

Newsletter August 2022

All newsletters can be found here: https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/newsletters

Please email us with comments and to receive future editions via email: savewestofifield@gmail.com.

Save West of Ifield Annual General Meeting

We held our first Annual General meeting on 9th August, kindly hosted by St Margaret’s Church in Ifield village. We were delighted to see so many people there, but for those unable to attend, here are the main points.

The formal business of the AGM covered reports from the Chair and Treasurer, adoption of a redrafted constitution, and explanation of the new governance structure – Executive Committee and Advisory Board – see

https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/who-are-we. The meeting was then opened for discussion, which included topics such as the effect of the current drought on water neutrality, the demand for new schools on Ifield Golf Course, and ideas for fundraising. Councillors from Crawley Borough, Rusper Parish and West Sussex County Council took part in the conversation.

The Committee thanked everyone who has contributed to the campaign, and asked for volunteers to join the group as neighbourhood ambassadors, or to share relevant experience.

Reports from SWOI Chair and Treasurer

Fenella Maitland-Smith and Cathy Durrant

The Save West of Ifield (SWOI) committee was formed in summer 2021 and almost immediately in July we found ourselves outside Horsham District Council (HDC) offices protesting against the publication of their draft Local Plan, which allocated the 3,250 house site West of Ifield (proposed Phase 1 of the wider 10,000 house development). A great and energizing start, that earned us some good press coverage.

But the Local Plan was withdrawn days later due to a new legal requirement from central government for a 30 year vision, with

the expectation of re-publication in November. This gave us precious time to establish the campaign’s legal form with a written constitution and bank account. We also developed a campaign strategy which has all the themes you’d expect: building a strong case against, effectively navigating the planning process, using political and media leverage, working with partner campaigns and organisations, raising awareness and helping people to take action, and fundraising.

We were preparing to respond to a Regulation 19 consultation process for the republished draft Local Plan in November. However, this would still have been much too tight a timetable to put together the quality of response we needed to. But then, a tiny snail came to our rescue! In September, Natural England announced that in order to protect a rare snail in the Pulborough Wild



Brooks, all development across the Arun extraction zones should stop unless it could be shown to be water neutral, i.e. not add to water use.

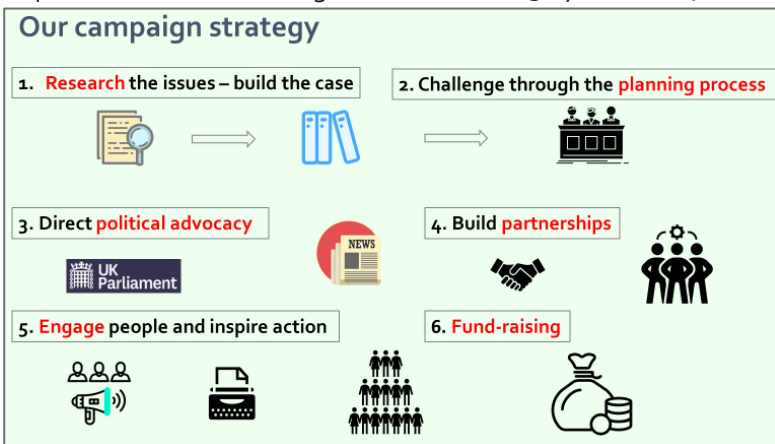
Southern Water and the affected local authorities are now desperately trying to devise a strategy to get development going again. They’re talking about short term measures such as retro-fitting existing homes and businesses, by fixing leaks, and eventually by investment in perhaps a new reservoir, diverting water from elsewhere, even desalination plants.



Our latest information is that we should expect statements from Southern water and Natural England in late summer this year, and that the Local Plan will follow in the autumn.

But all this uncertainty and delay has been very useful for our campaign. It’s allowed us to develop the strategy, and to really get going to build the case against. We’re working with some great planning consultants, funded by the generosity of our donors, and cash budgeted by Rusper Parish Council who also oppose this

Rusper Parish Council



development. This is giving us essential focus and direction for our research and drafting of objections.

Obviously one of the key elements of the HE proposal is **Ifield Golf Course**, and the fact that HE has to prove its surplus to requirements and if not then provide an equivalent facility. Although Horsham have committed to update their assessment of golf supply and demand, it's not likely to be any more useful than the previous one that only considers demand from people living in Horsham District, i.e. zero Crawley residents! We're working with Rusper Parish Council to fight this, and produce an assessment using realistic catchment areas in line with Sport England's methodology.

Other key areas that we're working on include biodiversity, transport, heritage, and housing numbers.

It might be a surprise to hear that we're also talking to **Homes England**. As well as making sure we publicly correct and challenge their statements, we also write to them regularly.

In terms of influencing those with **political power**, obviously we were delighted when Crawley Borough Council came out so strongly against the plans, and we're pleased to have a range of councillors working on the campaign, from Crawley, Mole Valley, Rusper and Charlwood Parishes, and West Sussex County Council. We're also building some good relationships with councillors and officials in Horsham District Council, and finding common ground. We've just presented new research on housing targets to Horsham planning department, and they were very supportive of our findings and encouraged us to publish them, engage national press and to lobby the Secretary of State. Watch this space!

We're aware that Horsham district and parish councillors all face re-election in May 23 and given that housebuilding is a huge issue across the whole district, we'll be using all the opportunities we can to keep development on the agenda. This will include working with other campaigns on common issues – we're already doing this with Save West Grinstead.

## Plans for thousands of homes west of Crawley will receive a 'no thank you' from communities

A community group has warned Homes England will receive a resounding 'no thank you' when it next consults the public on plans to build thousands of homes west of Ifield.

