

WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council meeting held in the Function Room, Village Hall, Woodcote
Wednesday 19th October 2016 7.30pm.

PRESENT

Chairman	Dr. G. Botting
Vice Chair	
	Mrs. D. Hadaway
	Mr. A. Crockett
	Mr. M. Smith
	Mr. B.. Williams
	Dr. P. Sudbury
	Mrs. S. McGurk
	Mr. R. Lewin
Parish Clerk	Ms. Jenny Welham

1. To receive apologies for absence.

Mr. R. Peirce, Mr. D. Booth.

2. To Receive declarations of interest.

Cllr. Crockett declared interest in Planning App. P16/S3267/O.

3. **Public Forum:** Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise, with the permission of the Chairman.

Mr & Mrs. Clark residents from Bridlepath

4. To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th October 2016.

Approved as true record.

5. Matters arising from those Minutes not on the agenda elsewhere.

None.

6. Planning Applications

P16/S3267/O (Outline) Minor Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and end gable wall of existing dwelling. Erection of 5 dwellings and associated works including provision of new access onto Bridle path. **Address:** 14 Bridle Path Woodcote READING RG8 0SE.

Cllrs. Botting and Smith had reviewed this application and had circulated a draft response from the Parish Council for councillors to consider.

The Chairman invited the two members of public present to speak. Mr. Clark had concerns that this application did not meet the requirements of SODC policy on Infill. The PC agreed that was correct. He also had concerns about the access and increased traffic. He asked if this application should be approved would it set a precedent for the development of the land to the rear?

He has concerns regarding the other proposal to the land at the rear from T.A. Fisher. The Clerk explained that matter would be on the agenda for the next PC meeting.

The PC agreed the draft response already circulated and recommended Refusal.

Appendix 1 to these minutes details the response comments.

Members of the public left the meeting.

P15/S2685/FUL (Full Application) Major. Amendment : No. 2 - dated 29th September 2016 Proposal : Erection of 20 new dwellings and formation of new access, driveway and parking.(as amended to include the demolition of the pump house and a revised layout and clarified through the submission of a geo-environmental report).

(As amended by site plan to increase parking provision and indicate vehicle tracking details).Address : Old Reservoir Site Greenmore Hill Greenmore Woodcote.

The Parish Council remains supportive of this application and is pleased to note that the amendment now states the correct number of parking spaces per bedroom as per the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan.

However, it is noted that the following matters raised in the PC's earlier response still have not been addressed;

40% social housing – has not been identified on the site plan.

Building materials to be used not detailed.

Traffic calming shown on original application is now not shown.

The Parish Council cannot approve this application until these matters are addressed and detail provided.

The Parish Council would also recommend the following conditions at such point that the application reaches a decision;

1. A further survey shall be carried out to determine the location of the underground reservoir walls, as recommended in the Geo-Environmental Site Assessment.
2. Further tests shall be carried out on groundwater across the site to determine the presence of PAH, as recommended in the Geo-Environmental Site Assessment.
3. The foundations of the dwellings shall be designed in accordance with the recommendations in the Geo-Environmental Site Assessment to prevent breaching the clay capping layer across the site and to take account of the location of the original reservoir underground walls.
4. Japanese Knot Weed found on the site shall be eradicated prior to any construction.

6.1 Applications Granted by SODC:

None.

6.2 Applications Refused by SODC

P15/S3434/FUL dated 14 October 2015. Erection of 5 new houses with parking and new access to Beech Lane. (2 x 2 bed, 2 x 4 bed, 1 x 5 bed units.) Retention of smaller paddock for grazing use. Appeal Dismissed.

6.3 Other Planning Matters

Several Developers have sent letters to the Parish Council requesting dialogue with them or the Neighbourhood Plan Group regarding various pieces of land within Woodcote that they wished to discuss the potential for housing development.

The PC have requested that the Chairman of the NHP Group (Dr. Botting) replied to these approaches and the Clerk has sent replies requesting that they contact the NHP Chairman.

The NHP Group has been reformed and should be holding their first meeting shortly to start the process of review.

7. Finance To approve payments, note receipts.

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
05/10/2016	HMRC	SO	£300.18	Sept. Tax & NI
10/10/2016	SwiftClik	586	£183.61	Stationery, Cartridges, Toner
11/10/2016	SODC	587	£22.50	Permit Dev fee Folly field
12/10/2016	Kings Tree Care Services Ltd	588	£696.00	Tree work Wayside Green
13/10/2016	K., Smallbone	589	£30.00	War Memorial October
20/10/16	Berinsfield	592	£915.60	Sept. Grass cuts.
28/10/2016	J. Welham	SO	£814.13	October salary
28/10/2016	L. Crockett	SO	£200.00	Litter picking October
			£3,162.02	

Approved.

Noted no Receipts.

7.1 Quotations/Grants received for review/approval.

Quotes for the extension of the current Basketball Court.

Cllr. Smith has reviewed the quotations and had some comments. Both quotations are similar in cost. There is provision mentioned in one quotation to make a Bund from the topsoil dug out rather than remove it. The Pc do not agree with this.

Clerk to check with the other supplier as also ask timescale for the quotation as the Sec 106 funds have not yet been received by SODC.

