

ALBOURNE PC - NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

DRAFT POLICIES – October 2012

INTRODUCTION.

The Parish of Albourne is located west of Hurstpierpoint on the western side of the B2118 (former A23). It is set in the open countryside of the Low Weald with the south west corner extending into the South Downs National Park. Overall size is 1969 acres. The Register of Electors of December 2011 records 489 electors. The total population is approximately 600 in 259 dwellings.

The Parish consists of two distinct parts, a compact village contained within a built-up area boundary and larger, low density, peripheral areas which are considered to have a rural character and therefore to form part of the countryside. The built-up area boundary was defined in order to conserve the rural setting of the village and to protect the surrounding countryside from inappropriate development.

The area between Albourne and Sayers Common and Albourne and Hurstpierpoint is defined as a Local Gap, created to preserve the countryside between settlements.

Running north-south through the village is the main thoroughfare known as the Street. The historic core of the village lies at the southern end of The Street, where many of the buildings are listed and date from the 17th century or earlier. The northern half of the village is more recent, largely consisting of post war development. Facilities within the central village include a primary school, village hall, recreation ground with an equipped children's play area and allotments. The Church of St Bartholomew's lies to the west of the central village at the end of Church Lane.

The Neighbourhood Plan is particularly concerned with the development of appropriate housing, including affordable housing, both within the village and the peripheral areas.

Other main issues include road safety, particularly along the B2116 north of the Primary School and parking within the village.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – 2011 TO 2031

Background

Principles based criteria for residential development were created and agreed. These criteria were based on previously documented views by the Parish Council and on the results of the 2007 Albourne Housing Needs Survey conducted by Action in Rural Sussex.

These criteria state that preference for development will be given to sites meeting one or more of the following principles:

within or at least adjoining the current built up area boundary

full/partial Brownfield sites or sites with existing approval for development fully or partially surrounded by existing development

which would not extend in any direction the current built extremities

sustainably situated – on bus route or within <5minute walk

These principles based criteria have been recognised by MSDC as potential “best practice” and circulated to other Parish Councils.

Development site selection and preferences

The initial site list for review was based on our pre-plan exception site priority list for possible affordable housing created as a result of the housing needs survey. Other sites were included if they met one or more of the above criteria, if we were aware of development wishes by the landowner, or if the site had been suggested by residents as part of the housing needs survey. All sites were reviewed against the above criteria and also against the AiRS site selection toolkit. As a result of this review, three sites were identified which together could meet our “fair share” target. The three sites were prioritised and communicated to residents at the 2012 Annual Parish Meeting and by means of a specific question in our Neighbourhood Plan Survey conducted in May 2012.

Residential Development Policies

The research used to develop the principles based criteria for housing also formed part of the evidence base for the formulation of the following Draft Residential Development Policies. These draft policies formed the basis of the questions contained in the parish wide questionnaire delivered to each household in April 2012. (See Appendix 1) The response rate to this survey was 18% and the “agree” % is shown in parentheses after the relevant policy.

POLICY PROPOSAL R1 - Preserve the identity, character and atmosphere of this small rural village. (100%)

POLICY PROPOSAL R2 - Protect best quality land surrounding the village, having regard to agricultural and horticultural use and environmental importance. (100%)

POLICY PROPOSAL R3 - Maintain key strategic and identity gaps. Specifically, between Albourne & Sayers Common to the north, and Albourne & Hurstpierpoint to the east. (96%)

POLICY PROPOSAL R4 - Resist ad-hoc residential development that negatively impacts the Conservation Area or setting of listed buildings OR is proposed for sites detached from the village built up area boundary OR is not on one of the locally agreed Plan “possible development sites” list OR does not support our “affordable dwellings*” strategy. (88%) * Rented dwellings with specific Albourne related qualification criteria

POLICY PROPOSAL R5 - Support the District Council’s 20 year housing supply targets by taking at least our “fair share”. APC’s view is that it could support up to an additional 15 houses over the plan period if we are able to secure by simple majority, parish agreement to our plan AND only our locally agreed “possible development sites” are utilised. (88%)**

** Using the housing targets, our housing needs and a variety of other sources we consider our fair share to be a 5% increment (equiv to 15 dwellings) in the number of Albourne dwellings over the plan period (source data available) .

POLICY PROPOSAL R6 – All housing developments of three or more dwellings to be subject to the “30% affordable rule”. (73%, or 84% if those wanting the % to be higher are included)

The parish wide questionnaire put forward three possible and preferred development sites in priority order. These were:

1. Land rear of 6 Hunters Mead, currently allotments and garages.
2. Land situated between Magnolia House & Holders.
3. Land situated between Holders & Greenmead Cottages.

