



Friday 2nd October 2015

St Peter's Community Centre

Speakers:	Mr Huw Merriman	MP for Bexhill and Battle
	Mr Davis Dennis	Secretary, Friends of Coombe Valley, Director CIC
	Mr Matthew Charnock	Development Director, Bovis Homes
	Mr John Short	Chief Executive Officer, Sea Change Sussex
	Mr John Williams	Sea Change Sussex
	Mr Chris Stanyard	Sea Change Sussex
Guest:	Mr Spencer McGawley	Sea Change Sussex

The Chairman, Mr Alan Peirce, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the speakers. He then invited Mr Huw Merriman MP to open the evening.

Huw Merriman explained that he is favour of new housing, which is essential for bringing employers into the area – employers are needed in order to bring more money to Bexhill. He also informed the meeting that this area has a master plan for the provision of the necessary infrastructure, something that other areas do not have.

David Dennis: Friends of Coombe Valley; CIC

David's slides and a history of Combe Valley are available on the Forum's web site and visa these links:

<https://bexhilltownforum.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/friends-of-combe-valley-presentation-2-october-2015.pdf>

<https://bexhilltownforum.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/history-of-combe-valley.pdf>

Please do not download or copy as photos are the copyright of David E P Dennis.
All other map copyrights are acknowledged.

- Q. Stevie Beale:** Are buzzards protected?
- A.** They are generally protected, along with other birds, though not in their own right.
- Q. Leonard Sterling:** Thinking of the expected despoliation of the valley – what is its current state and have the authorities done what they should?
- A.** Mr Dennis referred to a book called Silent Fields which talks of gradual despoliation and what needs to be done. ESCC has committed to replacing anything that is lost with two of the same kind.
- There are some issues at present related to costs and the opening of the link road before the ecological work is done however, plans are in place to get it all done.
- Q. Tony Sarginson:** Has the impact on the environment been fully assessed?
- A.** This is a complex undertaking since for seven months of the year there is flooding, and also development is not complete. It will take a long time to revert to the way things were in the 1950s. The jury is currently still out.

Matthew Charnock: Bovis Homes

Matthew's slides are available on the Forum's website or via this link:

<https://bexhilltownforum.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/bovis-homes-presentation-2-october-2015.pdf>

- Q. Brian Hart:** Secondary School provision in Bexhill is a concern as not everyone is happy with big secondary schools.
- A.** Yes, the County (ESCC) have assessed that no new secondary school is required. Only a primary school needs to be built.
- Q. Jean Corker:** Who are the houses for, local or outside people?
- A.** Both – we are regularly being contacted by local people who are urgently hoping to buy their first homes, but there will also be people moving to the area.
- Q.** And GP surgery provision?
- A.** GPs have stated that they have the ability to expand as and when the arrival of new patients arises.
- Q. Mary Reed:** What types of house and what price range?
- A.** Private, one to five bedroom, houses plus one and two bedroom affordable houses. Prices will range up to £500,000 with shared and private ownership. The Government's help to buy scheme will assist first time buyers.

- Q.** Without work being available, where will first time buyers come from?
- A.** There is already a good number of people in Bexhill looking to be first time buyers – many approached us at the consultation. The houses will be taken by a mix of local and incoming people and this will help to build the workforce to enable businesses to come into Bexhill.
- Q.** **Anthony Bradnum:** How green will the houses be?
- A.** 100% up to national standards for carbon emissions – and completely up to date with all current standards.
- Q.** **John (apologies, we did not catch which John it was who asked this question):** What percentage of the houses will be for social housing?
- A.** 30% will be for affordable housing.
- Q.** **Stevie Beale:** What is the timeframe?
- A.** We will start the first phase, off Wrestwood Road, in the summer of 2016. Completion will then be over seven years.
- Q.** How much commercial development will there be?
- A.** 7000 square metres.
- Q.** **Chrissy Foote:** Where will the commercial development be?
- A.** There are two possible sites for it, to the west of the area.
- Q.** **Jade Lythgoe:** Will more and more houses be added later? Also, how much will the development add to local pollution?
- A.** A management company will be set up from the outset and it will control limits. All standards regarding CO² limits are being followed and aiming for 0 carbon emissions.
- Q.** **Rachel Hills:** I understand you are building to Sustainable Level 4, is that correct?
- A.** Level 3 has now gone as a building regulation because 4 is now the lowest and so is standard.
- Q.** The industrial units on the Hastings end have not been taken up.
- A.** As Huw Merriman explained, employers need to see the workforce becoming available before they will decide to move in.
- Q.** **Stuart Earl:** These are the biggest plans for change in Bexhill – how will our roads, built around 1900, cope? Will Bovis work with the council on providing better transport links?
- A.** Yes, we are making a significant transport contribution to the wider model of ESCC and this site is part of that allocation.
- Q.** **Lawrence Keeley:** Have you considered care home provision for older people?
- A.** Yes we have and it is being factored in.

John Shaw, John Williams, Chris Stanyard – Sea Change

Sea Change's slides are available on the Forum's website or via this link:

<https://bexhilltownforum.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/sea-change-presentation-2-october-2015.pdf>

- Q. David King, Assistant District Commissioner, Senlac Scouts:** Kiteye Woods belong to the scouts but there has been no consultation with the scouts. We are very concerned about safety on the site.
- A.** Safety requirements are believed to be covered but Sea Change will check on it.
- Q. Sue Ager:** Why are you building a roundabout instead of a bridge as originally planned? What is an 'inner cutting'? Where exactly will the roundabout be? Will it be lit?
- A.** We have changed to a roundabout for ecological reasons. An inner cutting means taking it into a trench in order to screen it, making it far less visible. Hedgerows will help to mitigate the visual impact. We are also making sure that Watermill Lane does not become a 'rat run' for traffic in and out of Sidley.
- Q.** We know it will affect property values, who will address that?
- A.** We are in on-going dialogue with affected households on Watermill Lane.
- Q. Malcolm Brown:** How will the new road infrastructure impact on the landfill site?
- A.** We are unable to comment as the landfill site is not the responsibility of Sea Change.
- Q. Paul Lendon:** With reference to comments made about the impact of increased demand on our roads, could we not have a railway station at Glyne Gap, and what plans are there for our bus infrastructure?
- A.** A Glyne Gap station has previously not been assessed as economically viable. With the prospect of HS1 connection to Ashford coming there is a growing need for bus connectivity. Work is under way on the bus infrastructure.
- Q. Dan Price:** Do these changes mean we are losing natural sites for ever?
- A.** We are acting on advice from ecologists.

Theresa Stanbridge: There are question slips on your seats – please fill them out and leave them in the box on your way out so that we know what else you would like to have covered in the next meeting.

Christine Bayliss: There is a problem in the town centre with sea gulls attacking rubbish bags that have been left out overnight. Elsewhere steps have been taken to stop this from happening – surely something similar can be done in Bexhill?

Note: Following on from this point being raised we queried it with RDC and are pleased to report that a trial of seagull proof sacks has already been undertaken.

About 90 sacks were trialled at the seaward end of Sackville Road, on the western side, as this was one of the areas identified as probably the worst affected. This made an immediate improvement and gained the street sweepers a good hour first thing in the mornings due to not having to remove the scattered debris from seagulls.

Further stocks of seagull proof sacks have now been ordered, and the plan is to put them into use in St Leonard's Road, Devonshire Road and Western Road.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 3rd November 2015
Venue: St John's, London Road, Bexhill (parking available outside council offices)
Time: 6:30 for 7:00