

Dear Ms Whately, thank you for organising a tour of Westminster Palace for Councillors and the Clerk of Selling Parish Council on Monday, 9th January. We enjoyed the tour very much and were sorry that our meeting was unable to take place.

We would welcome the opportunity to re-arrange the meeting and these are the matters we would like to speak with you about:

Creeping urbanisation of our AONB and rural quality of life from:

a) 'permitted development' planning applications - sometimes based on contentious and unproven evidence of previous use of land for agricultural purposes (required by law viz. 3/7/2012) - intend to turn peaceful greenfield countryside wholly within North Downs AONB into centres for commerce, shops, cafes & restaurants together with lack of any consideration of obvious significant impact on narrow, quiet rural lanes by KCC Highways Authority.

b) revised planning applications with little information of what the revisions to the applications are and why, are making serious assessments by parish council impossible to properly complete within statutory timeframes and potentially inaccurate. Swale also promised nine months ago training for parish councils in planning and its new ways of working. This has never materialised despite repeated requests from ourselves, borough and county councillors

Proposed Duchy of Cornwall 'Garden Village' development in Selling

Road. The developer's website states: "Beautifully-designed public spaces and streets will be designed around the pedestrian rather than the car, and provide a sense of wellbeing and connection to nature, helping to create a new community that will thrive in the longest term, for people and the planet." The maps on the website and presentations at three public engagements have shown with great clarity the planned changes to road layouts, and consequent severe restrictions on access this would have for Selling residents intending to travel by road to Faversham and beyond, as well as the strategic road network. Streets may be designed around pedestrians in the so-called garden village but this will cause nothing but chaos and severe disruption for residents in Selling who have no other means of transport other than their car. We fully explored local transport limitations, including rail and road, in our response to the Swale Local Plan. Aside from the devastation destruction of existing grade 1 agricultural land and its extensive wildlife, the new site will support a commuter conurbation anxious for convenient transport links and local services - and not some nebulous notion of a community seeking some hazy lifestyle of living close to nature. Homes can simply be just that - homes. Our rural village Church of England primary school, recently graded as Good by OFSTED and with dynamic new leadership, has - like nearly every other neighbouring village school - suffered the stark decrease in relevant age profiles in southeast England and has had to reduce its published admission number (PAN). Any new primary school in any new development could realistically and seriously pose a threat to its existence. Life in rural communities is far from easy and is more complex and diverse than ever. And not every resident wants to play cricket. There is also the threat of another Garden Development on the A251 on land between North Street and Selling.

Uncoordinated utility roadworks and repairs (water, electricity, gas,

roads) Confusing and mistimed diversion signs have often simultaneously closed or seriously disrupted a number of the key routes into and out of the village and sometimes all at the same time (New Cut Road from A252 Chilham, Newhouse Lane from A251 Sheldwich, Selling Road from A2 Faversham and South Street from Brenley Corner and Boughton). These routes connect us to the strategic road network and the main centres of commerce, essential services and leisure in Faversham, Whitstable, Canterbury, Ashford and beyond. We have no bus services, of course. There is a litany of over a dozen farcical episodes during 2022, where residents and other road users have simply been cut off, unable to get into Selling or unable to navigate misleading road signs - many of which were just protecting empty space and no utilities work at all or in many instances sending road users into unfathomable circular routes or dead ends. Despite persistent reporting and representations from our borough and county councillors, this has just continued with no communication received from any of the utility organisations or even KCC Highways. LGVs and other inappropriate large vehicles have been stuck in tight and winding narrow lanes causing lengthy congestion and disruption together with terrible damage to the environment, with verges, hedgerows, trees, roadside flowers and plants, grass banks, tree canopies, road surfaces ruined and of course significant pollution. The council and residents have been enthusiastic contributors to Kent's 'Plan Bee' through our own 'Action for Insects' activity over the past two years. We have been keen to promote bee and bug corridors along the very roads and lanes that have been unnecessarily churned up or destroyed due to the incompetence of utilities companies. This is all compounded by the continued presence on our country lanes of inappropriate vehicles, particularly LGVs, travelling at inappropriate speeds. Recent weather has also again highlighted the poor condition of many roads damaged by heavy vehicles and the inability of authorities to prevent serious flooding on roads (Fox Lane specifically) that far too regularly results in extensive blue light emergency attendance to save people trapped in deep water. Early last year, Selling Parish Council carried out a community consultation on speed reduction. 105 residents took part in a survey and 85% agreed that large or heavy vehicles inappropriately use the village roads for their route in and out of the village and 88% agreed these vehicles cause disproportionate damage and pollution to our environment, road verges and surfaces. 87% also strongly disagreed or disagreed that KCC Highways are doing a good job in keeping the roads from flooding.

Selling Parish Council are very pleased to advise that we have achieved the Local Council's Foundation Award Achievement showing that the parish council achieves good practices in governance, community engagement and council improvement and that the council has gone above and beyond the legal obligations.

Best regards

Wendy Gregory
Principal SLCC
Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Selling Parish Council