



**Tunbridge Wells
Borough Local Plan (2020 – 2038)**

Representation Form

Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Ref: (For official use only)

Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:	Proposed Changes to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (2020 - 2038): Response to Examination Inspector's Initial Findings, Received November 2022 and Supporting Documents, including Sustainability Appraisal
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Completed forms must be received at our offices by **midnight Monday 26 February 2024**

We encourage you to respond online using the consultation portal. Please note you do not have to sign in to respond via the portal: <https://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/kse/>

Alternatively, you may email or scan forms to: LocalPlan@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk or send them by post to: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, PLANNING POLICY, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS

Please note that representations must be attributable to named individuals or organisations. They will be available for public inspection and cannot be treated as confidential. Please also note that all comments received will be available for the public to view and cannot be treated as confidential. Data will be processed and held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

	1. Personal Details	2. Agent Details (if applicable)
Title		
First Name	Emma	
Last Name	Lester	
Job title (where relevant)		
Organisation (where relevant)	Residents Against Ramslye Development	
Address Line 1	[REDACTED]	
Address Line 2	[REDACTED]	

Address Line 3	██████████	
Address Line 4	███	
Postcode	██████	
Telephone number	██████████	
Email address (where relevant)	████████████████████	

PART B – YOUR REPRESENTATION
(Please use a separate sheet for each representation)

Name or Organisation	<p>Residents Against Ramslye Development</p> <p>We are an informal group established in 2019 to respond to TWBC's proposed development of Ramslye Farm. Comprehensive representations with supporting evidence have been made to both Reg 18 and Reg 19 and a 669 signature petition submitted. This representation is made on behalf of the group and the names and addresses submitted at the end. We contacted TWBC who have confirmed they are happy for us to submit one response from multiple individuals rather than multiple duplicate responses, however some members may choose to submit their own response</p>
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3. To which part of the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) as set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum?	
Chapter and (if applicable) sub heading	
Policy	AL/RTW 16 Land to the West of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm
Paragraph number or appendix	

4. Do you consider the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) would make it: (please tick as appropriate)					
4.1	Legally Compliant	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Sound	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please give details of why you consider the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 - 2038) (as set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum) are not legally compliant or are unsound. Please be as precise as possible.

- 5. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) (as set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum) please also use this box to set out your comments.**

The text box will automatically expand if necessary.

The Proposed Changes do **not** exclude Ramslye Farm (RTW16) from its proposed Housing Development and therefore do not take account for the grossly incorrect Agricultural Land classification and its unique and historical characterisation of Ramslye Farm. Furthermore, the proposed changes also do not take account of the recent changes to Housing numbers which now discount Green Belt land. More importantly, the proposed changes do not acknowledge the latest guidance in the recent NPPF regarding the development of farmland. In that guidance it specifically states that *‘Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for the development’*.

Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) Incorporating the Proposed Changes set out in the Development Strategy Topic Paper Addendum, legally compliant or sound, having regard to the Matter you have identified at Section 5 (above) where this relates to legal compliance or soundness.

- 6. You will need to say why this modification will make the Proposed Changes to the Borough Local Plan Submission Version (2020 – 2038) legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.**

The text box will automatically expand if necessary.

Removal of Ramslye Farm from the Proposed Local Plan

Site Identification and Resultant land Use

Site RTW16 is incorrectly named. The subject property is at Ramslye Farm TN3 9ET. It is not Spratsbrook Farm TN3 9EX. Spratsbrook Farm is in Wealden and therefore falls under Wealden District Council, and no part of the proposed development extends to Spratsbrook Farm.

Our repeated requests to have the subject property correctly named have been ignored. The only concession was to change the original site name 'Spratsbrook Farm' to 'Land at the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm' a complete refusal to add the word *Ramslye*. Wealden named their section of the same site 'Ramslye Farm (Spratsbrook Farm)'

This fundamental and very basic error has not only caused confusion for local residents as to the exact position of the proposed development, but it is extremely possible that the statutory assessment process itself has been fundamentally hindered in reaching its conclusions because Ramslye Farm and Spratsbrook Farm are two very different farms in different uses, in different locations – indeed different Counties.

This is clearly shown on the following map.