**SussexWorld**

By Karen Dunn, local democracy reporter  
Wednesday, 29th June 2022, 3:41 pm



We meet Henry Smith on a regular basis and we're very pleased that he's publicising West of Ifield via questions in parliament and other means. We're working on Jeremy Quin but understand that he's constrained by the ministerial code and while he can't lobby publicly on our behalf, we push him to do so bilaterally with the Secretary of State for Housing, for example.

We've raised our profile with some good media coverage, not only in the written press, particularly across the SussexWorld group of newspapers, but on TV, radio and social media. **We are now keen to enlist the help – possibly paid – of a media relations specialist, so, if you know anyone, please let us know.**

Please see some of our media coverage here.  
<https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/media>



Issues include the fact that they've recently been downplaying the masterplan for 10,000 houses in their public statements. We asked if the masterplan is being abandoned – No – and how much resource are they putting into working on it. They recently appeared to remove important material from their website – we asked why and for details of the public consultation process they're required to follow. We're seeking permission to do wildlife surveys on their land – currently refused, but we'll keep pushing. And we've been part of discussions about the tone and intention of the signs across their land warning walkers about trespassing. They've now suggested a meeting to discuss these and other issues. Of course, we're very aware that it will suit them to say they've consulted local campaign groups. But we will meet them.



In terms of **partnerships**, we must start by acknowledging and thanking the Ifield Society for its tireless work to protect and raise awareness about the ancient parish of Ifield. We've mentioned above the collaboration with and budgeted funds from Rusper Parish Council, and collaboration with Save West Grinstead. We're also engaged in discussion with Colgate and North Horsham Parish Councils, and conservation organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust who ran a fantastic butterfly egg hunt for us in Ifield Brook

Meadows in the spring. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England are being very supportive indeed.



**Fundraising and Finances** – we've chosen to act as an Unincorporated Organisation, rather than a charity. Our income is generated through fundraising activities, which we started in December 2021. Our financial position to date is:

Income	£7,480.24
Expenditure	£4,573.06
Cash at Bank	£2,907.18
Other available	£14,500.00 from other pledges and funds budgeted by Rusper Parish Council.

In total over the past 8 months we have raised and been 'granted' £23,500.

This is a fantastic start, but we know that other campaigns have needed in excess of £50,000 to fight to win. So we will be redoubling our efforts in the months to come. **A huge thank you to Ifield Cricket Club, The Plough, Rusper, the Ifield May Fayre committee and of course St Margaret's Church for their help in hosting events.**

**Public Engagement** feels like a real success story. We're approaching 1,500 supporters on Facebook, and growing, plus separate email lists for several hundred people less keen on social media. Our petition has attracted 4,700 signatures, and of course we're aiming to push this higher. It was fantastic to speak to so many people – both already supportive and new to the issues – at Ifield and Rusper events this year

So Thank You to our committee and everyone else who's worked hard over the past year to get the campaign up and running.

And to all our supporters for giving what you can – whether it's cash, time or lovely positive messages

**THANK YOU!**

We held a letter-writing workshop last November which was well attended and sparked a lot of useful discussion. We will be running more of these and plan to hold public meetings nearer the time of the publication of HDC's Local Plan. We're now planning how to expand awareness more widely across Crawley and Horsham. **If you are interested in becoming an ambassador to help us spread the word, please let us know.**

**Now go to page 4 for Dates for Your Diary!**



How about a SAVE WEST OF IFIELD campaign T-shirt?!



**Only £15**  
100% organic cotton.  
Ethically produced. Great quality.

Please contact [jenella.m@gmail.com](mailto:jenella.m@gmail.com)



**Please donate if you can via our website** <https://www.savewestofield.co.uk/take-action>

# Dates for your Diary

## SPONSORED WALK

SUNDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

11am The Plough, Ifield

**Walk the 10k!** A fundraising walk through the area to be covered by up to 10,000 houses- see what will be lost whilst raising money to help keep it. For more information

see <https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/sponsored-run>



**FUNDRAISING BINGO NIGHT FOR SAVE WEST OF IFIELD!**

CASH PRIZES!  
BAR OPEN!

B I N G O

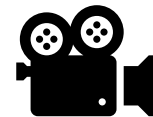
IFIELD CRICKET CLUB RUSPER RD, IFIELD  
FRIDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER.  
GAME SALES FROM 7.30PM EYES DOWN AT 8PM  
£2.00 A GAME (SHEET OF 6)  
£10.00 FOR 6 GAMES  
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREENER SUSSEX  
SAVEWESTOFIFIELD.CO.UK

## Buzzing Bingo!

FRIDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER

8pm Ifield Cricket Club

A chance to have fun, win cash prizes and help save west of Ifield Win/win/win!



## FILM AND SOCIAL EVENING

SATURDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

7pm St Margaret's Church Ifield

Come and watch Operation Mincemeat in great company, have a chat, a drink and a wonderful buffet. Joint fundraiser with the church. More details to follow.

## QUIZ NIGHT



TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER – 8pm The Plough, Rusper

Come along with a team, test those brains and win prizes.



## IFIELD SOCIETY Saturday Walks from the Plough, Ifield at 11am

Aug 20<sup>th</sup>: Ifield Mill and Millpond - Crawley Museum Society will open the Mill just for us on the day!

Aug 27<sup>th</sup>: Archaeology and the Ancient Parish of Ifield

Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>: The Friendly Dragon Trail - Ifield Brook Meadows Local Green Space [LGS]