The results of this survey conducted in April 2012 showed high (63%) levels of support for the three sites, with very high (85%) levels of support for sites 2 and 3. There were however, objections from a significant minority (28%) to the “loss” of the allotment space inherent in Site 1. Accordingly, we agreed to reprioritise our initial three selections, placing Site 1 in third place, and conducting a “champion/challenger” exercise to re-compare this site with the other sites evaluated under our initial analysis, and with “new” housing and “brown-field” sites suggested by respondents to the survey. Results of this exercise shown in **APPENDIX 2**.

This exercise has resulted in a revised approach to Site 1 involving 2 small starter homes only on the brown-field (garaging) part of the site. To compensate for the resultant reduction in plan numbers, we have added a “next best” fourth site to our priority list. This being land south of Softech House (North of the Twitten). This is a brown-field site with current approval for a large office development and is the only site (apart from the garage site) suggested that meets all four principles.

4. TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT AND PARKING

The villages in the Parish currently experience the following traffic problem areas:

- a) Traffic congestion: The Street adjacent to the School
- b) Pedestrian safety conflicts: B2116 from its junction with the B2118
- c) Traffic speeding - B2116 from its junction with the B2118
- d) Parking congestion: The Street adjacent to the school

Any additional housing development within Albourne will add to these traffic and parking conflicts.

POLICY PROPOSAL T1: In Albourne the Parish Council will work with WSCC (and the School Governing body, and continue to press for :-

- (a) Improved traffic management and enforcement systems along the B2116, including pedestrian safety and footway layouts.**
- (b) A solution to the School generated parking congestion in the street and elsewhere in the village.**
- (c) Weight restrictions in the various Parish country lanes**

POLICY PROPOSAL T2: Steps shall be taken to address and implement improved traffic management measures to reduce speed through the village, particularly along the B2116 both through the village and along to High Cross.

The Parish Council, in conjunction with West Sussex County Council, shall continue to encourage the development of cycle ways through the Parish.

POLICY PROPOSAL T3: New designated cycleways shall be identified and implemented through the Parish area.

5. SCHOOLS

Albourne CoE Primary School serves Albourne and surrounding villages including Sayers Common and Poynings, but is almost full. Increased housing in Albourne and Sayers Common will result in increased demand for places and “bussing” to other schools. This is of particular concern as Hurstpierpoint (the closest school to Albourne) is currently oversubscribed.

APC believes that it is not acceptable that local children are denied a place at their local school and such arrangements are potentially divisive in a small community such as Albourne.

POLICY PROPOSAL S1: The Parish Council will encourage, through the planning process, the development of the school to enable all primary school children to attend their local school.

POLICY PROPOSAL S2: Any additional housing development would be required to address and contribute towards providing additional primary school places.

6. COMMUNITY PROVISION, SPORT, LEISURE AND AMENITY SPACE.

The Village Hall and recreation ground are much valued and well used. Additional housing will lead to further pressures on existing facilities and may drive a requirement for additional facilities. The Village Hall facilities are in need of updating with a need for disabled access, disabled toilets and improved storage facilities. There is further demand for additional facilities for young people of the community, particularly youth facilities and expanded and enhanced play equipment on the playground.

POLICY PROPOSAL C1: A prioritized list of required actions in being developed to address the shortcomings of both the Village Hall and the Children's Playground. The Parish Council will actively support the re-establishment of a Youth Group.

Albourne is surrounded by countryside and the local footpaths are well used for leisure purposes to different parts of the village. Increased opportunities are needed for access to informal open space, for exercise and amenity.

POLICY PROPOSAL C2: Opportunities shall be sought to provide an area of informal public open space, with particular emphasis on preservation of natural habitats, adjacent to the existing built-up area of Hurstpierpoint, to be owned and managed by the community.

POLICY PROPOSAL C3: APC will actively promote its allotment facilities and seek additional facilities. A proposal to utilise unused areas of garden volunteered by residents will be explored.

7. BUSINESS AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Parish Council wishes to encourage a balanced local economy, with appropriate provision of businesses and employers within the Parish area. It supports the District Council policy of encouraging a range of economic activity but would discourage any development which resulted in a dominant employer in the Parish, or business activity which was out of scale with the immediate community. The Parish Council recognises the position of Albourne in relation to the South Downs National Park, and the opportunities and challenges of tourism. The Council shall resist the introduction of further activity centres or other new tourist developments in the rural areas of the Parish. However, it shall encourage that provision by change of use and redevelopment of existing buildings, of appropriate retail and accommodation services provided that all other planning issues are properly addressed.

