

## **Newsletter from Maresfield Parish Council – April 2022**

### **How Many New Homes for Maresfield Parish ?**

We understand that Wealden District Council still hopes to publish its new draft Local Plan in Spring 2022 and it will almost certainly include a number for the new homes to be built in Maresfield Parish over the plan period to 2030. We do not know what that number is; in the last Plan (2013) it was 50 though planning applications were subsequently approved for about twice this number.

But circumstances are now very different.

Firstly, Wealden District is required by the Government to plan for at least 1,200 homes per year whereas in 2013 the number in the Plan was about 450. But Wealden and many local Town and Parish Councils are lobbying hard for this number to be reduced and hoping for a Government rethink seems to be delaying the publication of Wealden's draft Plan.

Secondly, the protection against development afforded by our Parish's proximity to the Ashdown Forest has significantly reduced. We still understand that no new development will be allowed within the Forest nor within the 400m Exclusion Zone around the Forest Boundary; however, development elsewhere will not be restricted but will merely require a small financial contribution as mitigation for any adverse effect on the Forest attributable to the development.

Thirdly, Wealden's recent requests to landowners/developers to put forward sites for an initial assessment of their suitability for development yielded over 30 sites in our Parish which Wealden has now assessed and if deemed suitable would enable Wealden to allocate new homes to our Parish to be delivered from those sites.

My personal conclusion is that our Parish is likely to be allocated as many as 250 new homes, or even more, to be built in the Plan period and these would be built primarily on sites in and around Maresfield village.

If we think 250 is too many we need to have very good reasons and feed these into Wealden during the consultation period immediately after the draft Plan is published. Please do think about this.

Where the houses would go in the Parish is an essential part of the valuable work currently being undertaken by our NDP Steering Group which is objectively and impartially also assessing the sites which have been put forward and will produce a prioritised list of recommended sites when the number of homes being allocated is known.

### **Save the date – Annual Assembly**

This event will take place on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 for 7.30pm at Fairwarp Village Hall. We are delighted that our key speaker will be Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex, Katy Bourne, OBE. Please put the date in your diary.

### **Parking on School Hill, Maresfield**

Cars parking or waiting on School Hill, especially at school drop off/pick up times, is both inconsiderate and potentially dangerous. Please don't do it. Parking at these times is available in the Chequers car park and in the Recreation Ground car park but wouldn't it be even better to walk your children to school?

### **Maresfield Recreation Ground**

New, larger litter bins have been installed and the private Park Farm Lane road surface has been repaired. Please drive slowly when using the Lane to access the Recreation Ground or the Pavilion which, having recently been refurbished, will soon be available for hire for one off events and meetings.

### **Platinum Jubilee Events**

Maresfield and Fairwarp Villages are organising Jubilee celebration events and it would be great if we all decked our homes and other village premises with red, white and blue bunting over the festive period. The Parish Council will be planting a commemorative tree.

### **Great British Spring Clean**

Both Maresfield and Nutley are again up to the challenge of supporting litter picking etc during the Spring Clean campaign which runs from 25<sup>th</sup> March to 10<sup>th</sup> April. Please volunteer – contact the Parish Office on 714555.

### **Fords Green Play Area – Nutley**

We plan to refurbish, including equipment replacement, at the Fords Green Play Area and would appreciate suggestions from parents and children of the kind of equipment that they would like to see installed.

#### **Useful links are:**

<https://my.wealden.gov.uk/>

<http://www.maresfieldparish.org.uk/>

<http://www.uckfieldtc.gov.uk/>

<https://www.ashdownforest.org/>

And you can also follow the Parish Council on Twitter and Facebook.

**Martin Craddock** – Chairman Maresfield Parish Council