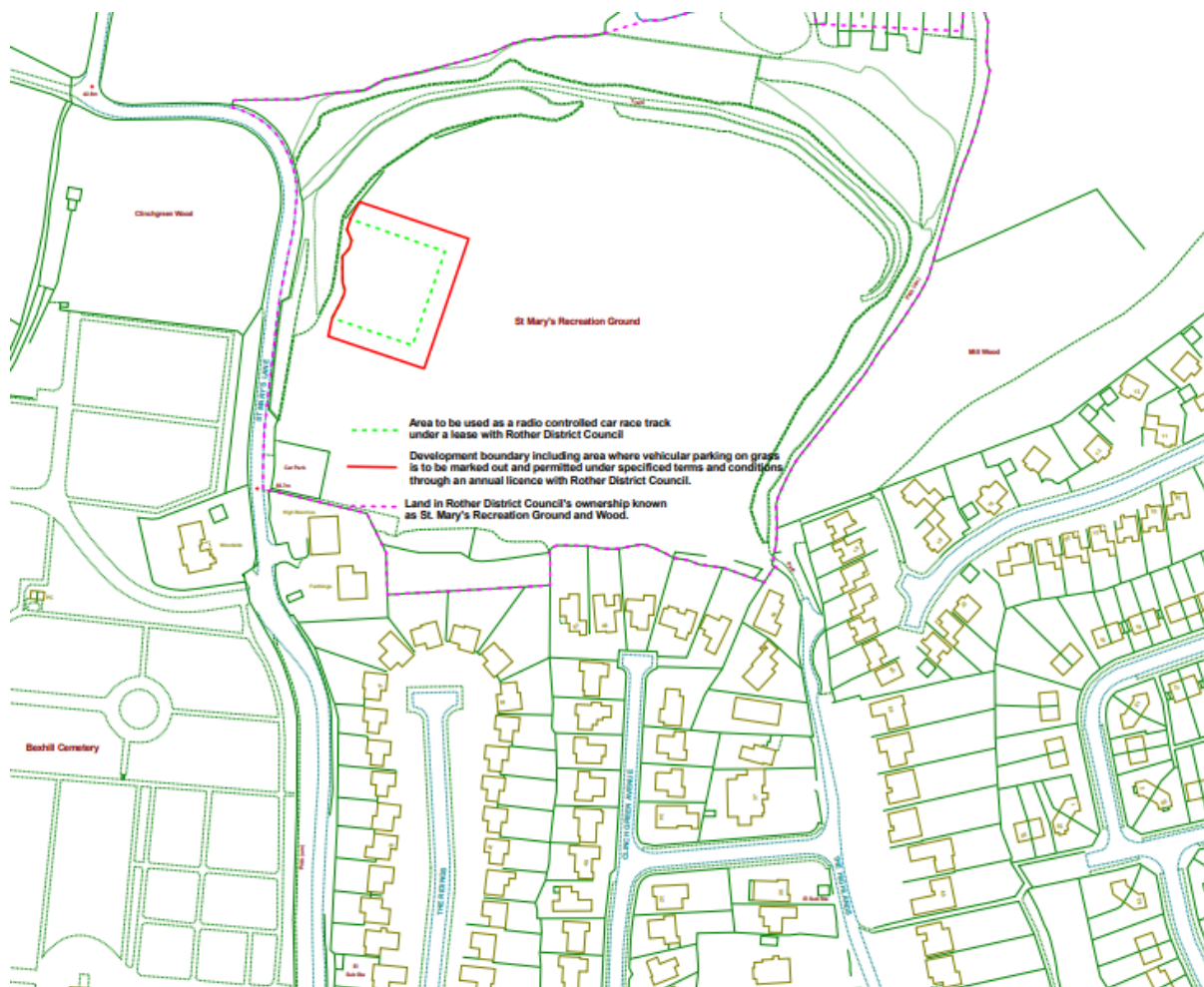


# SITE PLAN

RR/2021/2252/P

## BEXHILL

ST. MARY'S RECREATION GROUND – LAND  
AT,  
ST. MARY'S LANE



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Not to Scale

## Rother District Council

Report to - Planning Committee  
Date - 10 March 2022  
Report of the - Director – Place and Climate Change  
Subject - Application RR/2021/2252/P  
Address - St. Mary's Recreation Ground – Land at  
St. Mary's Lane  
BEXHILL  
Proposal - Construction of an electric race car track and siting of a shipping container for storage.

