



Lenham Neighbourhood Plan – we need your support on May 6

Neighbourhood Plans were one of the outcomes of the 2011 Localism Act which introduced reforms to the planning system and gave opportunities for increased powers to local communities. Unfortunately, what was initially envisaged as an easy way for local communities to have more control over what went on in their area turned into an extended exercise in planning.

History of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and where we are now

- The Lenham Neighbourhood Plan began in 2014 and was put forward during Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC) review of their Plan in 2015.
- At that time MBC also decided that Lenham, amongst other villages, would be a "Rural Service Centre" resulting in 1,500 new homes built over a five-year period.
- That part of the Plan was criticised by the independent planning inspector who decided that the number of houses was too great and the time-frame too short.
- A decision was made that Lenham Parish Council should create a Neighbourhood Plan which would accommodate 1,000 new homes over a time-frame of ten years. That is how our Plan came into being.
- Our Plan aims to control what is built, where it is built and even what these buildings look like. It also includes how the schools will expand over time, how the medical services will be increased, how new nursery places can be accommodated, new opportunities for recreation and sport all the while protecting and/or creating green space.
- The Plan is a comprehensive, complex and detailed planning document which is difficult to summarise here, you can see it in full at: **www.lenhamparish.org.uk/community/lenham-parish-council-15704/neighbourhood-plan1/**

At this point we need to emphasise the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan does not support MBC's plan to parachute new houses into Lenham Heath. That proposal is not and will not be any part of our plan and Lenham Parish Council has and will continue to oppose this to MBC at every opportunity.

The Challenge

Following MBC's decision in 2015, we had to decide how to accommodate the additional homes while minimising the inevitable impact of the village and the other settlements in the Parish as well as preserving and enhancing as much of the countryside as possible.

Our Proposals

- The major developments outlined in the Lenham Neighbourhood plan will take place to the south and west of the existing village footprint between Headcorn Road and Old Ham Lane and then west of Ham Lane to border Dickey Wood.
- The final site will be at East Lenham Farm which will also provide a home for a new sports centre and multi-use playing fields. **Please see the map on the back page for more detail.**

There are some other developments which were agreed before the plan came into being: land alongside and south of the railway, formerly Russell and Russell; land between the Old Ashford Road and the A20, known as Tanyard Farm North and land at the corner of Ham Lane and the A20. Two of these sites are currently being built and the third has just been sold on to another developer.

Although these are technically outside our Plan, there has been liaison with the developers of these sites to ensure they are fully integrated with the plan.

- On **Road Infrastructure** we propose the construction of a service road through the new developments will eventually link the Headcorn Road just south of the railway line to the A20 Ashford Road. There will also be some additional traffic calming along the Headcorn Road approach to the village.
- Providers of **Other Services**, like schools and health, have a statutory responsibility to engage with plans like the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan to ensure the increases required from them are factored into their forward planning and budgeting. Those discussions began at a very early stage. We know that Lenham School and Lenham Primary have capacity to expand and the Neighbourhood Plan includes a proposal for a new expanded nursery. There have been discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Group to make sure that the provision of services from the local Primary Care can expand over time to meet the increased capacity.

So why is May 6 Important?

On May 6 2021 everyone in Lenham Parish who is entitled to vote will be asked in a referendum organised by Maidstone Borough Council if they support the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan.

We ask you to say 'YES' and support the Plan for the following reasons:

- The Lenham Neighbourhood Plan offers the best protection from unwanted developments by accepting a structured approach to the creation of 1,000 homes over the next ten years, which was part of Maidstone's 2017 Local Plan.
- Without our Plan MBC will be able to approve whatever developments they want and the Parish Council will have very limited power to object – our Plan shifts much of that power of approval to the Parish for the duration of the Plan.
- The "Heathlands" proposal or "Garden Village" of up to 5,000 homes at Lenham Heath is not part of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and never will be.
- Supporting the Plan will help protect the countryside.
- The Plan includes a specific policy designed to protect the areas outside the planned development zones – this means that the relationship between the village and the rest of the parish remains protected – MBC wanted this policy removed but the Independent Inspector said it should remain. **This is the biggest protection against unwanted developments like the so-called 'Garden Village'.**

- The Plan contains requirements for additional services which the growing village will need, like increased capacity at the Lenham Surgery, a new nursery unlocking space at Lenham Primary School, increased facilities at Lenham School and a new larger recreation area to the east of the village with facilities that would not be available otherwise.

We would like to ask each and every resident in the Lenham Parish to vote to support the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan in the referendum.

Thank you

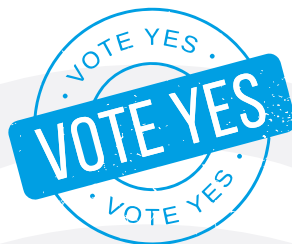
John Britt

Chair: Lenham Parish Council



Vote:

**'Yes' to support the
neighbourhood plan**



Plan 4 - Overall Masterplan

Key

-  Site Boundaries
-  Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space (8.76 HA)
-  Amenity Green Space (1.37 HA)
-  Play Provision (1.25 HA)
-  Allotments and Community Gardens (0.50 HA)
-  Outdoor Sports (5.98 HA)
-  Sports Pavilion
-  Housing and Associated Gardens and Roads (33.41 HA)
-  Commitment sites
-  Housing allowed on appeal
-  Roads
-  Provisional Offsite Road
-  Provisional Offsite Footpath
-  Existing Footpaths
-  Proposed Footpaths
-  Station Hub

