

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) – response from Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council

Updated version 7 March 2022

For our parish the sites put forward are:

Land at Roseneath Farm, Mill Lane, Ripe Ref: 823/3230

Quote from SHELAA 2019 :

“Not suitable for housing - The site comprises of redundant farm buildings and fields located on the southern fringe of the settlement. The site is adjacent to the Conservation Area and is visible in the wider landscape as part of the attractive rural setting of the village. There are listed buildings immediately adjacent. Housing development would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the landscape, and would be likely to have a harmful effect on the historic character of the village of Ripe”.

Despite this site being assessed as unsuitable for housing, planning permission was in fact granted in 2019 for 3 new dwellings on this site. The site is no longer adjacent to the Conservation Area; the site lies in the Ripe Conservation area. The Parish Council would be totally opposed to any further development on this site for the reasons outlined in the SHELAA 2019.

Land between Pepperham and Rosings, Mark Cross Lane, Ripe Ref:173/3230

Quote from SHELAA 2019 :

“Not suitable for housing - The site comprises of a single field used for grazing located to the west of the centre of the settlement. The site is adjacent to the Conservation Area and is visible in the wider landscape as part of the attractive rural setting of the village. There are listed buildings immediately adjacent. Existing vehicular and pedestrian access is unsuitable for further intensification, and Mark Cross Lane has poor forward visibility at its junction with The Street. Housing development would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the landscape, and would be likely to have a harmful effect on the historic character of the village of Ripe”.

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council broadly agrees with the above comments which are still relevant but would point out that the site is no longer adjacent to the Conservation Area; the site lies in the Conservation Area. The Parish Council would also like to add the following local knowledge: the site is adjacent to and opposite Listed Buildings (Pepperham and the Manor House) and other listed buildings such as Mill Farm and The Old Cottage are very close by. The field is currently used for agriculture and is a green field site. The narrow road is totally inadequate to support any increase in traffic (which would arise from housing development) and the exit/entrance onto Mark Cross Lane is dangerous; residents have

witnessed far too many near misses on that stretch of road between horse riders, cyclists, pedestrians and large agricultural vehicles. Any development of that site would be detrimental to the outlook to the South Downs and would impact adversely on the holiday rental at Pepperham. One of the features of the village of Ripe is open spaces that allow distant rural views between dwellings. Any development on this site would be incompatible with the rural setting of the village, would destroy the open space and would render this part of Mark Cross Lane a built up and urban appearance. Additionally, as with many small villages in Wealden, there is a lack of infrastructure (no pub – closed some years ago, no school, no GP surgery, complete reliance on the private car). In short, any development of housing on this site would go against the principle of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Land at Mill Lane/Firle Lane, Ripe Ref: 850/3230

Quote from SHELAA 2019

“Not suitable for housing - The site is comprised of a small grass field located to the south of the settlement. The site is adjacent to the Conservation Area and is visible in the wider landscape as part of the attractive rural setting of the village. Housing development would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the landscape, and would be likely to have a harmful effect on the historic character of the village of Ripe”.

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council agrees with the above comments which are still relevant and would add that this small grass field is well outside any settlement and any housing here would be unsustainable and have the appearance of a ribbon development outside of the settlement of Ripe.

Follengers Field, Church Lane, Ripe Ref:345/3230

This has been identified as a suitable site for development in the 2019 SHELAA.

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council completely disagrees with this assessment. The field adjoining Follengers Field (locally named Dolly’s Field, now Carriage Mews) was put forward for development some years ago and 6 new dwellings have been built there. If the frontage of Follengers Field is developed, as has been suggested by Wealden, then Church Lane will appear like an urban development, with houses on both sides of the road; most importantly the open space that is so valued by the community for its amenity value will be lost and the historic character of the village will be harmed. Follengers Field, where it joins Church Lane, is now in the Ripe Conservation area because it is an important open space and because of evidence of Roman agriculture - centuriation. Any development of this open green space will go against the principle of preserving and enhancing the character of the conservation area.

Deanland Wood Park, Deanland Road, Ripe Ref: none found

Planning permission granted for 105 new dwellings in 2021, after case went to appeal. This, in addition to the 26 new dwellings approved a few years earlier.