It should be noted that, for a small parish (<2000 acres, 275 households and 620 people), Albourne has a very wide range of office, industrial, leisure and other employment-related development. See appendix 1. It is therefore considered appropriate to develop and agree appropriate policies for this area:-

POLICY PROPOSAL E1 - We will aim to support the activities of all Albourne based businesses and allow them to prosper and grow.

POLICY PROPOSAL E2 - We will aim to maintain the wide and diverse range of office, commercial and light/other industrial facilities within the parish.

POLICY PROPOSAL E3 - We will encourage movement between facilities as organisations outgrow their space.

POLICY PROPOSAL E4 - We will not support any further development of this type which.....

Negatively impacts the small Albourne segment of the South Downs National Park

Negatively impacts any part of our designated Ancient Woodland or compromises any of our remaining Grade 3 or better agricultural/horticultural land

Negatively impacts any of our sites of environmental or recreational importance

Represents inappropriate or unnecessary encroachment onto green field sites or countryside gaps.

POLICY PROPOSAL E5 - Consideration shall be given to redevelopment or change of use of existing buildings for the provision of small-scale commercial activity, subject to all the proper planning issues.

The Parish Council will seek to balance any such further commercial activity with appropriate action to ameliorate the impact of additional traffic, and particularly its impact on the smaller country lanes.

POLICY PROPOSAL E6 - Appropriate traffic management systems shall be introduced in conjunction with any business related development in the parish, to prevent any increased use of Church Lane, Truslers Hill Lane, Shaveswood Lane, Twineham Lane and Reeds Lane

POLICY PROPOSAL E7 - Additional design and architectural detail should be included in any redevelopment of existing or new business sites to reduce ecological harms and protect the visual amenity of the users of the South Downs National Park and South Downs Way. Special regard shall be placed on sensitive use of materials and landscaping to facilitate this policy.

REFERENCES AND APPENDICES

MSDC DRAFT Core Strategy: Chapter 9.0 Sustainable Rural Communities

MSDC Rural Issues Background Paper – March 2009

MSDC SHLAA report - August 2009

MSDC Economic Development Action Plan 2010 – 11 (draft)

APC Housing Needs Survey 2008

APC Neighbourhood Plan Postal Survey - April 2012

APC Presentation at Annual Parish Meeting - May 2012

APPENDIX 1 – Albourne Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Postal Survey – April 2012

APPENDIX 2 – APR Residential Site Re-evaluation Champion/Challenger Exercise – June 2012

Allotment/Garage Site, Hog Lane, Off The Street, Albourne.

Meets all four development principles, but possible Policy R4 impact (Conservation Area) and allotment section fails Policy R2. Significant level of local objection, primarily to use of Allotment site. Policy impact mitigated by limiting use to the brown-field garage site/footprint.

Softech House, Old London Road (B2118)

Meets all four development principles and does not conflict with policies R1 to R5. Planning consent already granted for substantial office building. Initial informal approach to APC by owner's representative seeking views on possible residential use.

Hazeldens Nursery site south (between Gospel Hall and Spurk Barn drive)

Fails to meet three of our development principles – Not a brown-field site, is detached from Village built up area boundary and comprises high quality horticultural land. The site also fails policies R2 and R4.

Hazeldens Nursery site north (between Gospel Hall and Church Lane)

Meets three of the four development principles, but the site fails policies R2 and R4.

Land between Albourne Court and Inholmes Farm (Henfield Road B2116)

Meets all four development principles but fails policies R2 and R3.

Land to the rear of Albourne Court (Henfield Road B2116)

Fails three of the four development principles and fails policies R2, R3 and R4.

Land to the rear of Hillbrook House, Little Foxes and Clovelly (Old London Road B2118)

Fails three of the four development principles and fails policies R3 and R4

Land to the rear of Grangeview House (Old London Road B2118)

Fails to meet three of our development principles and fails policies R3 and R4

APPENDIX 3

List of Existing Employment Sites

Within Parish Boundary – Albourne Court, Albourne Equestrian Centre(L), Albourne Farm Winery/Micro Brewery, Albourne School, Arden Grange, High Cross Farm, Jammeson’s Farm, Q Leisure(L), Singing Hills Golf Club(L), Softech House, Sovereign House and Wickwoods Country Club (L).

Adjacent to Parish Boundary - Valley Farm Reeds Lane, Whiteoaks Farm Reeds Lane and Firsland Estate Henfield Road.

Sites marked “L” also provide Leisure facilities within the Parish.