

THE RAGSTONE

Otham Parish Council's Newsletter

April 2019



The tools that shaped our village

Planning Application 19/501600/OUT for up to 440 residential dwellings on Land West of Church Road, Otham ME15 8SB

Otham Parish Council is objecting to the above application, submitted on behalf of Bellway Homes, regarding the access and infrastructure needed to build 440 houses on the field next to our church.

We hope that you, and members of your household, will also feel the need to comment. This may only need to be a couple of sentences, but your opinion must be based on valid planning grounds i.e. not loss of your house value or view etc. as these are not planning matters.

Your response must reach Maidstone Borough Council by no later than 6 May

We would like to assist you by listing some of the grounds that your parish council may be using below. Feel free to select the subjects that matter most to you. **Please submit any comments that you may wish to make in your own words.**

Traffic and transport

- The impact on the local road network within Otham and Downswood has not been assessed.
- Church Road was never built to take heavy traffic. It is very narrow road - 3.2m at the narrowest point, increasing to 3.8m at the widest point – with no footpaths or street lighting.
- The roads surrounding the site are already struggling to cope with the existing traffic. Additional traffic will lead to even greater congestion in the village and at the main junctions of Deringwood Drive/Willington Street and Spot Lane/Ashford Road.
- No traffic assessment has been carried out for Gore Court Road, White Horse Lane, Deringwood Drive or Spot Lane. A localised study needs to be carried out to enable an informed judgement to be made.
- An additional 200 cars per peak hour will have a significant effect on the roads.
- Highway safety: Vehicle users and pedestrians.



Please note, **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL PROVIDE PARKING FOR VISITORS TO THE CHURCH**, so this cannot be used as a reason for objecting to the proposal.



OPC Facebook page where you can share views, discuss community issues and connect with friends in the village as well as the Parish Council. You can also post images. <http://www.Facebook.com/othamcommunity>



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Landscape and Visual Impact

- The development will be harmful to the setting of the Grade I Listed Church (this will appear to be in an urban setting when viewed from the east).
- Views from the very well-used public footpath, from the east, will be totally changed.
- The already dangerous entrances to the public footpaths will be even less accessible with an additional 4 cars per minute using the site at peak times.
- The application shows that a total of 120m of the hedgerow along Church Road will be removed to accommodate the access roads, so only 80m of hedgerow will remain.

Biodiversity

- Development in this area will cause significant harm and lasting environmental impact on the surroundings. What wildlife have you seen in the site that should be protected?

Cultural Heritage

- Archaeological works need to be carried out at the site in advance of development to clarify the archaeological potential. Have you found any evidence of Roman occupation in or near the site?

The easiest way to comment on the application is via the public access portal: [Go to www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk) and select 'Planning and Building.' Then select 'Search and Comment on Planning Applications' then 'Search For A Planning Application' and finally enter reference 19/501600.

[A link to the website can be found on our new Parish website www.othampc.org.uk](http://www.othampc.org.uk)

You can also comment by:

Email: planningcomments@midkent.gov.uk

Post: Mid Kent Planning Support, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone. ME15 6JQ

We hope that you found the above helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Otham Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, 29 April at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall. This is your chance to find out what has been happening in the village during the past year. We hope that you will take the opportunity to attend and look forward to seeing you there!

The parish council meetings for the remainder of 2019 will be held at 7.45p pm in the Village Hall on the following dates:

13 May (this meeting will follow the Annual General Meeting at 7.30 pm). 8 July, 9 September, 11 November.

Your Parish Council currently has vacancies. Please contact the Clerk or Chair for more information.

Thank you to Harry Knottley for all his help during his time on the PC.