as a nursery. It is now redundant. If it was in the Green Belt would be known as Grey Belt. As it had a former commercial use it could be described as a brownfield site.
- b) There would be minimal damage to the National Landscape. The site is enclosed and so it would not be visible to others.
- c) The development would be infilling rather than ribbon development.

Other factors:

- a) The major concern is the threat to the café. The café is a success story. Not only is it a useful food outlet it also has an important social element. Hospitality is under attack across the country. District Councils do all they can to help hospitality outlets to continue. The original plans had the café being replaced by housing. Sensibly, Rother District Council made it clear that that would not be acceptable. Currently the staff use the provisionally allocated site for parking. If the allocated site became houses, the staff would then park in the customers' car park. The customer's car park is currently inadequate for the popular café. The lay by on the road takes few cars. Rother District Council is considered imposing a site requirement that the car parking spaces should be increased by using part of the allocated site.
- b) The East Sussex Highways authority objected to the site at a planning in principle application on the basis of access. The application reference number is RR/2025/185/P. The application awaits a decision and has recently been amended. In fact the access has been used for many years without problems as far as the group knows. The access is better than many current access points across the county. It is anticipated that the access could be improved so that the Highways authority would drop their objection.
- c) The trees need retaining and the drainage needs to be improved.

The other HELAA sites

45. One or more members of the group have visited all the HELAA 2024 and HELAA 2026 sites. A 33 page assessment has been drafted considering each of the sites suitability for allocation. One site was considered suitable, but the site has become a commercial site which is welcome. The success of the commercial operation meant that it was no longer suitable for housing. Another site was considered suitable but it had no access. None of the other sites were suitable. The exercise which took a considerable amount of time confirmed the view that Rother District Council had taken about the other sites.

Q55-Q63

46. These questions do not effect Burwash.

Q64-Q65

47. See earlier answer.

Q66. Do you have any comments on the proposed changes to Policy LWL7 (A) (i) (Streets for All)?

48. The policy for reducing speed limits in villages to 20 mph is highly contentious. The advocates believe that the new speed limit will reduce road accidents and improve the quality of village life. Opponents believe the speed limits will not be adhered to, will generate inappropriate speeding tickets and have no impact on road accidents or the quality of life. Burwash: Save our Fields will leave this debate to others as the group would not be able to have a response that all members agree with.

Q67. Do you have any comments on the Appendices?

49. Appendix 2, the Glossary, should be removed.

50. Many of the entries are taken from the NPPF. Where the entry is different from the NPPF one must ignore the glossary and use the NPPF definition. As the Local Plan ages, more and more of the entries will be wrong, because statutory or NPPF or other central government documents have amended the definition. It is inevitable the glossary will already be wrong before it is published. If one compares the draft definition of Development Plan in the Local plan and the one in the draft NPPF 2025, one sees the NPPF wording is different. The reader will not know that the Glossary entry should be ignored. The same applies to the two definition of Habitat Sites. The two definitions are different. Most readers will not know that. It will therefore be a confusing and inaccurate section.

51. Many of the entries are not needed. There is no need in a Local Plan to include a definition of the Campaign for Real Ale. It gives the impression that one of the authors wanted to plug a society they were connected with. The definition will provide no assistance to anybody.

52. A definition for 'Older people' is so wide it could give no assistance to anybody. The definition for walking could be included in the 'Have I got News for you' programme.

53. The appropriate way of dealing with definitions is to have a definitions document for all of Rother District Council. The Draft Local Plan would refer the reader to that document. Where an entry has been taken from central government, like a statute or the NPPF, it should give its source. The reader will then know whether that entry is still correct. The new definition document can be used for all of Rother's documents so there will be no chance of different documents having different definitions for the same phrase. The document can also be amended whenever one entry becomes wrong or another entry needs to be added. The Draft Local Plan is intended to last till 2042. Many of the definitions will be entirely different by then.

Q68. Do you have any comments on the Interim Sustainability Appraisal in support of the Regulation 18 stage consultation on the Development Strategy and Site Allocations (January 2026)?

54. It is assumed that the question is meant to relate to the Sustainability Appraisal in the Interim consultation document of January 2026. The group is unaware of any Interim Sustainability Appraisal. In the document there is feedback on sustainability appraisal and habitat regulations. Surprisingly, the document does not list any feedback it only puts in one sentence details about the sections the planners have put the comments in. There is also one other sentence in the section that deals with the summary of the next steps.

Q69. Are there any other issues, options or other matters you would like to raise?

The need to protect the Burwash's medieval landscape

55. Many people in Burwash believe that Rother District Council is urban and coast centric. There is no need to determine that issue. However it is clear but many in Bexhill have no real understanding of the beauty and importance of the countryside in Burwash.

56. In the accompanying question air the first question was, 'Do you consider Burwash's ancient field layout, woods and watercourses should receive greater protection from development?

Yes	109
No	4
Entry left blank	3
Total	116

Excluding those who left the entry blank

Yes	96.5%
No	3.5%

57. Few questions receive such an emphatic answer. It is in fact perhaps more emphatic than it would appear, because some of the people who responded to the questionnaire are, or are connected with developers.

58. The medieval field layout of Burwash with its woods and watercourses is unique and is an important historical survivor which gives residents and visitors an environment of great beauty. The ability to walk along its footpaths is much valued and provides important well-being benefits. The surrounding countryside is also important for the visitors to Bateman's and those who travel sometimes hundreds of miles to enjoy the spectacular countryside.

59. English Heritage, East and West Sussex County Councils and Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority commissioned a report about Sussex's Historic Landscape. The report concluded that the parish of Burwash had the greatest landscape survival from the medieval period in East Sussex¹.

60. If over 200 years each generation uses the fields for houses it will disappear. It is like the Peak District, the Lake District or Snowdonia, it needs to be kept as a whole.

61. The current planning rules provide this survivor with no effective protection from inappropriate development.

62. It is important That this landscape survival remains. As the countryside around the villages are one by one destroyed, one parishes countryside should be kept intact. The new Draft Local Plan should recognise this. There should be a specific policy about this. The enhanced status would fit well with the protected land around Batemans' and its visitors. A significant proportion of the visitors to Batemans go there so that they can walk in the spectacular countryside. Many all from abroad who do not have such a gem in their country.

Bewl Water

63. The group welcomes the inclusion of policy on Bewl Water in the Draft Local Plan. Rother District Council will be aware that the Localism Act 2011 s 110 requires local planning authorities to 'cooperate and engage constructively, actively on an ongoing basis with other local authorities'. They will also be aware of the rules in relation to engagement under the

¹ Historic Landscape Characterisation report by Dr Bannister 2010 page 51

NPPF 2024 para 24-28. Rother District Council is invited to engage constructively with Wealden District Council so that both councils have the same policy on Bewl Water. Currently Wealden District Council has not announced that they will have a Bewl Water policy. Right the District Council is also invited to strengthen their policy on Bewl Water because as currently drafted it will not provide sufficient protection for Bewl Water.

64. The group draws the Rother District Council's attention to the Northern Parishes group 35-page representation dated 10 June 2026. The group invites Rother District Council to reread that submission which would mean that the submission does not have to be included as part of the answer to question 69 above.

Robert Banks

Burwash: Save our Fields

20 March 2026



www.burwashsaveourfields.org.uk