



BIRCHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE – 03 February 2021

Birchington Traders Back Council Initiative

This week, Birchington traders gave their backing to the Parish Council initiative '*Your Village, Your Voice, Your Say*' initiative, which aims to raise awareness of the outline planning application to build 1,650 new homes on 185 acres of agricultural land south west of the village.

Many villagers had complained that the application, which runs to more than 60 documents and 1,000's of pages, was hard to understand due to the volume of documents, the technical assessments and sometimes complex cross references between documents.

Some villagers were concerned that because of the strict lockdown rules, information was only available on the Thanet Council website which they found intimidating. Others without internet access felt excluded.

The Parish Council decided that the planned development is such an important issue for the village that steps should be taken to better inform as many locals as possible about the plans through social media, social networks and more traditional print methods.

As part of the '*Your Village, Your Voice, Your Say*' initiative the Parish Council has produced a short leaflet which sets out some key points from the planning application in easy to read language. The leaflet also explains how comments can be submitted during the consultation period. An eye-catching display dispenser has been designed so that the leaflet is easy to see and pick up.

Sixteen businesses in Birchington are supporting the initiative by having the leaflets and dispensers on display in their store.

Carol Adams, who has run Priceless Discount in Birchington for 30 years, says 'Something was needed to make these plans easier to understand; people are frustrated that they cannot comment properly because they don't know what it all means. We hope that by supporting this initiative we can help the Council to better inform people in the village.'

Neville Hudson, Chairman of the Parish Council said 'We hope that by putting more information out to villagers in terms they can understand and by means that are comfortable for them, they will then be more engaged with the consultation process. This planning application proposes changes that are without precedent in Birchington, it is important that we do the right things for now and for future generations.

The Parish Council is grateful to all those businesses that are able to help us distribute the leaflets, and to those who have expressed support but for various reasons have been unable to participate.'

The '*Your Village, Your Voice, Your Say*' leaflet is part of the Parish Council's public information programme which is also being delivered across social media and through other established and informal social networks in the village. The parish magazine, which includes an extensive article on the plans, is being delivered to every home in the village from Monday this week. The aim is to ensure that as far as possible local people know about the planning application, what it includes and how it might be implemented. Then, people will be able to make up their own minds about whether or not they support all, some or none of what is being proposed and how to let their opinions be known.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Leaflets can be picked up, free of charge, from the following shops in Birchington:

Best One Store, Minnis Bay	Priceless
Both Birchington Co Op's	Macy News
Monty's Fruit & Veg	The Village Florist
Mandy's Deli	The Bottle Shop
Poomastore, Station Road	Harbour Bakery
Naga Mini Mart, Station Road	Courts Pharmacy (Pending approval)
Brills	Gulf Filling Station, Brooksend

ENCLOSED:

Leaflet

Collage of pictures from all participating stores (pdf and jpeg formats)

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