[View application/correspondence](#)

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**RECOMMENDATION:** It be **RESOLVED** to **GRANT (FULL PLANNING) DELEGATED (EXPIRY OF RECONSULTATION)**

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**Director: Ben Hook**

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**Applicant:** Mr Andrew Coley  
**Agent:** Mr Andrew Coley  
**Case Officer:** Miss Harriet Nurse  
(Email: [harriet.nurse@rother.gov.uk](mailto:harriet.nurse@rother.gov.uk))

**Parish:** BEXHILL

**Ward Members:** Councillors J.J. Carroll and S.J. Coleman

**Reason for Committee consideration:** Director – Place and Climate Change referral: Council owned land.

**Statutory 8-week date:** 26 January 2022

**Extension of time agreed to:** 15 March 2022

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### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The proposed electric race car track would complement the existing recreation facility along St. Mary's Lane. It would not detract from the rural character and appearance of the locality, would not adversely impact on the living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties and there are no highway safety concerns. The recommendation is to grant permission subject to the expiry of the re-consultation period and subject to the imposed conditions.
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## **2.0 SITE**

- 2.1 This application relates to St. Mary's Recreation Ground, a large open space located on the eastern side of St. Mary's Lane. The site is outside the Development Boundary for Bexhill and is within the countryside. It is not within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2.2 The recreation ground itself is grassland offering general open amenity space with a hardstanding near the access providing parking facilities for visitors.
- 2.3 The nearest neighbouring property is High Beeches which is located some 77m to the south.
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## **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the construction of an electric car racetrack and siting of a shipping container for storage, for the land use of the track for 1066 Racing. 1066 Racing is an off-road radio-controlled car racing club. The club race would use '1/10<sup>th</sup> scale RC cars'. 1066 Racing is a member of the British Radio Car Association (BRCA), who provide rules, regulations, safety recommendations for venues and crucially Public Liability insurance.
- 3.2 The area of land proposed for the track, rostrum and container would be positioned approximately 53.5m northeast of the hardstanding of St. Mary's Recreation Ground car park.
- 3.3 The elements proposed within the application for the proposed land use of the track for 1066 Racing:
- (i) A flat track measuring approximately 40m x 40m of the grass surface within a fenced area. (maintained by 1066 Racing)
  - (ii) A timber constructed rostrum, raised area for drivers to view/track/control their cars.
  - (iii) A shipping container clad in wood providing a secure place to store club equipment, including that to maintain the land.

Further clarification was received during the application confirming the proposed days/hours of operating, attendance, proposed parking arrangements and a risk assessment document.

An amended location and block plan were received detailing an increase in the red edge to include the 'confirmed' proposed parking arrangements and supporting details. The amended plans and details are currently undergoing the re-consultation period accordingly.

### **3.4 Usage**

The proposed usage for the club meetings would be a Sunday morning for a maximum of five hours, from 9am until 2pm and on one weekday evening during the summer months, after 5pm until sundown. The track would not be lit, evening meetings would only take place during summer months. The track would remain open at other times for local use (electric only) RC cars,

this would be anticipated to be very minimal use. If a bigger meeting would take place, further permissions would be requested from Rother District Council (RDC).

### 3.5 *Attendees*

There would be between 15 and 25 competitors, potentially 30 at a busy meeting – it should be noted the indoor events attract the most attendees rather than outdoor occasions. It is proposed that 20 vehicles would be at a busy outdoor meeting but often this would be lower.

### 3.6 *Parking*

It is proposed that 20-25 parking spaces of 3m x 5m would be positioned on the grass on three sides of the proposed racetrack. Parking would be authorised under an annual licence issued by RDC Neighbourhood Services. Access to the parking spaces would be across the grass from the existing hardstanding car park, a club representative would be on hand to oversee the arrival and departure of all vehicles attending.

