



Since its inception in 1894, Ansty and Staplefield has been a multicentred and multifaceted parish, consisting of a number of small villages and hamlets including Ansty, Staplefield, Brook Street and various other scattered hamlets and households. As the parish does not consist of a dominant central settlement, it is in the unusual position of being able to give a voice to small places which might otherwise be regarded as peripheral to the whole.

The latest addition to our family of settlements are the three housing developments, collectively known as Rocky Lane.

Since the establishment of the Rocky Lane developments, Ansty and Staplefield Parish Council (ASPC) have endeavoured to do the very best we can for the local community, and we seriously doubt that Haywards Heath Town Council (HHTC) could have done any more. Currently, the 3 Rocky Lane Ward Councillors make up a quarter of our number and have made a fantastic contribution to the Parish as a whole. In the event of this review recommending the loss of these wards, we feel that this would significantly undo much of the good that we have done here. All 3 of our Parish Counsellors from Rocky Lane have developed good working relationships with their communities and their respective Residents' Associations. They regularly feed back to the Parish Council as a whole on any issues affecting their wards, in order for us to all fully understand the needs of the area and provide better local democracy in action.

Our commitment to this community has been reciprocated by residents choosing to attend our meetings to elicit our support, most recently with regard to the proposed 5G telecommunications mast submitted by Cellnex Connectivity Solutions Limited, where they also voiced their strong desire to remain part of the Ansty & Staplefield Parish. This one example shows how by being part of a smaller, potentially more attentive parish, the residents feel able to have their say about matters that are important to their community. We have also represented the Rocky Lane residents with the developers of their estates, who remain on site, attending to various landscaping and snagging issues, and liaison with WSCC regarding the adoption of the roads. We have additionally provided financial support with landscaping, planting and improving a community exercise space, to help support the interests of the community.

In order to ensure effective delivery of local government information, ASPC have secured the s.106 funds and are in the process of providing a noticeboard for Rocky Lane to help keep residents up to date with Council Communications.

The Parish have worked hard with the residents to foster genuine placemaking by providing much needed local funding for events to help improve community engagement and cohesion. These events have been well attended, and our Parish Councillors have also attended to help to continue

to improve relationships with the local community. ASPC have also supported local initiatives and projects with leaflet drops to enable them to set up and establish residents' associations.

ASPC have chosen to move every third monthly meeting to the nearby Ashenground Community Centre to allow residents easier access to their Councillors and meetings. This thereby demonstrates our commitment to this community and enables a much greater level of community engagement than might otherwise have been the case.

As a Parish, we have provided many assets to support the residents of the Rocky Lane developments

- bus shelters
- salt bins
- Mobile Speed monitors (SIDs).
- Provided a grant to the local scout group catering for local children and youths.
- Provided a grant to the residents' association to help complete the remaining landscaping issues and residual site clearance issues.

We cannot see how moving out of ASPC and into HHTC would be of any benefit to the residents of the Rocky Lane Wards. Access to the facilities of the town are not denied to them by being located beyond its boundaries, but within HHTC they would represent less than 5% of the population, as opposed to the 46% they make up in our Parish. This will undoubtedly reduce the level of participatory representation that they currently receive. As things stand, the local residents can have a bigger say in how their money is spent and how they can be advocated for, rather than in a large town with many other priorities to address.

Finally, and not unimportantly, by removing the Rocky Lane developments from ASPC, the council will lose over 46% of its precept which will have a huge impact on the Parish as a whole, as it is our main source of income. The Rocky Lane developments, although geographically small in comparison to our Parish, have become a very large part of the ASPC family of settlements and we do not believe that the change in boundary would be in the best interests of the residents of the Rocky Lane Wards, nor the Parish as a whole.

ASPC feels it should also stress that all parties feel this is a terrible time to be doing this review, amidst all the uncertainty of Local Government Reform and would urge that this be scrapped or at the very least deferred, until there is a better understanding of how it will impact our communities.