

## **Burwash: Save our Fields**

### **Response to the Rother District Draft Local Plan 2025-2042**

#### **Part III The Comments made in the Questionnaires**

##### **A selection of the comments**

1. Matters which are not planning reasons have been excluded. One of the most common comments is that the school and the doctor surgery can't cope with the current number of residents. The school has falling numbers so new houses would not be a problem. Doctor surgeries across the country can't cope and that cannot be a reason to build no houses.
2. One of the surprising comments and responses was the anger directed at Rother District Council for allowing Watercross fields (Strand Meadow), RR/2020/1822/P, to be built on. Some of the anger was directed at Burwash: Save our Fields for failing to stop such an obviously inappropriate development. This seems particularly harsh as it was only one person, the misguided Inspector, who allowed the development and our group worked extensively to oppose the application. It may take for some people a generation, for the anger to subside. Currently the residents of Strand Meadow are coping with the most intolerable inconvenience during the construction work. Rother District Council might say in fact they had rejected the scheme. This was not an argument that was accepted, because the planners had actively supported the scheme from start to finish. It is considered that the majority of planners never saw the field and never saw the environmental and historic importance of it. Many people refused to take part in the consultation because of their anger and distrust of the officials at Rother District Council.
3. Many people believed Rother District Council are urban and coast centric. It is also believed that many have no understanding of the mediaeval landscape in Burwash which is a national asset of great importance. The group does not share this belief. The group believes that the planners simply give insufficient weight to the mediaeval landscape.
4. The other common comment is that houses that have been built in Burwash have not sold. Part IV of this response is a list of the unsold houses in the parish. To cope with the surplus stock 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 provided houses without paying any money. Secondly, the problem families move in caused terrible issues with their neighbours. One area 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 the urban environment. The families find great difficulty in settling down in an area which does not have the facilities that they expect. The families are cut off from their friends in the 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 off 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 financial inducements, 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 that communities into a different one. It should be seen as modern slavery.

5. The list of comments below might give impression that no one wanted new houses. There were some who did want housing allocations. They were in a significant minority and those who supported allocations said far less in comments than those who opposed the allocations.
6. **Do you consider Burwash's ancient field layout, woods and watercourses should receive greater protection from development?**

Ancient Woods, watercourses and field layout are just that ANCIENT. Once they are gone, they are gone! Forcing ancient villages to build a set amount of houses is not going to solve the housing problem. A new Milton Keynes type town on brownfield sites with the correct infrastructure for the population built in, just might help the national housing crisis.

It is unacceptable to destroy ancient hedgerows and field layout.

There are two SSSI sites and it has to be protected.

This is a unique landscape which is valued both by its residents and visitors alike.

Our mediaeval landscape deserves protection for future generations.

That washes down spoiled, historic, charming village, where one of our greatest authors Rudyard Kipling made his home, and who cared passionately about the surrounding countryside, which provided him with inspiration.

Concrete, concrete everywhere!

The ridge that the historic Burwash villages are located on, give glorious views both to the north and south. The medieval field patterns are unique. Once gone these can never be replaced.

The ridge on which the historic Burwash villages are located, give glorious sweeping views both to the north and south exposing the medieval field patterns bounded by ancient hedgerows and shaws which are unique to this High Weald National Landscape. The highest form of protection is in place to protect these green fields. Once gone they can never be replaced.

The mediaeval layout requires the upmost protection. It has been unchanged for 700 years and should remain so.

I was brought up in Burwash and it would be a tragedy if such a beautiful area was spoilt.

Burwash is one of the most beautiful and picturesque areas in the country.

Once it is gone, it's gone.

Once concreted over and destroyed it can never be renewed. This is an ancient village and surroundings. It should be kept whole for future generations. This area is of historical importance.

The heritage nature of the field system should be protected. These are not just fields.

Very precious

A unique landscape that there should be a National Park.

7. **Do you consider the Denton Homes site in Shrub Lane (BW1 and BUR 3) should be allocated for housing?**

This has been muted many times and the objections remain the same. Access, ancient woodland desecration, no infrastructure in place, no footpath on Shrub Lane. Too many houses for the space.

Too damaging.

Environmental damage will be caused.

Where would the infrastructure be?

For all Shrub Lane sites, planners really must go and look at the top 50 metres of the lane, where it emerges onto the main road: they must surely agree that the exit is congested and quite dangerous.

Idiotic location.