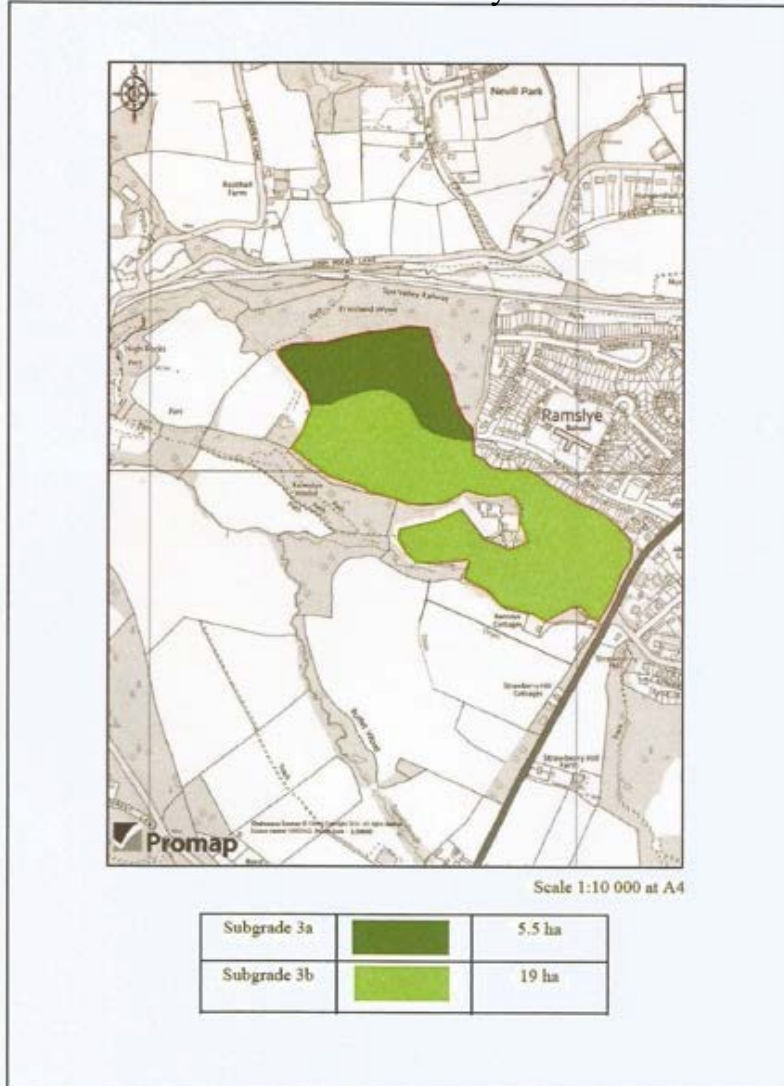
Land Classification

The proposed changes do not apply the correct Agricultural Land classification (ALC) to the subject property. In this regard, the subject property's ALC are 3a and 3b as clearly stated in the detailed land survey commissioned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in 2014. Under this ALC, the subject property has the following generic classifications:

- Grade 3a: Good to moderate quality agricultural land
- Grade 3b: Moderate quality agricultural land

Plan 1. Ramslye Farm, Agricultural Land Classification

These ALC classifications are clearly shown on the following plan:



Vaughan Redfern
Agricultural and Rural Development

This being so, these ALCs should have been used in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). **They were not**, and the SHELAA used a Natural England desktop survey. That survey erroneously classified the fields as having an ALC Grade 4 Urban classification. This ALC defines the subject as being, “Poor quality agricultural land with severe limitations only able to sustain occasional crops.”

Why the statutory planning authority have not amended the ALC for the subject property is a clear error on their part to the extent that a fundamental and wrong conclusion has not been amended in the proposed changes to the subject property.

This is especially so when the following is acknowledged:

- Natural England themselves state that, *‘these maps are not sufficiently accurate for use in assessment of individual fields or sites’*.
- The proposed development areas within the subject property are arable fields that have never had any buildings on them.
- The proposed development areas are currently in agricultural use, and they produce a good arable crop year on year.
- The proposed development areas are on the border of Wealden District Council (WDC) and TWBC.
- The Wealden SHELAA concludes within its "Unsuitable Sites Summary", at Page 24 Appendix 4 under site reference 729/1610, that the Land at Ramslye Farm as follows:
 1. Is not suitable for housing.
 2. Is not suitable for employment.
 3. Is not suitable for new development.
- The proposed development of the ALC Grade 3b land will mean the larger and more productive ALC Grade 3a land will become landlocked due to lack of access. As a consequence, the proposed development will result in an unacceptable loss of a huge amount of productive farmland at a time when food security is so important. This is a fundamental misuse of land and strikes at the very heart of planning ideology.

