

Ringmer Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Voting Information for
Referendum on
12 November 2015**



Lewes District Council

Introduction

A referendum will be held in Ringmer Parish on Thursday, 12 November 2015 asking eligible voters whether the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan should be used by Lewes District Council to decide planning applications:

We are required to produce “a statement that sets out general information as to town and country planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum”. This document has been produced to meet this requirement.

This document provides:

- Information about the planning system
- Information about the referendum
- Information stating where more details relating to the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan can be found.

Information about the planning system

As is made clear in legislation, most development requires consent, known as planning permission, to go ahead. This is usually done by submitting a planning application to a local planning authority, which decides whether to approve or refuse a planning application. Local planning authorities use planning policies, whether they are produced at a national, local or neighbourhood level, to make such decisions.

In Ringmer Parish, Lewes District Council is the local planning authority that decides planning applications. A small part of the parish is located within the National Park where the South Downs National Park Authority is the local planning authority.

National Policy

National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, commonly referred to as the NPPF, as well as other related documents. The NPPF sets out policy on a range of different topic areas to aid in the determination of planning applications and ensure that development contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

The NPPF sets out policy to local planning authorities regarding the production of Local Plans and makes clear that local policies should be consistent with the NPPF. It also contains relevant policy and advice to local communities that undertake neighbourhood planning.

Local Policy

Local planning authorities produce Local Plans to introduce policies to guide development within their area. The current Local Plan is the Lewes District Local Plan, adopted in 2003. The policies within the Lewes District Local Plan that are up to date ('saved') and consistent with the NPPF are used to determine planning applications.

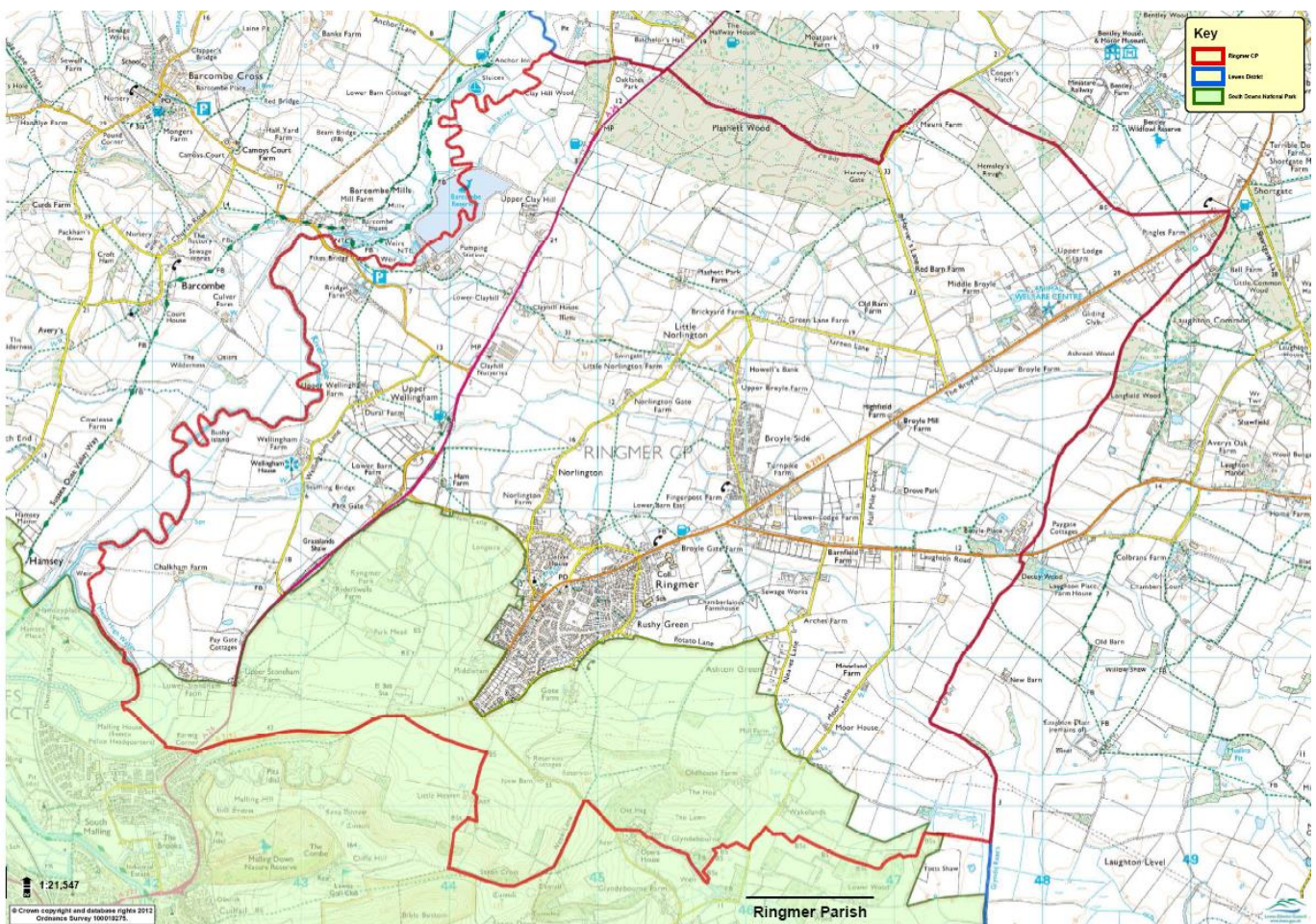
A replacement Local Plan will be produced in two parts. The first part, the Core Strategy, is currently being examined by a Government-appointed

