

PARISH COUNCIL COMMENT SUBMITTED ONLINE ON PLANNING INSPECTORATE WEBSITE 21 APRIL 2026:

Appeal 6005903: Land near Bishops Lane, Robertsbridge TN32 6BX

Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council wishes to submit the following written representation against this appeal:

We and the overwhelming majority of residents in our community remain fundamentally opposed to development of this site; our reasons are laid out clearly in our comments on this planning application and the large number of submissions made by local residents on the Rother District Council (RDC) planning website.

We have recently reviewed development sites in our rural village in the High Weald as part of the Rother Draft Local Plan 2025-2042 (RDLP) consultation which ended on 23rd March 2026. This site was NOT included in Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (SRNDP), our local neighbourhood plan, and Rother District Council has NOT included it in the RDLP. Indeed, as recently as September 2025, RDC accepted our objections to the latest development proposals for the site at their Planning Committee meeting and rejected the application.

Furthermore, in our recent submission on the RDLP, as well as stating that we were pleased that this particular site was not proposed by RDC for development, we voiced our more general concerns on the proposed increase in housing numbers from 180 in SRNDP to 344 in RDLP in our Parish, and the capability of local infrastructure to support this level of development proposed for our village. Even without the Bishops Lane site RDC is proposing 344 new homes for our rural Parish within the High Weald National Landscape. WITH THE ADDITION OF DEVELOPMENT OF 41 HOMES ON THIS SITE OFF BISHOPS LANE THE TOTAL WOULD RISE TO 385 NEW HOMES, AN INCREASE OF AROUND 30% AS WE CURRENTLY HAVE ONLY AROUND 1200 HOMES IN THE WHOLE PARISH. We would point out that all the proposed sites in SRNDP and RDLP are in close proximity to the centre of this historic village.

The Parish Council is pleased that the Inspector has confirmed that they will visit the site as part of their consideration of the appeal. We believe an Inspector can only understand the historic significance of Bishops Lane within the High Weald National Landscape and potential impact of development on this site for view lines in Robertsbridge village by visiting the site. It would also be useful for the Inspector to visit Grove Farm site, the lower part of which is already in SRNDP (32 homes) and which RDC now proposes should be extended to include an additional 70 homes above the existing Grove Farm site. This would destroy the rural nature of the southern end of the village. By visiting both Bishops Lane and Grove Farm sites the Inspector would see that if development of both these green spaces go ahead there would be a huge cumulative adverse impact on the rural nature of our village.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this appeal.