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Countryside hero 'slam dunks' developers

Two years ago, Twineham farmer, Robert Worsley made national news when he turned down £275m to protect the Sussex countryside. Now he has taken things a step further by publicly challenging the developers for continuing to promote their proposal on his land.

He says he took action because he has become increasingly concerned about the erosion of the Sussex countryside and the many injustices of the present planning system.

The property company Mayfield Market Towns (MMT) has been promoting Robert's farm as a 'new settlement' for the past four years. MMT has never submitted a formal planning application but it has published maps of Robert's land on its website showing hundreds of acres of countryside obliterated by the proposal.

However Robert has responded by dealing the company a crushing blow - speaking at the Examination of Mid Sussex's Local Plan yesterday (Fri Jan 13), he left the government inspector, Jonathan Bore in no doubt of MMT's glaring shortcomings:

Robert began by referring to paragraph 173 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states the need to establish that there is a willing landowner before a site can be considered. He then criticised MMT's Planning Advisor, John Rhodes trying to manipulate the process to promote his client's site:

"With respect to Mr Rhodes and his submission, I know he says they're not talking about specific sites here, but I think every submission they have made has made it very clear where their site is and where the epicentre of it is."

"As the land owner of the land in that area, I can confirm that the land is not available – it doesn't have willing land owners there, both in terms of my land and the land belonging to all the farmers and landowners around me."

"I can confirm that it (Mayfields) is not supported, it is not deliverable and frankly it's a non starter from any constraint point of

view," he concluded. "It is the definition of 'constrained.'"

This proved to be a pivotal moment in the day's discussions. Soon afterwards CPRE Sussex's Michael Brown pointed out that throughout the five days of the hearing the countryside had not been mentioned once: "greenery probably isn't their thing" he said referring to the developers to his left.

"Mid Sussex District Council's whole vision and objectives for their plan are predicated on the rural nature of the District," continued Mr Brown. "Unless the whole underlying ethos of the plan is to be scrapped and local people can be persuaded to accept that Mid Sussex is to become an urbanised district with just patchy pockets of countryside – and I can see no mandate for that – the new District Plan must continue to value and celebrate the district's rural heritage."

Robert's intervention and Mr Brown's comments were watched by Sir Nicholas Soames who had joined the Public Examination for the morning. Sir Nicholas quickly sent out a flurry of supportive Tweets:

Nicholas Soames @nsoamesmp

Robt Worsley major landowner sinks unwanted [@MayfieldTowns](#) [@Quodplanning](#) "land not for sale" [#realherocountrysideoweshimhugedebt](#)

Nicholas Soames @nsoamesmp

Poor old [@Quodplanning](#) still flogging a dead horse [@MayfieldTowns](#) [#notwantedhere](#)

Nicholas Soames @nsoamesmp 6h6 hours ago

At Examination Local Plan with hero of local countryside Robt Worsley who refuses to sell to ghastly [@MayfieldTowns](#)

Nicholas Soames @nsoamesmp

[@CPRESussex](#) Michael Brown makes important point that in our crowded islands ,Sussex countryside is truly precious [#treatwithcareandrespect](#)

Despite Robert's crushing blow, Mayfields still had one last go at pushing their case for an 'early review.' but this time the Inspector was having none of it:

"And you've made those points, Mr Rhodes," said Mr Bore. "You'll have to wait to see what I have to say in my report to the Council."

During the next break a grim faced John Rhodes quietly packed his bags and slipped out - missing the final session completely.

To hear Robert's speech in full please go to: [Countryside Hero 'slam dunks' developers by Janiejey](#)

**Countryside Hero 'slam dunks'
developers by Janiejey**

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developers who wanted to build on productive f...

And for Michael Brown's eloquent speech on the Mid Sussex countryside go
to: [CPRE Sussex standing up for rural district under siege from developers by cpre sussex](#)

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CPRE Sussex's Michael Brown stands up for the countryside
at the Examination of Mid Sussex's Local Plan ...

—Attachments:

Robert Worsey at the Mid Sussex hearing.jpg	97.5 kB
Sir Nicholas Soames and Robert Worsley at the Mid Sussex Plan Examination.jpg	101 kB
Robert Worsley.JPG	1.6 MB