

Minutes.

Date: 25.06.2025

Attendees: John Longhorn (JL), Vistry Group
David Scane (DSc), SEC Newgate
Cllr Dawn Smith (DSm), Ford Parish Council
Cllr Sam Langmead (SL), Ford Parish Council
Cllr Danny Armstrong (DA), Ford Parish Council
Maureen Chaffe (MC), Ford Community Land Trust
David Fry (DF), Ford Community Land Trust
Julie Curteis (JC), Ford Community Land Trust
Dave Hodges (DH), Ford Community Land Trust
Elaine Cordingley (EC), Ford to Hunston Canal Society
Richard Smallbone (RS), Arun Sports Arena
Cllr Tim Hibbert (TH), Clymping Parish Council
Cllr Colin Humphries (CH), Clymping Parish Council

Apologies: Cllr Amanda Worne, ADC
Sophie Richardson, SEC Newgate
Cllr Jacky Pendelton, WSCC

| | Action |
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| 1. | DSc to share the presentation on the drainage issues, including the information provided by West Sussex and ADC's responses, to the CLG. |
| 2. | Follow up with Clymping parish council on the drawings and plans for the improvements to Horsemere Green Lane and the pedestrian crossing points. |
| 3. | JL to arrange a meeting with the directors at ADC (Philippa Dart and Carl Roberts) to discuss the drainage issues and try to find a resolution. |
| 4. | DSc to send out a community newsletter/timeline that can be put on a noticeboard could be sent out to inform the community of what the current status is. |
| 5. | Next CLG meeting to be in September |



| Comment | Actions |
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Meeting Introductions and Previous Actions

- DSc introduced the meeting and reviewed actions from March, including a meeting with Arun's drainage officer and letters to ADC and the Deputy Prime Minister. There was an action to continue a regular newsletter, however this has been delayed due to a lack of construction updates to include in one.

Planning Update

DS:

- DS explained where Vistry are in the planning process in terms of outstanding issues flagged by Arun. Delays are largely down to drainage disagreements. To recap there are three planning applications: RM4 (south), RM1 (north), and the infrastructure application in the middle.
- The agreement before the submission of the RMs was that West Sussex County Council (WSCC) were to be responsible for drainage due to capacity issues at Arun District Council (ADC). Since March ADC have become unsatisfied by WSCC's approach, leading to ongoing issues.
- ADC's concerns include the need for more winter monitoring and shallow depth testing, despite WSCC's satisfaction with the current scope. Another round of winter monitoring would cause longer delays to approving application.
- WSCC is content with the water catchment modelling and discharge rates, but ADC remains concerned about natural drainage patterns and emergency overflow design - both elements of the drainage proposals shaped by advice from WSCC.
- The volume and complexity of the technical information has likely contributed to the delays in ADC being able to review the information. There is risk of refusal, particularly for the northern application, which could impact the entire project due to the interlinked planning applications. Drainage questions from ADC have also delayed the approval of the construction management plan (CMP).
- ADC has suggested submitting a new application, but Vistry believes a solution is achievable without restarting the process. A planning committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for mid-September (13th or 17th).

JL:



- JL described a meeting with Carl Roberts, who admitted that delays were being caused by the transition of drainage responsibility from the Lead local flood authority (LLFA) to ADC.
- Vistry had been advised previously not to approach ADC for pre application drainage advice due to their limited capacity. Instead, they were directed to WSCC, who reviewed and approved the drainage strategy. However, after WSCC's approval, ADC's drainage team unexpectedly re-engaged and raised objections, including to the overall strategy. JL suggested paying for their own work to be reviewed by ADC's consultants, but ADC's team was hesitant due to past experiences.
- JL explained that although there is a technical requirement to explore infiltration-based drainage first, Vistry had taken a "belt and braces" approach. This meant designing a robust system using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that would function even if infiltration was possible in some areas. The aim was to avoid any risk of failure, especially given the site's history of flooding.
- Vistry attempted to clarify that the strategy was safe and would be subject to detailed planning conditions. Since the last CLG meeting Vistry have submitted many more supporting documents for ADC to consider. This has likely contributed to the drainage officers' large workload that had led to them referring to WSCC originally.
- To address this, Vistry proposed compiling a comprehensive response to all of ADC's comments in a single, coherent document. They acknowledged that ADC's team was overwhelmed which further slowed the process.
- Vistry also offered to fund an independent review of their drainage work to provide ADC with additional assurance. However, ADC declined, citing past experiences where third-party reviews did not yield the outcomes they wanted.
- JL expressed concern that ADC is likely to recommend refusal of the northern application on drainage grounds. Since the infrastructure and southern applications are linked, this could jeopardize the entire project. ADC suggested submitting a separate application for the southern infrastructure to allow partial progress, but Vistry rejected this, viewing it as a way for ADC to avoid resolving the core issues as well as it slowing down the planning process.
- JL discussed the impact of ongoing drainage issues on construction timelines and community infrastructure.
- The northern part of the site is particularly affected, with concerns about cash flow and the timing of construction.
- The southern part of the site is also linked to the northern part, and any delays could impact the overall project.

