



TDRA NEWSLETTER

TDRA Coffee Morning

White Lion Hotel Saddlery, Tenterden High Street on Saturday 14th October from 10–12pm. This is open to both members and non-members and is the perfect opportunity for you to chat with us on any of the ongoing issues affecting Tenterden – or any fresh thoughts you wish to share. We hope to see you there.

Cinema Focus Group

The inaugural meeting of the Cinema Focus Group was held on 17th August with a further meeting on 21st September. The group consensus was that a professionally run cinema was the preferred way forward. Possible sites were discussed including the Woolpack; HSBC; the Pebbles; the Old Pine Shop; Glebe Hall and Tenterden Club.

The landlord of the Woolpack, Rob Cowan, who is a member of the Focus Group, advised that because of recent usage restrictions, the barn at the rear of the pub could be available for use as a cinema site. A visit was carried out by the Group at the end of the meeting and it was apparent that the site was of a good size and, as money is due to be spent on the refurbishment of the Town Hall it could become a joint venture for both interested parties. Rob has agreed to approach Enterprise Inc to gauge their views on this.

It was also established that Kino had shown interest in coming to Tenterden in 2015 and would possibly still be interested if a ready made building was available. The Group agreed that all possible options of cinema companies should be kept open.

Recreation Ground Focus Group

TTC has been actively appointing architects to undertake studies of options for redevelopment of the Recreation Ground. However, the Focus Group was not invited to meet the various firms bidding for the work or to have any input in setting the terms of reference for the study. Although some local organisations such as the Bowls Club and Tennis Club may have been approached by the appointed consultants (Ground Control), TDRA has had no input to date.

It is understood from TTC that a meeting of the Focus Group will be convened on 11th October to consider various options to be outlined by the consultants.

Local Plan to 2030

The proposals affecting Tenterden as part of the 'Main Changes' to the draft Local Plan to 2030 include:

- Additional 50 houses at Tent 1 Phase B (an increase from 175 to 225 houses)
- Pope House Farm development (south of the A28 as you approach St Michaels from High Halden) – this site lies within High Halden Parish but adjoins the Tenterden boundary

These proposals respond to a central government directive for ABC to deliver an additional 1,200 completed houses within 5 years – this additional requirement for the Borough in effect placed a premium on sites which can be rapidly expanded to accommodate more houses at greater density, are in single ownership and adjacent to a main road for ease of access.

Neither of these proposals are considered to be acceptable by TDRA.

The site now proposed by ABC at Pope House Farm fails TDRA adopted criteria, being linear rather than lateral development and remote from the town centre.

Listing the site has already led to the submission of a planning application for a further 20 dwellings on the opposite side of the A28 at the entrance to London Beach Golf Club. If these developments go ahead we are likely to have 100 new houses outside the current confines of the town and which will result in many additional traffic movements to the supermarkets, schools, surgery, etc and increased traffic and parking issues in the town.

The impact of the additional 50 houses to Tent 1 Phase B would result in approximately 5 acres less open space – no green lung in the development, smaller gardens and a continuation of the dense housing of Phase A rather than a gradual transition to the countryside.

Separately, there are concerns that the Tent 1 Phase B site may not come forward for development until very late in the Local Plan period up to 2030, leading to the consideration of the 'Wates' site between Appledore Road and Woodchurch Road.

The 'Wates' Site - What is the Truth?

Many TDRA members will have seen recent articles and comments in the local press regarding the decision on 14th August by the Planning Committee of Tenterden Town Council (TTC) to support development of the land lying between Woodchurch Road and Appledore Road. This triangle has now become known as 'the Wates site'. The recommendation of the Planning Committee was then overturned by a TTC meeting on 29th August.

The TTC Planning Committee meeting on 14th August was held to finalise the TTC comments on the Ashford Borough Council draft of the Local Plan to 2030 as the final date for comment was 31st August. The Wates site was NOT proposed for development in the published draft Local Plan although it had been considered and recommended by TTC at meetings earlier in the year.

