

A number of representations have been made to the Inspector seeking to include Pluckley as a Tier 3 village and/or propose residential development on sites in Pluckley.

These representations have been made by, or on behalf of, landowners seeking commercial advantage. In making their case, certain misleading or inaccurate statements have been made about the views held by the village, as represented by the Parish Council; and about the process by which those views were formulated.

For the avoidance of any doubt, the majority of the residents of Pluckley, supported by the Parish Council, are in accord with Ashford BC that Pluckley should not be a Tier 3 village.

The submissions by Parker Dann and by Chubby Carnegie are particularly misleading.

Parker Dann claim that, both at a Community Workshop organised by Ashford BC in January 2009 and a further public exhibition organised by themselves in June 2009, the village supported residential development on their client's site at the old brickworks.

At the Community Workshop attendees were told that the purpose of the Workshop was to select sites from the village. Only one of the three tables supported the brickworks site, as the least bad option, to receive a small number of houses. Ashford BC concurred with the majority views of the Workshop and concluded that none of the sites put forward in Pluckley were suitable for allocation for residential development.

At a subsequent exhibition arranged by Parker Dann in June 2009, 75 residents attended. They were told by Parker Dann that "the 'do nothing' scenario is not a realistic option" so which would they prefer, housing or commercial use? Half the attendees refused to reply, many saying that this was a thinly veiled attempt to gather support. Of the 31 who did reply, 16 preferred housing and 5 preferred commercial development. On the basis of 16 out of 75, Parker Dann claim that housing is the preferred option and that it is surprising the Council (Ashford BC) has chosen to ignore these views. We submit that the foregoing demonstrates Ashford BC's wisdom in disregarding these minority, and indeed to some extent cajoled, views.

Chubby Carnegie's submission casts doubt on the process by which Pluckley Parish Council formed its views, and then offers a confused view as to Pluckley PC's position.

Pluckley PC's position supports the findings of the Input to the Parish Plan. This took the form of a questionnaire to all households in Spring 2008 followed by a Workshop in September 2008. 569 residents representing 62% of households completed questionnaires. 80 residents, selected by a working group to provide a fair mix by residential location and type, age and sex, attended the Workshop. There was a strong accord between the views expressed in the questionnaire and at the Workshop. The Parish Plan was subsequently drawn up reflecting these views and was formally adopted by the Parish Council in November 2009. At all times, the process was transparent and democratic. The process followed was as suggested in the Parish and

Community Planning Toolkit, supplied by Action with Communities in Rural Kent, who were consulted throughout.

The first two objectives listed in the Action Plan of the Parish Plan are 1. Continue to seek Local Needs units; and 2. Continue to support small-scale, dispersed development only. It is quite wrong to suggest that “the Parish council gives the highest priority to resisting any form of domestic...development”. Indeed the Parish Council is currently endeavouring, with Ashford BC’s help, to secure a site for Local Needs housing. We are also supporting an inter-village initiative to develop managed housing for elderly residents.

Ms. Carnegie’s submission goes on to say that the Parish Council has adopted the Parish Plan then quotes a wish list as if that were part of the Parish Plan. This is muddled. The wish list quoted dates from 2004 and was put together without the village being consulted. In 2008, the Input to the Parish Plan was made by residents and it is this that forms the content of the Parish Plan, not the old wish list which is no longer supported by the Parish Council.

It is regrettable that, in an attempt to have Pluckley re-instated as a Tier 3 village thereby affording the opportunity for profiting from development, this landowner had chosen to make wild assertions about the Parish Council and the process by which it came to adopt the Parish Plan. We felt obliged to set the record straight.

Martin Newman

Chairman, Pluckley Parish Council