

Valley Conservation Society

doing nothing is not an option



Public newsletter

We are a non-political organisation

August 2025

Aile Homes development

This is just a note from the Valley Conservation Society to make you aware of the latest planning application for the land between Saxon Way, Richmond Way and the Hayle Park estate, known as Smiths Field or the Horse Field.

Those with longer memories will recall that over a decade ago, the Society fought against this land being included in Maidstone Council's 2017 Local Plan, but nevertheless, it was included and allocated for 62 homes.

Subsequently, a planning application was submitted by Chailey Homes for 62 homes, which was granted full planning permission by the council in December 2019.

For various reasons, that company never acted on its planning permission and that permission has now lapsed.

A new company, Aile Homes, has now submitted a fresh application to Maidstone for the same site, but only for 34 homes.

We would rather see no building at all on this greenfield site, which lies adjacent to the Hayle Park Nature Reserve and borders the Loose Valley Conservation Area, but obviously we would prefer 34 homes to 62.

The company also seems to have taken some trouble over its application – keeping the large oak tree on the site as a feature in its new development, proposing significant planting along the western border that will help screen it from the listed buildings at Hayle Place and promising to upgrade the footpath (which is not in their control) that leads from The Lodge to one of the Hayle Park Reserve entrances.

All traffic to the site would be from the existing access by The Lodge, off Postley Road.

It would involve the demolition of a small section of the ragstone wall at the gated entrance by The Lodge, and the moving of one of the gate pillars, so that the entrance could be widened. The Lodge itself would be demolished.

One of our committee members has attended a meeting with the developer's agents who seem receptive to our concerns about maintaining as much greenery as possible and not permitting any access through the site to the next field along, (known as the Cricket Field), where there has already been a separate application for housing, which, after objections from the Society, from the parish council and others, was fortunately rejected.

Therefore, the Society is inclined to look favourably on the Aile Homes application.

However, there will of course be disruption for residents during the construction with noise and dust, and some neighbours may have concerns about privacy and overlooking.

We would therefore urge you to examine the two relevant planning applications for yourselves and reach your own conclusions.

You should make your representations directly to the borough council, using their planning portal.

It would also be helpful if you contacted us with any concerns – there may be something we have missed – so that we might include your worries in our representations. Email Alan Smith, secretary, on a128smith@btinternet.com

The relevant planning numbers are:
and listed building consent application (for the gate)

25/502491
25/502492



How the new homes would fit in the surroundings. Image: On Architecture

About the Valley Conservation Society

Founded in July 2000 by a group of residents who were concerned at speeding traffic through the Lower Loose Valley, the Society is this year celebrating its 25th anniversary.

From the beginning, we have scrutinized planning applications in the area and campaigned against any we thought would harm the beauty and character of the Loose Valley. However, we quickly realised that the best way to safeguard land against unwelcome development is to buy it.

Subsequently, we purchased an acre of woodland off Hayle Mill Road, which we call Treacle Wood. Our next purchases were the millponds – Lower Crisbrook Pond and Reeds Pond.

Later, in 2013, we were able to extend this with the purchase of Crisbrook Meadow, which we did jointly with the help of Tovil Parish Council.

We also own another patch of land off Cave Hill, which we call Crisbrook Bank, and the patch alongside Crisbrook House, where our Conservation Cabin now stands.

Additionally, we own one-third of the 20-acre Hayle Park Nature Reserve.

We manage our land for the benefit of residents, wildlife and visitors, through the assistance of an enthusiastic volunteer work party, which meets every Tuesday.

The Society currently has nearly 400 members, who receive a regular newsletter and invitations to our various social events.

On **Saturday, October 11**, we will be holding a **Quiz Night** at the King George V Pavilion. We are looking ideally for teams of six. Final details to be confirmed.

On **Saturday, November 22**, we are presenting a theatre show at Boughton Monchelsea Village Hall. The Black Liver Theatre Company will perform **Devilled Eggs**, a musical comedy set around the goings-on in the Dakota Hotel in Blackpool. Tickets £15.

New members to the Society are always welcome. Membership costs just £2 a year.

Fill in the membership form overleaf and return it to Jonathan Leeson, Membership Secretary, Ridgeways, Cripple Street, Maidstone, ME15 6DN

Contacts:

For any issues concerning the ponds or VCS land, or inquiries about joining the work party, phone **Dennis Usmar on 07484 706537** or email dennisusmar@hotmail.com

For general inquiries about the Society, contact our chairman, **Jane Holman, on 07486 158538** or email VCSchair@gmail.com

For inquiries about social activities, call the secretary, **Alan Smith, on 07860 909903**, or email a128smith@btinternet.com

Membership Application 2025

Names:

Address:

..... Postcode.....

Email(s) ***please print***

Phone Mobile

Membership is £2 per person per year (50p for 14 to 18-year-olds).

I enclose a cheque/cash for £ (Donations welcome)

Cheques (payable to Valley Conservation Society) or cash can be delivered with your form to:
Jonathan Leeson, Membership Secretary, Ridgeways, Cripple Street, Maidstone, ME15 6DN

**Alternatively, it would assist us if you can pay by setting up a standing order
or bank transfer using the details below.**

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

(please allow at least 14 days to start date for bank processing)

To: **The Manager**, (add name and address of your bank/building society)

.....

Name(s) of Account Holders

Account Number: Sort Code:

Please pay:

Lloyds Bank plc, Week Street, Maidstone (309537) Branch, PO Box 1000, Box BX1 1LT

For the credit of: **Valley Conservation Society**

Account Number: **02166853** Sort Code: **30 95 37**

The sum of £ starting on2025
and thereafter on 1st day of January every year until further notice.

Signature(s) Date:

Please email - VCSMembership@btinternet.com with your name and address, if you choose this option.

General Data Protection Regulations: Our legal basis for holding and processing the data you provide is our legitimate interest as a membership organisation and we will use it to send you newsletters and other information we consider relevant. We will not disclose it to any third party.

Please tick the box if you consent to VCS retaining the details on this form

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