The Wates site was suggested by Councillor Carter for development as an alternative to the above-mentioned sites as it could also provide sports pitches to meet the requirement for more football pitches in the town and would avoid a development 'free-for-all' in the event that Tent1 Phase B was delayed. The TTC Planning Committee voted unanimously in favour of the Wates site.

So what is the Wates proposal? In a letter to TTC dated 25th August, which was circulated to attendees at the Council meeting on 29th August, a brief explanation was given together with a preliminary layout drawing reproduced below.

The Wates proposal comprises 250 homes (including 100 affordable homes) located on an 8 hectares (20 acres) area to the west of the site. The development area will not intrude beyond the ridgeline and public footpaths. Wates have offered the remaining 16 hectares (39 acres) of the site for a sports hub, sports pitches and a country park.

TDRA View on the 'Wates' Site

In 2008 TDRA drew up detailed 'Criteria for Selection of Development Sites' which were used to evaluate 23 sites under consideration at that time. These criteria remain valid today and include:

- Allocated housing development should be within easy walking distance of the town centre (900 metres / 15 minutes) ie lateral development rather than linear development.
- Areas that are important to the setting of the town together with 'green lungs' need to be identified and protected.
- The character of the entrances to the town (gradual transition from countryside to town) should be retained.

- Continuous development that avoids major access road construction should be given priority. Green walk-through routes should be encouraged.
- Green lungs should be incorporated into housing developments, retaining and sustaining existing natural features.

There are many who object to the development of the Wates site as this is an attractive area of countryside popular with walkers. However, the site satisfies many of the adopted TDRA criteria.

In 2008, TDRA concluded that this site would be suitable for a development limited to the west side of footpath AB12. We noted that a master plan would be required prior to development. The drawing provided by Wates is a start in that direction and does indeed confine housing to the west of footpath AB12 as TDRA proposed.

What appears to be needed now is a Preliminary Master Plan for the Wates site similar to that which was carried out by Rummey for the Tent1 site in 2009, one year prior to allocation of the Tent1 site in the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan.

With the benefit of a preliminary master plan for the Wates site a public consultation could take place with 'stakeholders' fully informed of the potential of the site and of the drawbacks, of the added value to the community in the form of a sports hub, football pitches and other provisions that could be available under a Section 106 Agreement.

We expressed our concerns to the Council about railroading this site through without proper consultation, and were therefore pleased that the Council decided it should not be included in the current Ashford Borough Council consultation. This can ensure that any future debate on the merits of developing this site takes place properly with all relevant stakeholders having a voice.



TENT 1 Progress Summary

Dandara Site

Progress since the start on site in December 2016 has been rapid with all 44 dwellings in Phase A (closest to the Leisure Centre) at various stages of construction using a timber-frame construction. Half of these are already weather tight.

The sales office and two show houses will be completed and open for viewing from 21st October 2017. The first homes are scheduled for occupation in November 2017 and the first block of nine 'shared ownership' apartments is due to be handed over to MOAT Housing Association prior to this Christmas.

Taylor Wimpey Site

70% of foundations are now complete. The masonry superstructure of the houses using traditional cavity wall construction is progressing. The first of the homes will be completed in February 2018. The show houses and sales office will be completed in November 2017. The first of the affordable housing units will be handed over to West Kent Housing Association in August 2018.

Tentertainment

Following the recent upset over the future of Tentertainment with a majority of local residents hugely supportive of the event and the announcement that there would be no event in 2018, the TDRA Committee felt a strong vote of

support for Tentertainment was appropriate, to recognise its importance to the town as a whole.

We have exchanged correspondence with the organisers, who appreciate our support, and have promised to stage Tentertainment in 2019. We have agreed to make a donation from TDRA to assist in staging Tentertainment 2019.

Planning Report

We have been actively monitoring planning applications over this period, and have formally issued our comments to Ashford Borough Council for a number of key applications including the following:

17/01203/AS London Beach Golf Club

'... TDRA object to application 17/01203/AS located at London Beach Golf Club, Ashford Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6HX for the expansion of the existing hotel to provide additional 8 No. two bedroom flats, 3 No. two bedroom houses and 6 No. three bedroom houses.

