

The date for the appeal on Hospital Field has now been fixed for 9th January 2018 at the Civic Centre, Ashford. It has been allocated 8 days and starts at 10.00 on 9th. Brabourne Parish Council will be represented by a barrister who will be working alongside Ashford Borough Council's barrister. We have also engaged a Traffic Expert and have five residents who will be speaking on topics relevant to the appeal site, selected by our barrister. The Council for Protection of Rural England (CPRE) will also be appearing and objecting to the proposal. More information will be forthcoming nearer the time.

With regard to the revised Local Plan to 2030, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) has now put this out for a second public consultation following amendments to the original draft and legal advice over the so called 5-year land supply. There is a need for more housing in the country, particularly in the south-east and we are all going to see more development. The government requires every borough and district council to have an ongoing 5-year supply of land available, at any point in time, for residential development. As a result, ABC has earmarked sites in the majority of parishes for development. However, Brabourne has none but Smeeth has two - Church Road and Caldecott.

ABC envisages that all the sites allocated in the plan (i.e. including Church Road and Caldecott) will be developed in 3 to 5 years from when the plan is adopted. Other sites will need to follow, in all parishes, to keep the 5-year land supply rolling and up to date.

In addition to the allocated sites, smaller sites of up to 10 units and individual infill sites will also be permitted within the confines of the villages in the borough, again to keep the development numbers up to the government's requirements. All villages are therefore going to see planning applications for this scale of development, which will most likely be permitted. An application has already been submitted in Plain Road, Smeeth for 7 houses and it is likely there will be an application for the paddock behind the Plough Inn very shortly.

However, Brabourne and Smeeth (and others) have produced the Landscape Protection Policy document to help developers understand the needs and concerns of the villages. This has been broadly incorporated in the revised Local Plan but we need to ensure it is adhered to.

Brabourne and Smeeth Parish Councils will do their utmost to protect the villages but some small-scale development will be inevitable. However, we will not oppose such development where we think it is not unreasonable and not harmful to the character and setting of our village.

Mike Hickmott, Chairman, Brabourne Parish Council.

David Herrick, Chairman, Smeeth Parish Council.