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## 4.0 **HISTORY**

### 4.1 No relevant history.

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## 5.0 **POLICIES**

### 5.1 The following policies of the [Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014](#) are relevant to the proposal:

- OSS4: General Development Considerations
- RA3: Development in the Countryside
- BX1: Overall strategy for Bexhill
- EN1: Landscape Stewardship
- EN3: Design Quality

### 5.2 The following policies of the [Development and Site Allocations Local Plan](#) are relevant to the proposal:

- DEN1: Maintaining Landscape Character

### 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance are also material considerations.

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## 6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

### 6.1 Environmental Health – **NO OBJECTION**

#### 6.1.1 Based on the information supplied with the application the proposed use appears to be limited to only one or two days per week and to present no significant noise impacts and no requirement for artificial lighting; consequently, I have no adverse observations on the proposed use.

6.1.2 Following an email from an objector, the Environmental Health Officer responded with the following:

6.1.3 Regarding the objections, I considered both the question of noise and of toilet provision before preparing my original response to you on this application. I do not believe the video example supplied is representative of the outdoor situation proposed for St. Mary's Lane being a recording made within a highly reverberant indoor space. The absence of toilet provision on the site is a consideration but it is not particularly unusual for sites with occasional recreational uses, be it football, BMX track, fishing etc. The recreation ground appears to have been used for both football and cricket in the past with an advertised provision for two junior pitches. The public toilets in Sidley are approximately one mile distant.

6.1.4 For those reasons I stand by my original observations on this application.

## 6.2 Planning Notice

6.2.1 59 letters of objection have been received. The concerns raised are summarised as follows:

- Do not want to see and suffer cars/vans parked on the recreation ground on the grass.
- Concerns regarding traffic/parking at the site, in the small car park and on St. Mary's Lane itself.
- The lane is already very busy and narrow, limited parking at the car park for such an activity/business.
- Concerns regarding the noise nuisance to local residents and an increase in traffic.
- No toilet facilities and no paths, concerns this would destroy the land.
- Concerns regarding the proposed location, opposite the cemetery and on a narrow lane – which is already more congested than ever.
- Private buildings very nearby.
- Elements of noise – backing onto a residential area is totally inappropriate.
- Disrupt the quiet atmosphere while walking and relaxing.
- Noise, pollution, mess, congestion and lack of toilet facilities and parking makes this the complete wrong place.
- Environmental concerns – disruption to local wildlife.
- Nuisance to local residents.
- Could be anti-social, but potentially dangerous.
- Who will monitor the site?
- High congestion – Hastings events have up to 80 vehicles.
- These are playing fields for sports – just another incursion into eradicating our open green spaces.
- Leave the green spaces alone – no more infrastructure.
- Competitors could double or triple in number.
- It is purely financial – rather than for community benefits.
- Lack of parking space for 80 attendees.
- The cars do create noise, even more so do the spectators and the competitors – impacting the only green area where people go to sit quietly.
- Lack of consultation with residents who will be most impacted.

- 6.2.2 22 letters of support have been received. The reasons are summarised as follows:
- Great place for this activity to take place.
  - Very impressive – Bexhill needs this for the community to take part or be spectators.
  - It is good seeing the ground being used.
  - Encouraging to see a positive use – giving attention to young people, allow residents to be more active.
  - Could bring new life to the recreation ground.
  - Great use of space and there is still plenty of room on the green for dog walkers and families to play.
  - Promotes good mental health.
  - Great idea for an unused space.
- 6.2.3 Two letters with general comments have been received. The reasons are summarised as follows:
- All for the project although concerns regarding the parking accommodating the number of participating players/supporters.
  - We need this field for residents to enjoy and walk their dogs.
- 6.2.4 All comments can be viewed in full on the Council's website.
- 6.3 Bexhill Town Council – **OBJECTION**
- 6.3.1 Bexhill Town Council objects on the basis of the adverse impact on the environment, the lack of toilet facilities, the noise and disturbance that it will cause neighbouring properties, particularly in the evenings. Highways issues due to the limited access to the recreation ground. The Town Council feels this is not a suitable use of the green space at this location.
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## **7.0 APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 The main issues for consideration are the provision of the recreation space for an electric car racing use and its effect on the locality and the impacts upon neighbouring and nearby properties.
- 7.1.1 *The provision of the 1066 Racing use to the area of land on the recreation site and its effect on the locality*
- 7.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework at Section 8 sets out the planning objective of 'promoting healthy and safe communities. At paragraph 93 it says that to provide the social and recreational facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities sports venues, open space, and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. It adds that, decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, and social well-being for all sections of the community, and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. In terms of 'open space and recreation', at paragraph 98 it states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can

deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Paragraph 99 goes on to say that existing open space, sports and recreational land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless specified criteria are met, including: the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or (c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use. Section 12. 'achieving well-designed places' at paragraph 130 (f) requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

