

Bredhurst Parish Council

Lidsing Fighting Fund Update – Over £13,000 Raised in 2 Weeks!!

Bredhurst Parish Council (BPC) urgently needs to raise £26,000 to fund legal costs to fight to remove the proposals for Lidsing from Maidstone Borough Council's Local Plan.

The Local Plan sets out a framework showing the areas within the Borough where MBC want to build houses. There are two 'Garden Settlements' included in the Plan which are at Lidsing (2000+ houses) and Lenham (5000+ houses). There are numerous other small and medium sized developments in the Plan.

Despite thousands of objections to the Local Plan, with the vast majority in respect of Lidsing, MBC submitted their Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for an 'Examination in Public' (EiP) to be held later this year. The Inspector will examine every aspect of the Plan to test it is consistent with national policy and that the proposals are viable and deliverable.

Bredhurst PC has taken advice from a barrister who has highlighted 'fundamental flaws' with MBC's Local Plan. He is a specialist planning barrister from Landmark Chambers based in London and has previously worked for Medway Council, so he knows this area well. He has also advised we need to employ specialist consultants who will form part of our legal team. £26,000 will cover the barrister's fee plus one consultant. If we exceed £26,000 there are two other consultants we would like to employ to give us the best possible chance of success. In addition to direct funds from supporters via GoFundMe, cash and cheques, BPC are also exploring other avenues of funding.

Maidstone Borough Council and other Parishes will have legal teams arguing on their behalf at the EiP and Bredhurst PC must have legal representation if we want our voice to be heard.

Thank you to the many residents, supporters and local businesses who have generously donated and are supporting our campaign. These include; Asbestos Ltd, Bell's Glass & Glazing, Boxley Sawmill, N&D Attwood Ltd, Kitchen Culture, Twydall Carpets, Whiskers Lodge Cattery, Pickwick Motors and many more.

We urgently need funds to allow us to instruct the barrister and consultants to proceed as there are many weeks of work required prior to the actual hearing in the autumn. We sincerely hope we can raise enough funds quickly as professional advice is our best hope to stop the development at Lidsing and to save Bredhurst and all surrounding areas!

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO SAVE BREDHURST

Please donate via GoFundMe <https://gofund.me/d7101e4e> or cheques payable to Bredhurst Parish Council may be sent to Mr S Hill, Clerk to BPC, C/O Englefield, Dunn Street, Bredhurst ME7 3LY.

If we do not reach our target, donations will be refunded. Please enclose your name, address and email with cheques. Funds will be ringfenced and administered by Bredhurst Parish Council.

Questions Raised by Residents

Q. Medway Council are fighting this so why does Bredhurst PC have to?

Medway Council will be represented at the EiP but their arguments will not be focused on Bredhurst. It has more impact if the Inspector hears a 'diversity of voices' - possibly arguing the same points but from different perspectives.

Q. Building works won't start for years.

Work could start very soon if the Inspector upholds the inclusion of Lidsing in the Local Plan. The promoter of Lidsing has stated they are 'committed to delivering housing by 2027 at the latest'. They wish to 'accelerate the programme so that infrastructure can be delivered earlier than the indicative programme' (i.e., the demolition and re-building of the Bredhurst M2 bridge and new spur road to the M2).

Q. It's a 'done deal' so why bother fighting?

It is far from being a 'done deal' and our barrister has highlighted many 'fundamental flaws' with MBC's Plan. In addition, the Inspector's first letter to MBC which was 9 pages long highlighted issues and concerns, many of which relate to Lidsing. Furthermore, a recent challenge to Sevenoaks Local Plan successfully halted the process

Q. Lidsing won't affect me.

It definitely WILL affect every resident.

- With the demolition and re-building of the bridge and creation of a new spur road to Junction 4 of the M2, Bredhurst will be full of construction traffic for months, possibly years on end. We assume access will be through **Kemsley Street, Forge Lane or Dunn Street**. Throughout the construction phase the village will be severely affected by traffic, dirt, and noise pollution.
- 2000 houses could bring potentially 4000 - 8000 new residents. There are **NO** additional services or facilities planned except one small primary school. We know how hard it is now to see a GP, get a hospital appointment or secure a secondary school place of choice. Imagine what it will be like competing with 1000s of new residents.
- Commuters going to Rainham Station, Hempstead Valley, Maidstone or Chatham will add to congestion on already overcrowded local roads.
- The **promotor** of the scheme has estimated an additional 10,000 traffic movements **per day** and there are no proposals for alterations to any of our rural lanes.

Join us for an overview of the Against Lidsing campaign and the latest funding information. There will also be a question and answer session.

Public Meeting - Monday 6th June, 7pm
Blacksmiths Barn, Blacksmiths Court, Bredhurst ME7 3JU