This site is currently surrounded by horrible Leylandii trees but when houses are bought, many new residents are likely to take down the trees to see the view. At this point the development will be viewable from everywhere across the valley. As a resident of Shrub Lane, I am also concerned by the extra traffic and the lack of appropriate access.

Previous attempts to develop this green field have been futile. Defeated by the fact that there is no viable access and any development would be seen from miles away across the valley and would be a blot on a protected landscape. Shrub Lane is a narrow, bendy country lane and not suitable for pedestrians for much of its length. Extra cars using this already busy lane will just exacerbate the situation.

Serious damage to the National Landscape.

I used to live close to two of the sites. The lack of a foot path, access problems, drainage problems, and the destruction of habitat .....

All efforts to develop land must be resisted. If the government sees you as a soft target they won't stop. Their promises are worthless.

8. **Do you consider the Greenfield Road corner site in Shrub Lane (BW2 and BUR 10) should be allocated for housing?**

I live next door to this site. This land was originally allocated for 4 houses in 1905. when Greenfield Road was built. There are definitely issues that will need to be addressed in today's world. This site will be accessed from Shrub Lane, at present Shrub Lane is not a wide road and many people park here. Sight lines for the site might be difficult to work out with so many cars parking here. It is already difficult to pull out of Greenfield Road safely. especially as cars drive very fast here moving into and out of the 30 mph speed limit zone. Much of this could be solved with the allocation of parking for the Greenfield Road residents running alongside Greenfield Road. ( Greenfield Road is a single track private road with very little parking for the residents as it was built in 1905).

If there must be building, 6 houses would be bearable. The site is clustered with other houses and is anyway not very pretty.

This is an infill site and has at present an existing bungalow. The extra traffic and the fact that there is no pavement from the site going up Shrub Lane towards the A262 is a big problem. It is also a long way from the village centre and residents would no doubt choose to drive into the village centre.

9. **Do you consider the 44-49 Shrub Lane site (BW3 and BUR 31) should be allocated for housing?**

I strongly oppose the building on this ancient field for many reasons. Firstly in winter it becomes very waterlogged and there are many underground streams here. I know this as one of these runs under my house [at the Shrub Lane end of Greenfield Road] and has caused considerable damp problems to my house which became worse when Greenfield Road was resurfaced. Building here would cause even more problems. Then there are the ancient hedges around the gate which even with the best will in the world [the hedge] will

have to be made smaller to allow for enough space for an entrance to so many houses. Then the lack of footpath to the village (putting a footpath behind the hedge of the site does nothing to allow the pedestrians clear access to the village as there is no footpath from there to the bus stop).

This is an area of many wildlife species.

Unacceptable because of A265 access inappropriate.

The environment, biodiversity and the National Landscape would be adversely affected as well as the impact on infrastructure.

Very productive agricultural land.

Smaller impact on the local area.

Definitely not. No footpath. Very damaging to the National Landscape.

This is open greenfield land and would blatantly be ribbon development. Also the number of houses is excessive. For all Shrub Lane sites, planners really must go and look at the top 50 metres of the lane, where it emerges onto the main road: they must surely agree that the exit is congested and quite dangerous.

There is no pavement and the site is a ribbon development.

This site would be undesirable ribbon development. There is no pavement. Too many extra vehicles brought into play.

Serious damage to the National Landscape.

Absolutely not. Ribbon development that would irrevocably harm the settlement pattern. It leaves the remaining fields open to full scale housing in future.

**10. Do you consider the 84-89 Shrub Lane site (BW4 and BUR 32) should be allocated for housing?**

For similar reasons [to the first comment above].

Too damaging.

This is an area of many wildlife species.

The environment, biodiversity and the national landscape would be adversely affected as well as the impact on infrastructure.

Good flat agricultural land.

Definitely not, no footpath very damaging to the National Landscape.

This is open greenfield land and would blatantly be ribbon development. Also the number of houses is excessive. For all Shrub Lane sites, planners really must go and look at the top 50 metres of the lane, where it emerges onto the main road: they must surely agree that the exit is congested and quite dangerous.

There is no pavement and the site is a ribbon development.

This site has the same problems as [previous] question. Unwanted ribbon development, no pavement, and too many extra vehicles on a narrow country lane.

Serious damage to the National Landscape.

Absolutely not. Ribbon development that would erase the irrevocably harm the settlement pattern. It leaves the remaining fields open to full scale housing in future.

**11. Do you consider the field near Clover Leys Cottage, in Heathfield Road, Burwash Common (BC1 and BUR 27) should be allocated for housing?**

Access to the Heathfield Rd would mean the destruction of an old hedge.