- 7.1.3 The Council's Core Strategy Policy BX1(ii): includes within the 'overall strategy for Bexhill' the objective of delivering development of local amenities, including support for community activities and facilities, and improved sports and leisure facilities.
- 7.1.4 Policy EN1 provides protection for the landscape character of the area, whilst Policy EN3 requires all development to be of a high-quality design.
- 7.1.5 St. Mary's Lane is rural in character with scattered residential properties which generally occupy large sites. The lane is lined with hedges and trees. The recreation ground is a large open space with trees lining the boundary of the ground, an area of grassland with a small section of fenced hard standing to the southwest providing visitors parking.
- 7.1.6 The application relates to an existing recreation ground and no loss of the area of the recreation ground would be proposed under this application. The proposed facilities would not impact on the existing areas on the recreation ground. The application does, however, include the loss of an area some 40m x 40m of informal amenity grassland within the recreation ground that would be taken up by the development of the space with a track positioned on the grassland and the specific facilities included within the fenced area (a rostrum and shipping container). Consequently, a different kind of recreation experience would be created within those areas, on the operating days/times proposed. The proposed would be a new addition to the recreation ground but nevertheless of similar nature to community meetings we would see at the existing recreation ground, including football, cricket matches and as such the nature of the activity would remain similar to a recreation ground. As such it is considered this use would be acceptable to the area within this recreation ground.
- 7.1.7 The area of land where the 1066 racing facilities would be positioned would be 53.5m to the north of the hardstanding area of the Recreation Ground, against the west side boundary. Within this area, the proposed flat track approximately 40m x 40m would have a grass surface, the track being laid on top, enclosed within a 1.2m high fence along its boundary. This area would include the addition of a rostrum structure and a shipping container for storage. The rostrum would measure 15m in length with a platform width of 1.5m and platform height of 1.4m and a rail height of 2.5m. The shipping container would measure 2.4m in width by 6.05m in depth with a height of 2.4m. Materials would consist of timber for the rostrum and green wood clad to the shipping container, with the track to be laid on the grass surface.

- 7.1.8 The structures would be positioned next to each other within the area of land, and therefore the land used for the 1066 racing would be read as part of a group of structures and would not read as an encroachment into the countryside. The area of land would be served by the existing access to St. Mary's Recreation Ground. The scale and design of the structures proposed are of a simple nature, in keeping with the locality and of sympathetic materials as to not have a harmful impact visually or physically on the character and appearance of this rural location.
- 7.1.9 Given the countryside location, if permission is granted, it would be essential to put controls in place to ensure that the use would be operating within approved limits. It would therefore be necessary to impose conditions to manage the use and operating times.
- 7.1.10 Overall, it is considered that the proposed land use and relevant structures would be appropriately sited and would be of an acceptable use, scale and design as to not adversely impact the character and locality of the recreation ground and surrounding area.
- 7.2.1 *Residential Amenity*
- 7.2.2 Policy OSS4 (ii) of the Local Plan Core Strategy says that all development should not unreasonably harm the amenities of adjoining properties. With regard to the proposal, the potential for impacts on residential amenity would principally be in terms of any noise impacts and secondly, any significant amounts of intrusive light affecting neighbouring properties as a result of the operation of any proposed lighting. In relation to these matters Policy DEN7 (environmental pollution) of the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan is relevant. This says that development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on health, local amenities or environmental character. There is no proposed lighting within this application. In relation to noise, it says that consideration will also be given to the character of the location and established land uses. The application submission includes details of the proposed electric car to be used and the fact there would be little to no noise, Environmental Health has been consulted on the proposals.
- 7.2.3 Regarding the issue of potential noise: the site is within a recreation ground environment. With residential dwellings scattered along St. Mary's Lane, its nearest dwelling being approximately 77m in distance to the site (High Beeches). The existing use of the site is as a recreation ground and therefore neighbouring residents will be aware of existing activity and background noise characteristics associated with the existing uses. These may be more noticeable at times than others, such as when a football/cricket match is being held. With regard to the proposed new development the noise of the electric radio-controlled racing cars appears to be little to none. Environmental Health has confirmed in its consultation response that there would be no significant noise impacts and no requirement for artificial lighting with the cars and this has resulted in a no objection to the proposal. Other matters considered by Environmental Health included the absence of toilet provision on the site, nevertheless, it has been considered that it is not particularly unusual for sites with occasional recreational uses, be it football, BMX track, fishing etc. The recreation ground appears to have been used for both football and cricket in



