

## **AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT 2013/14**

There was an increase of 24 applications this year amounting to 226 again with most of these being for minor alterations and the usual pruning or felling of our natural tree cover.

There have been 4 approvals by TMBC where we objected, 5 TMBC refusals where we had not objected and 2 refusals by TMBC where we had also objected. Some applications appear to have disappeared from the focus such as the proposal for a natural burial site along Common Road at Blue Bell Hill for example.

Unauthorised changes continued at the Upper Bell site and it is reassuring to learn that enforcement and restorative action has been undertaken here, including the proposed change of use from pub car park to B8 storage yard which receive strong opposition from us.

We also objected to land East of Hermitage lane being a mixed development of up to 500 dwellings with land for an educational facility and community centre. This we felt was an overdevelopment of the site with the road layout being unable to cope with this level of development.

At Kits Coty Estate there was a request to change the land use for the siting of 4 temporary structures including tents and shepherds huts and a shower block for tourist purposes. The applicants spoke at the relevant meeting to the Committee but did not convince the Blue Bell Hill Councillors who strongly objected to this development but the Planning Committee agreed the development with rights reserved to prevent any further expansion to include caravan, tents or hut developments. A further application for a wooden shed (retrospective) and a mobile lodge and touring caravan were strongly objected to as over development of a green field site in an area of outstanding natural beauty.

To the north of Eccles there has been some early submissions relating to the former Peters Pit & Peters Works site at nearby Wouldham to consider.

In Aylesford the former Somerfield Distribution Centre, Station Road, Aylesford plans for 95 dwellings and the renewal of planning permission came before us and we still attached details of our concerns about possible flood problems.

Once again we are still distressed at the large number of tree related applications, especially where the natural tree cover is under threat, after all the trees were mostly there long before the houses were built perhaps too close to the buildings.

Generally the standard of planning applications is good but there are still some very poor ones too with lack of proper site maps and very amateur drawings or photographs. We hope that an upward trend will continue throughout the year.

I have to give my thanks to Neil and Janet in the office for getting all the information ready for the planning meetings and to those councillors who regularly attend to express their views on applications of particular relevance to their own wards and more especially to Cllr Elvy who, as Vice Chairman, has ably taken meetings on a number of occasions where I have been absent due to my hospital visits and caring days in Surrey. Thank you.

Cllr Malcolm Wright

Planning Committee Chairman

May 2014