I would object to this site for lots of reasons. It opens out on to a busy A road near a significant junction. It is a ribbon development which sets a dangerous precedent for further developments along the Heathfield Road. Like a lot of these sites it has a negative impact on what we used to call an Area of Outstanding Beauty.

Very dangerous access and inappropriate as it will damage the National Landscape.

It opens on to the busy A262 road near a significant junction. It is a ribbon development which sets a dangerous precedent for further developments along the Heathfield Road. It will urbanise and further erode the rural charm of the High Weald landscape.

Serious damage to the National Landscape and dangerous access. Damage to ancient hedges & trees. Ribbon development.

**12. Do you consider the Old Orchard Nursery site off Heathfield Road, Burwash Common (BC2 and no BUR number) should be allocated for housing?**

The Café should not be affected and no parking taken away from the cafe.

Adjustments to the entrance is necessary. At the present it's too narrow.

Sufficiently off main road to make it an attractive site.

Concerned about losing cafe car parking.

As long as the cafe stays.

Of all the sites in Burwash parish this is probably the most suitable because its position is hidden from view behind the Old Orchard café. However care needs to be taken in building homes that are financially viable for the local community. We already have a surfeit of newly built houses nearby which have not sold. It is telling that on two Burwash sites only the small 2 -3 bed houses and 1 and 2 bed flats have been sold. It is not right that new unsold properties should be rented out to London Boroughs to dump their unwanted needy families.

**13. Do you consider any other sites in Burwash parish should be allocated for housing?**

No comments of interest.

**14. Do you have any other comments about Rother District Council's housing allocation?**

Someone at Rother District Council needs to step up and start making reasoned arguments, to the powers that be, AGAINST building on ancient land and Greenfield sites in an arbitrary attempt to satisfy governmental housing quoters.

Burwash is an ancient village with a limited infrastructure and little access to public transport or any form of employment. I believe the majority of people here are older and not looking for starter homes or small houses. Bungalows might be appropriate but obviously they won't make as much money for builders!

The attraction to Burwash is the surrounding countryside and the history of the place. There is no viable public transport available. The drains currently do not handle the waste water and adding to building in the area will only exacerbate the problems.

Why are councils so incapable of standing up for what is right?

It is politically driven and not fact based.

The Bexhill bypass is ideal for housing.

We do not need more houses when so much of the current stock remains unsold.

Houses should only be built as infill, or on brownfield sites, of which there are many. No houses should be built without Eco credentials, such as storage of water, use of “grey” water, and full water saving. There are frequently water shortages due to the services being unable to keep up with demand, due to the constant building of new houses with no thought as to how they can be kept supplied during hot or dry weather.

If houses are to be built they need to allow for local people to be able to afford them. Mixed housing with 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms prioritised over large luxury homes with high price tags. Bungalows should also be considered, but all with energy and water saving features.

Keep Burwash as a village with a its surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for people to enjoy.

There is no housing shortage. It's the same story they used in the 1950s and 70s and so on. There are lots of empty properties in the Midlands and the north and they just need to get good rail links to Manchester Liverpool London etc.

**15. Do you have any other comments?**

There are many brownfield sites in the UK that are far more suitable for trying to solve the increased population housing issues. Build new towns with all the appropriate infrastructure. Put standard of living for people who need housing over and above the need for quotas and random housing allocations. Instead of ruining this country let's start thinking long term housing for population growth. Small villages such as Marden, Wivelsfield Green, East Hoathly, Halland, and Laughton, etc have been ruined despite major objections.

Travelling is already dangerous for pedestrians. Exit the topic strap line is difficult.

Please, no more executive homes.

We already have a surfeit of newly built houses nearby which have not sold. It is telling that on two Burwash sites only one or two of the small 2 -3 bed houses and /or 1 and 2 bed flats have been sold. It is not right that new unsold properties should be rented out to London Boroughs to dump their unwanted difficult families. Many local families who work in the area are finding it difficult to get appropriate accommodation. It is important that for any sites that are identified are designated for what is needed. Most developers who apply for planning permission are not committed to actually building what is needed and renege on promises to build affordable homes .Homes need to be built in urban areas where there is access to employment and good infrastructure. In Burwash the need is for starter homes for young people and for older retired people often single, wishing to downsize.

Please protect our beautiful village from unnecessary development.

The allocation document is ill-researched with desperate attempts to find numbers and share the pain.

Where in all this is an ironclad commitment to building houses for local residents and young people in this area?

If these scallywags get their brown envelopes to the right politicians and get away with this.