

## Chair's Report

To be presented at the PALLS Annual General Meeting, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019, WI Hall, Pennington

The Pennington and Lymington Lanes Society was created out of a desire to recognise the special character and rural environment of the lanes. The decision by New Forest District Council (NFDC) in June 2018 to allocate land between Lower Pennington Lane and Ridgeway Lane for housing development, now known as strategic site 6 in the NFDC Local Plan (land east of Lower Pennington lane), was the catalyst which resulted in the formation of the society.

PALLS was formally constituted on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018 with a membership of 27. The aims of PALLS are to protect and enhance the tranquility, rural environment and special character of the Lanes and the environs by:

- resisting inappropriate development;
- protecting the green character of this area from urbanisation so it can continue to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike; and
- maintaining the tranquility and environmental quality of this sensitive area including land within the Green Belt and within and adjacent to the New Forest National Park.

Within two months our membership had grown to over 700 members, a significant proportion of whom live north of the A337 and in the surrounding villages. The strength and depth of feeling against the development and desire to protect and enhance the lanes for future generations surprised even us. PALLS is now a key voice in the fight against SS6 and the wider campaign to enhance and protect the environment we all value.

### TIMELINE REGARDING PALLS AND LOCAL PLAN.

6<sup>th</sup> June 2018 NFDC considered a report at both its Policy and Environment Committee and Full council regarding sites to be included within its Local Plan which covers the whole of the New Forest area. Very few people were aware of the meeting and NFDC did not notify anyone in the area of its proposal. Notwithstanding that site SS6 had never been consulted upon as a strategic site NFDC did not allow any public speaking and the plan was approved without debate.

29<sup>TH</sup> June NFDC put their local plan on deposit and any representations needed to be in by 5 August.

5<sup>th</sup> July 2018 PALLS was formally created with **22** people attending the initial meeting.

PALLS leafleted the local area – leaflets were printed and distributed to raise awareness of the proposal – Very few people had any idea of what was proposed.

16<sup>th</sup> July – PALLS posts on its website information relating how to make your representations as it had to be in a specific format.

23 July 2018 PALLS has **210** members

24 July PALLS organised a walk to object to the inclusion of site SS6 in the Local plan – over 80 people attended the walk – front page in the Lymington Times.

31<sup>st</sup> July PALLS membership exceeds **500** and a group of 40 members attend the Lymington and Pennington Town Council meeting to ask the Town Council to support residents in objecting to the SS6 proposal. The Council agrees to object to the plan and the inclusion of site SS6 – although their objection was limited to the highway impacts and the effect on Oakhaven Hospice.

SDP MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL – this meeting was arranged a week before submissions were due and was badged as an event to help residents fill in their response forms. The event also included the Town Council's NFDC supplementary planning guidance consultation. This is a document which is advisory and shows how sites could be developed if allocated.

11th August PALLS submitted its objections to the Local Plan – membership of just under **700** people.

October NFDC published the response to its consultation – 804 representations were made in total – 341 related to site SS6 which is to provide just 1% of the total number of dwellings. Note PALLS objection counts as 1 objection.

PALLS asked Cllr Heron, who is the NFDC cabinet portfolio member for Planning, to consider the objections at a Council meeting; he immediately rejected the request and stated that he believed that the local plan inquiry was the best place for the significant number of representations regarding the allocation of site SS6 to be considered.

The local plan was formally submitted to the Secretary of State by NFDC on 1<sup>st</sup> November for formal examination which will be carried out by two inspectors in June/July this year.

The Inspectors have a copy of all representations and at the end of January published a series of Issues and Questions and invited additional statements to be made in response by March 13<sup>th</sup>. PALLS has responded and asked to attend the hearing on 5 days to address a number of issues. PALLS has been successful in being invited to attend all the sessions it has requested.

The developers have submitted 473 pages of additional evidence including a detailed transport assessment dated December 2018. Despite repeated requests from PALLS since November 2018, the transport assessment has been withheld by Hampshire County Council (who are the highway authority) which meant that PALLS have been unable to view or make any comment on it to the local plan inquiry.

**NOTE 20 JUNE 2019 IS WHEN THE INSPECTOR WILL CONSIDER SITE SS6 together with SITE SS5 (land north of Milford Road).** There is provision for the inquiry to sit on the 21<sup>st</sup> as well. Currently it is proposed that all hearings will be held at NFDC offices in Lyndhurst.

If we are advised of an alternative venue we will advise via a newsletter/website.

The inspector will report his findings into the Local Plan later in the year – no date has been given but we estimate September/October. Whilst we obviously are working towards the rejection of SS6 if the site is allocated then PALLS will engage fully with the planning application process to try to ameliorate the harmful impact of development in line with its objectives.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The production of a Neighbourhood Plan by Lymington and Pennington Town Council in parallel with the Local Plan has understandably confused many people. Neighbourhood Plans take the place of the more detailed second stage Local Plans and are meant to be the product of close community consultation and consensus building about a vision for their communities. PALLS has seen very little sign of such an approach from our Town Council and has had to resort to making a formal appeal under Freedom of Information regulations to obtain the release of information about the preparation of this plan. Our focus for now must remain on the Local Plan but we will engage where we can with the Neighbourhood Plan process.

The Town Council's most recent pronouncement in December 2018 is that it will consult on its completed Neighbourhood Plan, in June this year. We have no idea whether they will take on board the limited responses to the only community consultation they have undertaken (before SS6 was allocated) given their stated objection to the allocation of the site.

Once the consultation has been concluded the plan may be revised - it is then subject to a local referendum.

PALLS will keep the members informed.

### **Other events/proposals**

PALLS is not a single issue organisation, and irrespective of the outcome of the development of site SS6 the Lanes need ongoing protection.

PALLS has organised ecological and bird identification walks, 2 litter picks have been undertaken (thankyou to HCC for providing the litter pickers) and more of these events will be undertaken in the coming months.

Our next project is to see if we can make the Lanes safer for users via the **Quiet Lanes** initiative – a presentation will be made following the end of the formal part of this meeting.

### **Finally**

I would like to thank all our members for their continuing support and encouragement and would invite you all to keep the issues we all feel strongly about in the public eye, whether it be through letters, lobbying or simply by spreading the word about PALLS far and wide.

Many thanks to all of the steering group and other members and supporters for all the hours which they have given to PALLS in a whole variety of ways, from publicity to report writing, traffic counts and much more.

For all the members who have supported PALLS by contributing to our fighting fund.

Please accept my thanks on behalf of PALLS

Bruce Tindall

April 2019