Inspector. More information on the progress of the Core Strategy examination can be found at the link below:

<http://www.lewes.gov.uk/planning/22277.asp>

Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act and subsequent Neighbourhood Planning Regulations allow communities to guide and shape development in their locality by undertaking neighbourhood planning. The most common neighbourhood planning tool is the neighbourhood development plan, usually known as a neighbourhood plan. A neighbourhood plan contains specific policies relating to land use and development within a particular area, usually a parish, which has been designated as a neighbourhood area. Ringmer Parish has been designated as a neighbourhood area. This is shown in the map below.



A neighbourhood plan follows a statutory process that ensures that members of the local community, as well as relevant organisations, have the opportunity to influence the development of the plan. The plan is then subject to an Examination whereby an Independent Examiner reviews the neighbourhood plan and associated material against statutory requirements known as basic conditions and then writes a report (which may include modifications) recommending whether it should proceed to a referendum.

The local planning authority then decides whether to accept the Examiner's recommendations and whether to put the neighbourhood plan to a referendum.

Ringmer Parish Council has prepared the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan. It has been through the relevant statutory processes and a draft plan was subject to an Examination by an Independent Examiner and, with modifications, has been recommended to proceed to referendum.

Information about the referendum

The referendum will be conducted based on procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections. The referendum asks eligible voters the following question:

'Do you want Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority to use the neighbourhood plan for Ringmer Parish to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'

Voters will be asked to mark a cross (X) in either the 'Yes' or 'No' box on a ballot paper to indicate their preference. Should more than half of those voting at the referendum vote in favour of the neighbourhood plan, then Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority should adopt the neighbourhood plan at the earliest opportunity and use it to determine planning applications.

Voter Eligibility

Ringmer Parish is both the neighbourhood area and the referendum area and has been mapped on page 2 of this document. You can vote in the referendum if you live in Ringmer Parish and:

- you are registered to vote in local council elections; and
- you are 18 years of age or over on Thursday, 12 November 2015.

You have to be registered to vote by Tuesday, 27 October 2015 to vote in the referendum. You can check if you are registered to vote by calling our Helpline on 01273 484117.

Ways of Voting

There are three ways of voting. This can be done:

In person on 12 November 2015:

- At your local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do.
- In Ringmer, the polling station is Caburn Hall, Ringmer Football Club, Anchor Field, Ringmer, BN8 5QW.
- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this referendum.
- The polling station is open from 7am to 10pm.
- If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact our Helpline on 01273 484117 or email us on electoral@lewes.gov.uk.

By post:

- If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this.
- To vote by post, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm Wednesday, 28 October 2015 to Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB.
- Postal votes can be sent overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote by Thursday, 12 November 2015.
- You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement up to 5pm on Thursday, 12 November 2015 by contacting our Helpline on 01273 484117.

By proxy:

- If you have a proxy vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this.
- If you can't get to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post, you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody that you trust to vote on your behalf.
- To vote by proxy, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm Wednesday, 4 November 2015 at Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB.
- When you apply for a proxy vote, you must say why you cannot vote in person.
- Anyone can be your proxy as long as they are eligible to vote and are willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.
- Postal and proxy vote application forms are available from our Helpline on 01273 484117 or by emailing electoral@lewes.gov.uk.

Voter Registration

If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote. You can check if you are registered by calling our Helpline on 01273 484117.

If you are not registered to vote, you will need to complete a voter registration form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by Tuesday, 27 October 2015 at Lewes District Council, Southover House, Southover Road Lewes, BN7 1AB.

Registration forms are available from our Helpline on 01273 484117 or by emailing electoral@lewes.gov.uk. You can also register to vote at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Additional Information

The relevant regulations state that we must make available the following specified documents:

- The referendum version of the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan
- The independent examiner's report on the draft Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan
- A summary of the representations submitted to the independent examiner
- A statement setting out that the District Council believes that the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions (included within the document known as the Decision Statement)
- A statement setting out general information as to town and country planning (including neighbourhood planning) and the referendum (included within the 'Ringmer Neighbourhood Development Plan: Voting Information for Referendum on 12 November 2015' Document)

These documents have been made available online at <http://www.lewes.gov.uk/planning/22190.asp>. This webpage also contains additional information about the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan as well as links to related documents.

Copies of the documents can also be viewed at the District Council's offices at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1AB. The offices are open between 9am and 5pm during weekdays. They can also be viewed at the South Downs National Park Authority's offices at the South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH. The offices are open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am and 4.30pm Friday.