MC:



- Noted the last thing the community want is for the site to be split into different parcels as in other places this has meant more piecemeal development without the delivery of needed infrastructure.

JL:

- The urban design team are still working on comments and tweaking the proposals in the meantime. These changes are expected to be submitted this week for Jess Riches to reconsult on.
- There has also been a consistent objection from environmental health which is on the basis of the original submission and not subsequent amendments. They objected on the basis of a 3m noise fence. Vistry have proposed a 4m noise fence that they believe will be acceptable with good landscaping and time. A discussion with the environmental health team is still in the works. Vistry is trying to narrow it down to just one objection – drainage.
- The Construction Management Plan (CMP) was submitted but it was refused. This was because the drainage solution for the roundabout formed part of the drainage solution for the RM that it sat in, pre-empting that decision. It has been resubmitted with a temporary drainage submission for the roundabout. A meeting about drainage is expected tomorrow. But if a solution on drainage is not agreed soon they may need to take the CMP to appeal.

MC:

- Noted that the application is allocated in the approved Local Plan and that it aligns with the Government's ambitions.

JL:

- JL also noted the issue they encountered with the drainage officers not reporting to Carl Roberts. They report to Philipa Dart who Vistry are arranging a meeting with soon.

MC:

- Noted difficulties of working with ADC in August due to people being away.

DSm:

- Are there similar drainage issues on the site near the A259?

CH:

- Forman Homes have been in discussions with ADC about drainage too.

SL:

- Asked if WSCC do their drainage in house or if they outsource it.

DSC:

- An action to update the CLG on when a decision is being made on approving/refusing/taking to committee the RMs. A discussion of next steps will be needed.



Footpaths

DA:

- What is the update on the footpaths?

JL:

- The WSCC PROW officers are putting pressure on ADC to do something with the temporary PROWs but Vistry cannot implement the changes until the CMP is approved.
- He noted that the CMP is a large submission in itself and that they can't pick and choose taking forward parts of it. Health and safety is a key consideration which means that it isn't just a case of moving a fence further from the road/hedgerows to create a footpath. The CMP also contains important detailing on dust suppression, mud on the road, diversions, fencing and this all needs approving.
- A meeting is being held tomorrow about the CMP.

DSm:

- Asked if the archaeology work is finished and if there is a report.

JL:

- JL confirmed that it has now finished and that he will find out what the update is on a report.

Community updates

MC:

- MC sent a letter to Secretary of State Angela Rayner with information about how Ford Airfield was a site supported by the community that was experiencing delays. A reply from her office stated that they could not comment on individual cases but detailed the work that the Government was doing to improve the planning system, such as funding for training new planners.
- MC forwarded the letter to Alison Griffiths MP who said that a response would have to wait until a reply was received from MHCLG. Once a reply had been received they said that Griffiths was limited on what she could now do with it.
- MC would now like to get her letter into the trade press to add some pressure to ADC.

DSc:

- DSc noted that Vistry was getting involved in further discussions at a national level (at a property conference panel for example) about getting prisoners into construction work.



JL:

- Noted that the quicker the CMP and RMs can get approval the sooner Vistry can follow through on providing jobs for Ford Prisoners. A job fair was held in November but there have been limited jobs available so far as the ground works have not been able to start.

DSm:

- Noted her concern about the timings of the hedgerows being trimmed during bird nesting season. She was also frustrated about the lack of prior communication.

DSc:

- Acknowledged that there was a lack of communication about the work happening on site to clear the hedgerow.

CH:

- Clymping has issues with rat running and the lack of a crossing along Horsemere Green Lane. Can Vistry supply Clymping PC with all the plans about what has been agreed with WSCC and dates of delivery. Clymping PC have some community infrastructure funding which means that works could theoretically be delivered quicker than Vistry's developer contribution timelines?

DSc:

- Confirmed that a follow-up meeting can be arranged.

DSm:

- Asked if another community newsletter/timeline that can be put on a noticeboard could be sent out to inform the community of what the current status is.

Next CLG Date

DSc

- Another CLG to be arranged in September.