Chalvington with Ripe objected strongly to this development but our views were overridden, even though this is clearly an unsustainable location, with major flooding issues. We request that no more dwellings are permissioned at Deanland Wood Park.

Church Farm, Church Lane, Ripe Ref: 1185/3230

This site has only recently been submitted. The site sits in a conservation area and we consider that a housing development here would neither protect nor enhance the conservation area. The site is currently an equestrian centre offering livery, stabling and other equestrian pursuits to riders from all over Wealden. The key issue here is about rural employment which we need to encourage and support. The equestrian business has to have a rural location; the same facilities cannot be offered in a town. Equestrian facilities are being lost to development all over the district. The equestrian industry is a significant employer of some highly skilled people who have studied and had long apprenticeships to get to where they are - grooms, instructors, farriers, equine vets, feed merchants, saddlers, farmers supplying hay and straw, paddock maintenance etc. There is also low cost living accommodation on this site for the staff and that would be lost if the site was approved for housing. In summary, our view is that this should remain a thriving rural business, one that will enhance the rural economy in the parish and beyond.

Land East of Church Farm, Church Lane, Ripe Ref: 1186/3230

This site has only recently been submitted. The site sits in a conservation area and housing development here would fail to protect and enhance the conservation area because:

- It is an unsustainable location, almost wholly dependent on the private car for travel, no school or doctor, a bus once per week at times that would not enable people to get to their workplace on time.
- Open spaces are part of the character of the conservation area
- The land is opposite St John the Baptist Church which is a Grade 1 listed building; if this site were to be built on it would harm the setting of the church and the graveyard. It would be difficult to overcome the damaging impact to the setting of the church

Additionally, we are opposed to development of this land as it would be destroying open pasture land and creating a ribbon development of Ripe. At present there are 2 separate and distinct settlements – one in Ripe, and one in Chalvington. Development of this land would start to merge the 2 historic settlements. Moreover, if this land is sold off it starts to undermine the viability of the equestrian business next door at Church Farm.

It is also worth mentioning here that since the development of new dwellings in recent years (15 new dwellings permissioned or built out), there has been no additional infrastructure so more houses will just add to car dependency.

Other issues re the SHELAA that draw on our local knowledge:

1. Chalvington with Ripe Parish has punched well above its weight in terms of new dwellings, either built or permissioned: apart from many agricultural barn conversions there have been 6 at Carriage Mews (previously Dolly's Field), 3 at the Lamb Inn site, 1 at Mill Farm Cottage, 3 at Roseneath Farm, 26 + 105 at Deanland Wood Park. That is in total 144 new dwellings (excl barn conversions) in a parish of approx. 900 residents. This is well in excess of what other similar small parishes have been expected to take.
2. Building more new dwellings in an unsustainable location (no GP surgery, no bus or train services, no pub in Ripe, no school, total reliance on the private car) is not in line with government policy which is to build in towns, on brownfield sites, on sites which have good infrastructure.
3. It is really important to state that new dwellings permissioned in surrounding unsustainable locations, eg Golden Cross, Chiddingly, Laughton, Arlington have huge knock on effects on our parish – particularly in terms of drivers using Ripe as a short cut to get from the A27 to the A22; this has already caused a huge increase in traffic in our little village of Ripe and compromised the safety of our residents, our pedestrians and horse riders. Wealden needs to protect its small villages and rural areas as they are the reason that many people choose to live in the countryside.
4. We request that Wealden now state clearly to the Government that it cannot meet its 5 year housing supply and put pressure on the government to accept a much lower number of new dwellings in Wealden. Our understanding of the reason for refusal of our previous WLP was not just that it did not have the 5 year land supply but that it failed on the 'Duty to Cooperate'. We understand that there is now excellent cooperation between Wealden and neighbouring authorities.
5. Our Parish is represented at the SW Planning Cluster and the Parish Planning Panel and we continue to be actively involved with officers in the drawing up of the new Wealden Local Plan.

Chalvington with Ripe Parish Council

Response approved by full Council at its meeting on 7 March 2022