Given the above, we conclude that if the correct ALC had been used, then the subject property would have been deemed unsuitable for development at the SHELAA stage in line with the same conclusions as that of Wealden District Council for land within the same curtilage to that of the subject property.

On this basis we believe the TWBC conclusion are clearly wrong at law and should be addressed as a proposed change in the local plan.

Green Belt Designation

Ramslye Farm conforms to all the criteria for its well-established Green Belt designation. Against this background, we are surprised that no exceptional circumstances have been identified for the subject property to be released from its current Green Belt designation in the proposed changes to the local plan.

In the absence of such exceptional circumstances, we are devoid of any practical rationale or reasoning to support the subject property's removal from the Green Belt.

This is especially so, given that the Housing Secretary has announced that Local Authorities would no longer have to redraw Green Belt boundaries to satisfy housing targets.

When comparing site RTW 16 with other sites found to be 'Unsuitable' for development it is hard to see how the level of harm in releasing sites such as site 73, 116, 99, 114 and 411 from the Green Belt is higher than the assessed harm of releasing Ramslye Farm. The sites mentioned are all Green Belt greenfield sites but are unmanaged. Sites 73, 99, 114 and 411 are adjacent to Limits to build as is Ramslye Farm. Sites 99 and 114 have archaeological potential, Ramslye Farm contains an Iron Age Hillfort, highways issues apply to all the sites. Sites 114, 411 have ancient woodland, Ramslye Farm has Friezland Wood adjacent, nearly 8 ha of ancient woodland owned by the Woodland Trust. Sites 73, 99 are within or adjacent to conservation area, Ramslye Farm is adjacent to the Broadwater Down Conservation area one aspect of which is the far reaching view to Hungershall Park which will be destroyed by the proposed development.

On this basis, the proposed changes to the Local Plan should have removed the subject property from its proposed designation as housing development land given its outstanding Green Belt capacity to contain the urban conurbation of TW.

We believe not to do so, is wrong at law.

7.

Please use this box for any other comments you wish to make.

The text box will automatically expand if necessary.

The footpath adjacent to the proposed site has been used for generations for access to the ancient High Rocks. The views from the footpath are stunning. The proposed development would destroy this setting at the edge of Tunbridge Wells. Indeed, the Wealden Unsuitable Sites SHELAA states the site is visually prominent in the wider landscape and that suitable buffering could not be achieved.

Withyham Parish Council have stated;- "TWBC Local Plan appears to fly in the face of Wealden's rationale and interpretation of the Habitat Regulations". They object to development of the Spratsbrook/Ramslye site on the grounds that it has an illogical southern boundary defined only by the Borough boundary. Its development will also adversely impact on the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area.

8.	If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the examination hearings stage when it resumes?
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No, I do not wish to participate at the examination hearings

Yes, I wish to participate at the examination hearings

9.	If you wish to participate at the examination hearings stage once it resumes, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:
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Residents Against Ramslye Development would like to participate in the examination hearings, we strongly feel the site has been overlooked due to the inconsistencies given above and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with Mr Birkinshaw.

We would appreciate Mr Birkinshaw revisiting our Reg 19 Submission in light of the inconsistencies highlighted within this submission

Please note the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the examination hearings stage once it resumes.

Sustainability Appraisal

10. To which part of the Sustainability Appraisal does this representation relate?

Chapter and (if applicable) sub heading

Policy

AL/RTW 16 Land to the West of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm

Paragraph number or appendix

11.

Please use this box for any comments you wish to make about the Sustainability Appraisal.

The text box will automatically expand if necessary

Air: The proposed changes to the local plan do not respond or address the Air Quality issues that the proposed development classification of the subject property would cause.

This is especially so, given that the A26 in Royal Tunbridge Wells, is identified as an Air Quality Management Area where air quality is stated by TWBC as being 'poor'.

This is a serious shortcoming on behalf of TWBC to the extent that the wellbeing of its residents is potentially being put at risk by the failure to address this issue in the proposed changes to the local plan.

Biodiversity: We note the draft local plan made a reference to this site being a Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

However, this reference now appears to have been removed.

