

1 Burwash: Save our Fields from Concrete has considered the recent planning application for Rectory Court in Burwash. They have considered the letter, dated 11 December 2015, from Sarah Shepherd to Tom Gadd of Frankham Consultancy group about the developers' original plans. The group fully supports the comments made by Sarah Shepherd in her letter.

2 The group has examined the key objectives drafted by Robert Banks and endorsed by the Burwash Parish Council planning committee on 25 February 2015. The group agrees with them.

3 The key objectives were:

a) Help create an acceptable plan which should lead to the building of a proper home for elderly people in the centre of the village, as soon as possible.

b) Protect the historic nature of the village in its conservation area. The design of the buildings must complement the other buildings and must not clash with them.

c) Ensure the materials used similarly complement the materials used in the neighbouring buildings. They must, as Sarah Shephard says, be of the 'highest quality'.

d) Ensure the main building does not encroach on to the southerly edge of the site so it is visible by people walking in the valley below which is a Heritage Valley (about Batemans and Rudyard Kipling). About 100,000 people a year visit Batemans and about 35,000 people walk in the valley a year who do not visit Batemans. The area is in perhaps the most important part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is afforded special protection.

e) Ensure there is adequate car parking on site in accordance with the ESCC Parking Demand Calculator, as laid down by the Highway authority and endorsed by Sarah Shepherd.

f) Ensure the sewage disposal system conforms to the Southern Water requirements.

g) As Sarah Shephard said, 'there must be a radical rethink'.

4 The group notes that the new plans are suitable. The proposed buildings are in keeping with the surroundings and would make a good home for the elderly who need somewhere to live at the heart of Burwash village. The group also noticed that the plans meet the key objectives formulated in February 2015.

5 There are only three comments the group makes. They are:

a) It would be helpful to create a good community feeling within the main block if there was a communal room to which all residents had access.

b) There needs to be strong conditions attached to the grant of planning permission. This would ensure, that the materials that are used, are in keeping with the historic buildings in the High Street which are in a very important conservation area. This is particularly so of the materials used in the houses which are facing the High Street.

c) Elderly residents frequently find getting in and out of baths difficult, even when they find walking etc. comparatively easy. Those who presently welcome a bath in their flat will find that when they inevitably become less agile, getting in and out of baths becomes difficult and often dangerous. Consequently the group recommends all the rooms should have showers and not baths.

6 This representation was approved by the group on 16 September 2017.