



## New Romney Town Council

4<sup>th</sup> December 2023



### **NEW ROMNEY DROWNING IN CHAOS ARTICLE – INFORMATION CORRECTION**

**Councillor David Wimble published an article last week in Issue 339 of The Looker, in his capacity as editor of that newspaper. The article contained inaccurate information about New Romney Town Council and the work that it undertakes in relation to the local planning process, despite being an experienced Councillor with good understanding as to how the planning consultation process works and the Town Council's role as consultee within that process.**

**Page 2 of The Looker states that every effort is made by The Looker newspaper to ensure that information is correct. However, Councillor Wimble, in his capacity as Editor, did not ensure that this article was factually accurate nor explain to readers a number of ambiguities within the article.**

**So, in order to correct misinformation and clearly explain ambiguities published in Councillor Wimble's published article, please see below:**

In the Looker article by Stephen Daily it was stated that New Romney Town Council is embroiled in controversy; this is not the case – the Town Council works hard for the community and is audited every year in regard to its activities and financial management and, every year, receives a very positive internal audit report followed by a 'clean bill of health' via external audit.

The article goes on to claim that the Town Council unanimously approved the construction of 99 houses. However, this is not actually the case – the Town Council cannot approve any planning application; it is the District Council that is the local planning authority and makes all decisions regarding planning applications. The Town Council, like local residents, is simply a consultee. Furthermore, the construction of 87 houses on the relevant site had already previously been approved by the District Council. The Town Council was asked, therefore, to comment on the addition of 12 further properties.

It was stated in the article that Cllr Wimble was amazed that the Town Council could not find a reason to object to the application; however, Cllr Wimble has sat for many years on Planning Committees at both Town Council and District Council level and is fully aware that the Town Council can only comment with specific regard to Planning Policy. The Council could refer to as many points as it wished, including those relating to local infrastructure (which it is extremely mindful of); however, unless there is an actual Planning Policy that is being contravened, those comments will be deemed to be irrelevant when the application is considered at District Council level.

The article states that Councillor John Rivers is Chairman of the Town Council's Planning Committee; this is not the case. The Committee Chairman is Councillor Peter Coe and the Vice-Chairman of the Committee is Councillor Kirsten Terry. As a Member

of New Romney Town Council, Councillor Wimble should be aware of who the relevant Committee Chairmen are.

The article goes on to state that, previously, the original development comprising 87 properties, was approved by the District Council with the support of the Town Council. However, again, Councillor Wimble is aware that the Town Council can only raise an objection if there is an evident contravention of Planning Policy and, in the same way that this was not the case in respect of the additional 12 properties, it was not the case in respect of the original application. Hence, the Town Council was not able to raise a formal objection.

The claim is then repeated that the Town Council unanimously approved a fresh bid to build 99 houses; as stated above, the Town Council cannot approve any planning application as it is not the local Planning Authority – and the application was actually for 12 additional properties.

It is important that when a Member of the Town Council who is also the editor of a local publication publishes any article about the Council and its work, that Member ensures that all information is accurate and all required processes are fully explained so that the public are not confused into believing that the Town Council has acted in any way other than absolutely correctly and within its legal limitations.

Town Clerk – For and On Behalf of New Romney Town Council  
04.12.23