There is no explanation as to why this is so, given that the subject property has protected species including bats, dormice, adders, and great crested newts.

The subject property also, through the presence of trees and hedgerows, provides wildlife corridors between Hargate Forest, Friezland Wood & Broadwater Warren. Moreover, the subject property touches and concerns the Ashdown Forest 7km protection zone and this has not been addressed in the Local Plan.

In addition, the proposed changes to the local plan, make no reference to how the local plan will address the November 2023 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements now required at law.

Given the above, it appears that the proposed changes to the local plan are seriously lacking in addressing the BNG requirements of the subject property.

This is a serious omission on the part of TWBC such that its current conclusion is not sound.

Heritage: The proposed changes do not adequately take account of the Ancient Scheduled Monument (Historic England) components of the site and the role played in its setting.

Nor do they adequately reflect the role in the setting of the Broadwater Down conservation area as set out in the Conservation Area Assessment, along with other heritage constraints (listed buildings and historic farmstead).

The proposed development of Ramslye Farm has not adequately addressed the heritage of the farm as a Grade II listed building including relevant consultation with English Heritage. In this regard, it makes no reference to the 1960s excavations of the High Rock's Iron Age Multivallate Hill Fort. Those excavations discovered the paved entrance to the South of the Hillfort went from Broadwater Down, through Ramslye Farm.

However, this part of the farm has not been excavated although there is evidence of covered ramparts behind Ramslye Old Farmhouse at the pinch point of the field. Moreover, local residents have often discovered flint and pottery artefacts. This is especially so, after ploughing of the fields in conformity with its ALC Grade 3 a/b classification, indeed the farmer is only allowed to 'shallow plough' the fields due to their sensitive nature.

Taking all this account it quite clear that the Heritage issues of the subject property have not been fully addressed in the proposed changes to the Local Plan.

This is another serious omission on the part of TWBC such that its current conclusion is not sound.

Landscape. The proposed changes to the Local Plan do not address the undervaluation of the landscape value of the site (including that part outside of the AONB) in the same manners as that valuation approach used for other sites such numbers 30, 99 & 116.

This is another serious omission on the part of TWBC such that its current conclusion is not sound.

Services and facilities: It is not clear why this has been scored positively. We consider there will be an obvious increase in pressure on existing services and facilities that are already stretched, especially when considered with the other five sites identified for development in the Broadwater ward which will result in an additional c.500 dwellings in one small area.

On this basis, the omission of any reference or infrastructure impact assessment is another serious omission on the part of TWBC such that its current conclusion is not sound.

Travel: The subject property is on the borough/county boundary. Increased traffic is acknowledged by TWBC, as is the borough's low bus usage, and the existing cycle lanes on other sites are listed as issues not positive factors in relation to active travel. Eridge Road is already very busy with numerous dangerous junctions and no tangible plan has been put forward to deal with the considerable increase in traffic which the proposed development of Ramslye Farm would generate.

Given these statements the proposed changes do not address the rationale for a higher travel rating when compared with other sites such as 24 and 176 (which are very close to this site) and 73, 99 and 116 (which are greenfield adjacent to the LBD). Site 146 is on the A264 which gets 62% less traffic (9,034 vehicles per day based on 2016 data) than the A26 (23,496 vehicles per day based on 2016 data).

Water Supply: There have been water supply issues in the area, and these have not been addressed in the proposed changes. This a common problem throughout TWBC.

Therefore, until such water supply problems are addressed as a legal commitment, it can be wrong at law to propose further development on the subject property.

Flooding. Ramslye Old Farmhouse, is a Grade II listed house. It adjoins and is part of the subject property. The farm suffers considerably from surface flooding with surface water draining from the arable lands. As a consequence, this surface water drainage overwhelms the watercourse of ponds.