We raise concern over this application as this site lies outside of the urban boundary of St Michaels. This development would encroach on to the rural stretch between St Michaels and High Halden, setting the irreversible precedent of sprawl towards High Halden and damaging the rural character of this area that has been protected so far.

Taking into account current applications on nearby and adjacent sites, including discussion of the potential

development of approx. 50 houses on land at Pope House Farm (Policy 60 - MC103) as indicated in ABC's Local Plan 2030, together these proposals could result in approximately 100 additional housing units in this area. This level of development would go against existing town planning principles.

In addition, we raise the concern over the impact of increased traffic on to an already busy main route into and out of St Michaels and Tenterden, particularly at peak times in the morning and at the end of the working day.'

This application is pending decision.

17/00708/AS Land north of 14 Westwell Court '... TDRA object to application 17/00708/AS located at Land north of 14 Westwell Court, Tenterden for the following reasons:

Site Access

There is much concern regarding the access constraints to the site, and the detrimental effect of large vehicular site traffic as well as increased traffic generated by the development to Westwell Court residents. The existing roads are narrow and were not built to cope with the inevitable increase in traffic flow – in fact there is already significant congestion/ constriction caused by non-resident parking. In addition according to the Kent Design Standards, a cul-de-sac should serve no more than 25 dwellings. The current proposals are not acceptable and will need to be re-considered to take into account the local residents' concerns. We would suggest more public consultation to work together with local residents to find a mutually agreeable proposal.

Existing Foot Paths

We would expect a high quality landscape proposal to be submitted to mitigate the loss of historically important foot paths and vistas that are frequently used and enjoyed by many local residents. Local residents should have the chance to submit comments through public consultation to ensure that the proposals are mutually acceptable.

Gift of Land to Tenterden Town Council for Public Use

We would expect a formal proposal outlining the proposed gift of land to Tenterden Town Council for public use. The formal proposal/agreement should be made public with details of exact size and location of the land. This does not appear to have happened so far.

Sewerage Proposals

We have been made aware of considerable site constraints in realising the current sewerage proposal, relating largely to the significant gradients of the site. We would require demonstration that the current proposals are workable prior to construction.

Ecological Matters

We would expect a full and detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be submitted well in advance of any construction on site. The CEMP outlining the ecological and mitigation proposals

should be communicated to local residents through public consultation meetings to ensure full and clear understanding of the proposals as well as a chance for residents to submit feedback. There should also be put in place a regular and continuous monitoring of the implementation of the agreed proposals with representation from local interest groups and residents.

Architectural Design

For such a prominent position, we would expect the architectural design to reflect the vernacular style of Tenterden through the use of high quality materials and details. We feel that the current design proposals lack the required distinctiveness and sensitivity for a harmonious extension to the historic town centre. As stated in the Kent Design Guide – 'The quality and detail of all materials and components will be of paramount importance. Such matters can easily be settled at feasibility stage...'

Please note that if the points above were to be addressed by the applicant in a satisfactory manner, the TDRA would be willing to support the application.'

This application is pending decision.

17/01047/AS Tenterden Car Wash, Recreation Ground Road

'... TDRA are supportive of the concept to develop on the proposed site, however we don't feel that current design is sympathetic to the existing context and high quality architectural heritage of the High Street. The proposed building appears to sit awkwardly on the site, with bland detailing and minimal vernacular reference to its context.

The arrangements for turning of delivery vehicles appear inadequate and likely to cause substantial disruption to traffic entering and leaving the adjacent car park as well as being a hazard to pedestrians.

This application is pending decision.

Volunteers Required Please

We are running short on volunteers to assist in distribution of these Newsletters and the annual 'The Resident' magazine. This would involve posting newsletters through members' doors two or three times a year, as well as collecting members' donations once a year where feasible whilst distributing The Resident in April/ May each year.

If at all possible, rounds for distribution are close to the volunteers' own homes, and the number of houses on each round is no more than 40.

Join Us

We are always keen to welcome new members to TDRA. Please support us by joining online at www.tdra.org.uk