

Dear Stewart

Thank you for inviting me to your AGM. I am in Japan on Government business so can't be with you, but I am pleased to send this message.

The examination in public of the draft Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan has confirmed many of the concerns felt by the community about the threat that the intended development in Capel and around Paddock Wood poses to the rural character of the area and the strain on our infrastructure. I congratulate members present for making these points effectively to the inspector.

The character of Capel, Tudeley, Whetsted and Five Oak Green is very special – a blending of nature and settlement which is harmonious and delightful. It always feels to me to be fortunate that such a gentle mix of villages, hamlets, fields and streams has been able to sustain its character- located as it is between two big, growing towns, next to a trunk road and with a railway line crossing the parish.

It is important that the plans from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are now amended to safeguard this special rural character.

It is also vital that the principle which I recommended in my submission to the Inquiry – that infrastructure (including roads, drainage, sewerage capacity, GP surgeries, schools and public transport) is agreed, funded and constructed and connected *before* any development takes place.

In other words, I before E: infrastructure *before* expansion. Too often the experience is that expansion takes place and the promised infrastructure never does.

It is significant that the inspector was concerned – rightly, in my view - about the suitability of the existing infrastructure linking the parish to neighbouring towns.

I will be glad to meet with members and to offer my assistance in the next steps of this group's work.

With best wishes

Greg Clark



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A portrait photograph of Greg Clark, a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue suit jacket over a light blue shirt, smiling.

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