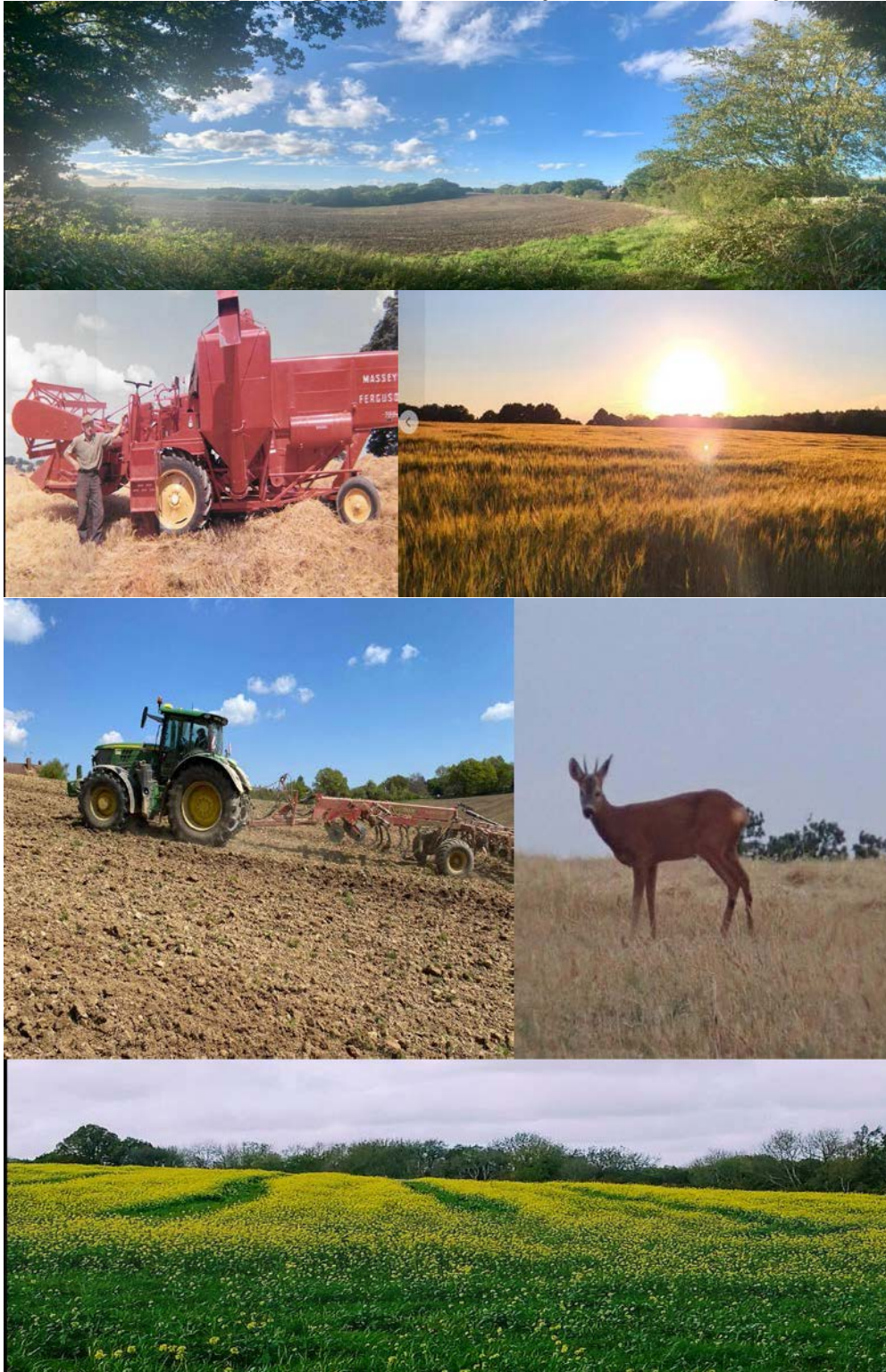
This being so, the proposed changes to the local plan do not address how development on the site will mitigate the onslaught of additional surface water flooding given these arable lands slope towards this listed building. **This is a serious shortcoming in the proposed changes to the proposed local plan.**

Conclusions

Given the above, we conclude that the proposed changes to the Local Plan are not Legally Compliant and are not Sound in their directions to the extent that

they should not be adopted by the TWBC. They therefore should not be adopted or implemented by the TWBC at this time.

These are some photographs of Ramslye Farm taken by local residents



Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested modification, as there will not normally be

a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at later stages.

After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he identifies for examination.

The following people wish to put their names to this response.