the past with an advertised provision for two junior pitches. As such it is considered there would be no adverse impacts on the residential amenities of nearby or neighbouring properties.

- 7.2.4 The area of land would be positioned a significant distance from any neighbouring property and would not directly impact on their amenities. In terms of additional traffic and activity, the proposal is for the use of the land for a maximum of five hours on a Sunday morning, 9am until 2pm and on one weekday evening during summer months only, after 5pm until sundown. Within the application there would be proposed parking spaces surrounding three sides of the fenced area (license to be applied for) with this in place and the proposed estimated numbers it is considered that it would not generate significant levels of traffic/nor parking issues to St. Mary's Lane.

### 7.3 Other Issues

#### 7.3.1 *Highway safety and parking*

- 7.3.2 Policy CO6 of the Core Strategy facilitates a safe physical environment by (ii) ensuring that all development avoids prejudice to road and/or pedestrian safety.

- 7.3.3 Policy TR4 (i) of the Core Strategy requires development to meet the residual needs of the development for off-street parking having taken into consideration localised circumstances and having full regard to the potential for access by means other than the car, and to any safety, congestion or amenity impacts of a reliance on parking off-site whether on-street or off-street.

- 7.3.4 The site is served by an existing vehicular access. Traffic speeds are generally low along the lane and therefore the operating use proposed should not increase hazards on the highway. There is adequate space on site to park and turn multiple vehicles, specifically the proposed addition of parking spaces surrounding the racetrack on the grassland (on submission and approval of a parking licence) would provide sufficient space for the proposed vehicles attending the meetings regularly.

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## 8.0 **PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposal of the provision of the 1066 Racing area and the proposed structures would not detract from the locality of the Recreation Ground and would not adversely impact on the nearby neighbouring residential properties and would not prejudice highway safety. The proposal complies with Core Strategy policies together with the various provisions contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and can therefore be supported and granted full planning subject to the expiry of the re-consultation period currently taking place for the amended plans and details.

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**RECOMMENDATION: GRANT (FULL PLANNING) DELEGATED (EXPIRY OF RECONSULTATION)**

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## CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: In accordance with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and details:  
Location Plan: RC racetrack at St. Mary's Recreation Ground dated 09/02/2022  
Block plan: radio-controlled car track area and parking dated 11/02/2022  
1066 Racing parking/vehicle access and movement plan detail submitted 09/02/2022  
Site East/North Elevation submitted 24/11/2021  
Rostrum Elevation submitted 24/11/2021  
Shipping Container Elevations submitted 24/11/2021  
Details within email submitted 25/01/2022  
Risk Assessment details submitted 25/01/2022  
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. The use hereby permitted shall only take place on the following days and hours:  
a) On one weekday evening per week and shall cease before sundown.  
b) On Sundays only between 9am – 2pm.  
Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy OSS4 (ii) of the Rother District Local Plan.
4. The race car track hereby permitted shall only be used by electric remote-control vehicles and shall not be used by petrol or other fuel powered remote control vehicles.  
Reason: To protect the living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties and to protect the rural character of the locality in accordance with Policies OSS4 (ii) (iii) and RA3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy DEN7 of the Rother Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.
5. No floodlighting or other external means of illumination of the racetrack hereby permitted shall be provided, installed or operated at the site.  
Reason: To protect the residential amenities of the locality and to protect the special character of the rural area, in accordance with Policies OSS4 (ii and iii), RA3 (v) and EN1 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy.

**NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK:** In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 38) and with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.