

Notes on Ashwood Site Visit 29 June 2020

Councillors Ian Rees and Nick Moore

We attended the site visit with the Rother Case Officer Matthew and the Artemis team who were there in strength.

Their current plans are posted on a large board on the site on the Stonegate Road. Artemis say they have dropped leaflets locally and called on immediate neighbours. They will copy plans to us shortly. They still intend to meet with Burwash Save Our Fields. They said that they have reworked their plans to take into account the High Weald Design Guide. They hope to submit their plans in early August.

The number of the properties is down to 14. This still includes the two self builds which the partners are building for themselves.

The remaining twelve properties include 4 flats in a block on the Stonegate Road/A 265 corner.

There are 29 parking spaces on site.

The Rother case officer mentioned impact on the AONB as an issue. He also referred to Rother Core Strategy Policy OSS (Overall Spatial Strategy) 1 and in particular (c)

Facilitate the limited growth of villages that contain a range of services and which contributes to supporting vibrant, mixed rural communities, notably in relation to service provision and local housing needs, and is compatible with the character and setting of the village;

The issue is that Burwash Common isn't seen as having the services to sustain housing development. There is no housing target for Burwash Common and the site is outside the very limited development area.

We did point out (while being clear that we weren't commenting on the actual application) that it is a brownfield site that has been empty for some time. The derelict buildings are an eyesore. The local residents' association meeting earlier in the year had been in favour of this site being redeveloped.

Although we are keen to keep commercial sites it seemed unlikely that there would be appropriate commercial development on this site. The care home had closed following a failed Care Quality Commission inspection. No one to date had come forward from the Care sector to our knowledge.

The case officer did acknowledge that Rother did not meet the 5year land supply required to meet their housing target.

We also pointed out that the development was on the ridge, in keeping with history of the villages, rather than as other recent proposals had been getting further and further down the side of the hill.

Artemis said they were committed to providing affordable housing but would be discounted in part because they are redeveloping vacant housing. But when that was taken into account they would fulfil the requirements as they relate to affordable housing.

[Follow up note – to try to follow up on the issue in the last paragraph NM tried to look it up on line but was unable to find the detail. NM has emailed the developer but has received no reply as of 06 07 2020]