

SAVE WEST OF IFIELD Together Newsletter March 2024

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.

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**Housing crisis quango Homes
England is 'gravy train' dogged by
secrecy, insiders claim**

<https://inews.co.uk/news/homes-england-blowing-millions-missing-targets-housing-crisis-2958994>

email savewestofifield@gmail.com if link doesn't work

For more on Homes England's performance see our letter to Michael Gove here: <https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/documents>

The Local Plan process – what next?

Well done and thank you for responding to the recent Regulation 19 consultation on the Horsham Local Plan. And it was great to meet so many supporters at the SWOI drop-in sessions (below) and at the Rusper Parish Council meeting. We'll let you know when we hear anything about the numbers of responses and when they will be published.



So what next?

The decision about the Local Plan now rests with the Planning Inspector – their examination process will run until at least the end of the year and we'll try to have a place at the table for all the Examination Hearings in the autumn.

There is also a chance that Homes England will submit a planning application for the West of Ifield in the summer and we'll need to be ready for that. Which means unfortunately that we must keep working on all aspects of the campaign, including asking supporters for donations so that we can pay for the expert planning advice needed to challenge the detail in the application.

SWOI responses to Regulation 19

The SWOI campaign submitted 516 pages of technical responses on eleven policy areas and you can read the reports here on our website <https://www.savewestofifield.co.uk/>

Many of these reports would not have been possible without your ongoing generosity. Your donations have paid for invaluable professional advice, and we're very pleased with the results and confident that the West of Ifield proposal is not viable, and will be found not sound in planning terms.

You might be interested in some of the arguments put forward by our experts. Our planning professional concludes (Stuart Crossen, formerly a Planning Inspector <https://www.linkedin.com/in/stuart-crossen-873278291/>):

"The allocation of West of Ifield will result in a development plan which does not pass the tests of soundness at Examination and this consultation represents the last opportunity for the Council to change direction ... to avoid ongoing significant costs and delays which will result from not producing a sound Development Plan which can serve the residents of Horsham and directs the right development to the right places" and

"The fundamental issue of this plan, a thread running through all of the issues raised by SWOI is demonstrated through the lack of evidence of any co-operation between Horsham and Crawley. Each Authority has been developing its own evidence to identify its needs and thus attempt to address it within its own boundaries, without taking account of the relationship and connections between settlements on the edge of Horsham and Crawley."

Our **golf** expert (chartered surveyor Mark Smith <http://www.smithleisure.com/>) concluded:

"It is my strong view that Ifield Golf Club is clearly needed in respect of all four of the Sport England's overarching measures to assess whether an existing sporting facility is 'clearly ... surplus to requirements'. They are: 'quantity', 'quality', 'accessibility' and 'availability'. It will not be possible for Homes England to demonstrate that Ifield Golf Club is 'clearly ... surplus to requirements'. Effectively under NPPF test 99(b), Homes England must replace Ifield by building another new 18-hole course with clubhouse and associated facilities to an equivalent or better standard nearby."

Which was supplemented with: "... it seems nothing short of ludicrous to suggest that anything yet publicised as part of the Homes England proposals [football pitches and tennis courts] will "...clearly outweigh the loss..." and certainly not to the benefit of the older generation who currently enjoy the irreplaceable benefits of playing regular golf."

Our experts were critical of the missing documents and lack of detail in the Evidence base. On **transport**: TTHC (<http://www.tthc.co.uk/>) noted: "In order to ensure that a transport model is suitable for future forecasting, it will first be subject to a process of validation.... set out in a Local Model Validation Report (LMVR). However, no report within the evidence base is provided in the form of an LMVR." And "There clearly remain many outstanding issues in order to conclude on the transport impacts of the development." • "... it would be inappropriate to allocate this site for development prior to ... know[ing] now what transport infrastructure is required to support the development as it currently appears inappropriate that a development of the scale of WO1 (3,000/3,250 homes) would be accessed solely from local roads which is not appropriate". • Are the car trip reduction rates identified in the Transport Assessment realistic? They show a very high car trip reduction ... based on all of the sustainable transport measures identified being utilised. There are clearly errors, omissions and inaccurate assumptions in the attractiveness of these alternatives. • Baseline data must include the combined effects of all new development in the area ... and the impact on the villages of Rusper and Charlwood."

On **biodiversity**, HDC failed to provide any ecological data in the Evidence Base to support the Plan, despite Sussex Wildlife Trust's previous comments that 'the plan should not be taken forward as the significant effects on biodiversity remain unquantified and poorly understood'. And 'SWT is very concerned about the impacts on Ifield Meadows LWS as presumably it will be surrounded by development. No comment has been made as to how this will impact on its functionality within the District's wider ecological network.' And on **landscape** (<https://www.neilwilliamsonassociates.com/>) "There is a serious deficit in the level of environmental information available and a lack of clarity over the proposed development including a seriously inadequate masterplan. The extent of these deficiencies is particularly apparent in the context of the stated aspirations to deliver a 'garden town' and a 'landscape-led' development. The West of Ifield allocation site is being proposed without any Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) having been made publicly available."



We're very grateful to All About Horsham (AAH) magazine for featuring the West of Ifield in their February edition – see pages 49-55 here:



Teresa Holland-Smith, Nancy Frost and Cathy Gorman of Save West of Ifield (SWI) (AAH) (see Wright)

<https://www.aahorsham.co.uk/content/aahfeb24>

Could YOU do some fundraising?

The fight continues over the rest of the year and so does our need for a fighting fund.

Getting the professional advice we need to oppose a Planning Application and prepare for the Local Plan Inspector's hearings, as well as paying for experts (including potential Legal Advisors) to attend will be expensive.

We have plans underway to try to raise the funds we need, but we are wondering if you would help too.

You've been extremely generous already, and many of you have kindly donated over the last few months, so instead of asking you to put your hands in your pocket again (though do feel free!) we're asking people if they would be able to raise cash for us. Maybe you and yours could do a sponsored silence, hold a coffee morning, or a bake sale, garage sale, etc. If enough of us do something it could make a real difference.

Please do get in touch to let us know what you think and if this is something you could help with.

As ever, donations can be paid into our bank account, via our Go Fund Me account, or by cheque.

(Business) Account: Save West of Ifield Number: 55426514
Sort Code: 53-50-39

Cheque (payable to Save West of Ifield) to: Treasurer –
Save West of Ifield 46, Green Lane Northgate, Crawley,
RH10 8JP

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-save-west-of-ifield>



Dates for your diary.

3rd April – 8pm. Quiz night at The Plough, Rusper. Call 01293 871215 to book table – and dinner beforehand.

18th April – 8pm. Quiz night at Ifield Cricket Club. Doors open 7.30pm – no need to book. Bar open!

6th May – come and see us at both the **Rusper Village day** and the **Ifield May Fayre**.

11th May – 11am. Walk – The 3,000 house site end to end. Walk from one end of the proposed 3,000 house site to the other, guided by Save West of Ifield, to get an understanding of what's proposed and where and what will be lost. Start and end at The Plough, Ifield.