Cllr Christopher Hall
Cllr Jamie Johnson
Yvonne Savage
Aimee Savage
Emma Heasman
Ian Thompson
Nadine Kayyali
Adam Kayyali
Rosemary Ballard
Richard Ballard
Lucinda Sparrowhawk
Rose Patterson
Chris Patterson
Wayne Fitzgerald
Melanie Fitzgerald
Alice Moro
Simon Gentry
Nancy Tully:
Ben Tully
Sharon Dyke,
Gemma Joy
Nick Joy
Alex Joy
Chris Williams
Ben Williams
Simon Holtham
Susie Holtham
Rhian Taylor
Ben Taylor
James Taylor
Caitlin Taylor
John Telling,
Adrain Thorne
Penny Thorne
Mike Vos,

Alison Vos,
Paul Lester,
Joe Lester,
Beth Lester,
Noreen O'Meara,
Bridget Adam,
Fiona Flower,
Una Perrine,
Kate Griffiths
Alun J Elder-Brown
Jacqui Avery
Robert Avery
Joe Avery
Anna Avery
Bill Adamson
Bernadette Adamson
Jean Jenner
Peter Jenner
Claire Edwards
Gill Snowdon,
Carolyn Muddle
Kevin Muddle
Nualphain Thanomoonchareon
Amphoe Mueang
Ian Jarrett
Neng Jarrett
Natalie Wyatt
Patricia Sanctuary
Michael Wadsworth
Tom Primrose
Steph Harlow
Sharon Darby
Simon Darby
Kim Dougal
Mr. D. Dawson,
Mrs Dawson,
Mr. Anthony Lorne
Mr M Michell
Mrs Michell
Guy Jenner,
Victoria Jenner,
Caroline Woolrich
Eva-Maria Woolrich
John Weller

Mary Pepper
Bev Pond
David Jarvis
Marlene Virgili
Andrea Rice
Jack Seal
Callum Seal
Emily Matthews
Jacqui Jarrett
Jessica Osborn
Dianne Adams
David Mullenger
Jason Godman.
Penny Godman
Louise Edgington
Bradley White
Sue Newell
Billy Fordham
Debbie Tampsett-Maynard
Joe Tampsett
Jak Tampsett
Tracey Smith
Julie Spall
Ned Spall
Rosenn Gladwell
Jenny Ashwood
Martyn Ashwood
Christopher Oliver
Delaine Langley
Carol Domizi
Nick Twist,
Allan Pearson,
Wendy Owen
Milton Cartwright
Peter Sievewright
Adam Willingale
Lida Willingale
Ashley Savage
Sarah Waldock
Adriana Milenkova
Emil Milenkov
Lyndsey Wheeler,

Ben Osborn
Kelly Osborn
Paige Osborn
Reuben Osborn
Samantha Kirkness
Michael King
Aimee Kirkness-King
Demi Kirkness-King
Adrian Blackman
Robyn Roycroft
Jamie Wilde
Amber Wilde
Suzanne Baker
Margaret Brazier
Peter Springate
Delaine Langley
Mary Hemming,
Ross Hemming,
Michael Sharp,
Adrian Blackman
Josh Blackman
Robyn Roycroft
Christine Osborn
Steven Osborn
George Oliver
Tanya Pulford
Jamie Pulford
Janet Primrose
Steven Primrose
Jemma Harris
Aaron Harris
Philip BOHANE
Nina BOHANE
Lily Kirkwood
Michael Cooper
Adam Coates
Sophie Coates
Tim Harlow
Sally Hitchman
Howard Hitchman
Rod Manwaring
Trudy Fields
Sheila Bates
Valerie Gledhill

Stuart Wilde
Bob Edwards
Jane Edwards
Rona,
Janet Walter
Ruth Meakin
Sherean crittenden
Paula Brown
Lisa Hickmott
Steve Hickmott
Petya Atanasova
Ivan Atanasov
Suzie Hales
Sarah Yelland
Lucy Jenner
Donna Colston
Hayley Chapman
Belinda Lee
Ruth Westguard
Peter Westguard
Abby Westguard
Bradley Westguard
Debbie Brand
Carys Brown
Beth Chater
Dan Lloyd
Emma Green
Callum Donoghue
Anne Tiffin
David Tiffin
Melissa Tiffin
Simon Tiffin
Samantha Tiffin
Alexandra Young
Kim Harris
Harry Scott
Ellie Pulford
Jean Luke
Jessica Venebles
Lucy Cratchley
Amy Howell
Norman Bennett
Gemma Bouchard

Signature	Emma Lester	Date	26 th February 2024
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