The Clerk had spoken to Builder Ede regarding the hedge is on the land owned by Builder Ede. They had confirmed that now all 4 apartments in the development have been sold Leashold, there is a Management company who look after the communal areas. The name of the management company given was not believed to still be in place. Clerk to write to the residents of the flats asking for detail of the management company so they can be contacted to get the hedge cut.

8. Other Committee Reports

Village Hall MC – no new matters to report.

Village Green – meeting at the end of October.

Cllr. Crockett reported that the Clerk had arranged for the BT hedge to be cut at the rear of the exchange and this had been done, however they had left a lot of the cuttings. A working group will remove them or they may rot down.

Cllr. Williams reported,

Police – The PCSO's have been deployed to Sonning Common due to serious problems with attempted crime. Cllr. Williams is still in dialogue about the Neighbourhood Watch reps in Woodcote.

Youth Club – One of the main youth workers is moving on to other things, the YC do feel that they can cover the gap.

Tuesday club is going well attendance continuing to be good. The YC committee need to discuss and consider the Monday club as it is not well attended.

Education – No new matters. Clerk to chase up the Head of Langtree as he had requested a meeting and not date has been received.

Traffic Group
Cllr Smith reported,

The design for the Pedestrian Crossing with the changes that the PC requested has been received and has been changed and is now ready for submission to OCC.

There is mention of some issues on the lighting to the approaches however this will be noted when the road safety audit is carried out. Also the traffic group are looking at upgrading the lighting for the speed humps.

The Clerk reported that OCC lighting department had replied about upgrading the lanterns to LED and this is possible. They need to come and check the site next week and will respond with cost and further detail after the inspection.

9. Other Matters for Chairman

The Clerk has now received from Blandy & Blandy the transfer detail of the Woodland from Millgate Home to the back of the development on Long Toll. This matter to be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Arrow Accounting had submitted their Engagement letter for the PC Internal Audit for Financial Year 2016/17. The charges quoted for the estimated hours is slightly more than last year. The PC agreed we engage Arrow Accounting again. The letter was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

The SODC Town and Parish Forum is Wednesday 2 November, which will clash with the next PC meeting. As Neighbourhood Planning is a matter on the agenda the PC agreed that it should be represented. Cllr. Botting will attend. Clerk to send it registration papers.

10. Correspondence

None.

11. To note date of the next PC meeting: Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 2nd November 2016.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed.....Date.....

Appendix 1 to Minutes 19th October 2016

Woodcote Parish Council

Response to Planning Application P16/S3267/O

19 October 2016

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and end gable wall of existing dwelling.
Erection of 5 dwellings and associated works including provision of new access onto Bridle Path.

Address: 14 Bridle Path, Woodcote, Reading, RG8 0SE

Woodcote Parish Council considers that this application should be REFUSED because the proposed development:

- I. Encroaches upon the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- II. Fails to comply with policies in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy; and
- III. Fails to comply with policies in the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan

These are expanded upon in the succeeding sections

1. Context

Planning applications in Woodcote must be considered against:

- the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP);
- the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (CS); and
- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to maintain a five year land supply. NPPF paragraph 49 says that decision makers should not consider the housing policies within the local plan (which the neighbourhood plan forms part of) to be up to date if a five year land supply has not been identified. In these situations paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that permission for development should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or unless specific policies, for example relating to sites designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), indicate development should be restricted.

Planning Practice Guidance (11 February 2016) advises that such adverse effects not only include policy on specific types of development contained within the NPPF but also paragraphs 183-185 and paragraph 198 of the NPPF which state where a development conflicts with a Neighbourhood Plan that has been brought into force planning permission should be refused.

This application of the NPPF is supported by two recent appeal decisions for development within Woodcote:

- a. Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/A/14/2223330
Land at 'Goats Gambol', off Beech Lane, Woodcote, Oxfordshire RG8 0PY
In refusing the appeal the inspector said (paragraph 54)
'I have given full consideration to the NPPF's aim of encouraging sustainable development. But given the harm that I have identified, and especially the harm to the AONB, it seems to me that the development now proposed cannot properly be considered as sustainable. And in any event, the presumption in favour of such development, as set out in NPPF paragraph 14, does not apply in AONBs.'

17 June 2015

b. Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/16/3147625

Land north of Beech Lane, Woodcote, Reading RG8 0PX

In refusing the appeal the inspector said (paragraphs 6 and 22):

'The appeal site lies within the Chilterns AONB, and consequently the presumption set out in Paragraph 14 of the Framework applies only after consideration of the effects on the AONB, and where the balance weighs in the scheme's favour. In this context, Paragraph 115 of the Framework requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, and Policy CSEN1 of the Core Strategy also gives high priority to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and states that planning decisions will have regard to its setting'

'I appreciate that the development would provide five additional dwellings in an area which does not have a five year housing land supply, as well as some associated economic and social benefits. However, this limited benefit would not outweigh the harm to the AONB identified above.'

11 October 2016

1. Impact on AONB

The site lies within the Chilterns AONB. As such paragraph 115 of the NPPF applies. This requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONB (as does policy CSEN1 of the CS).

The site is situated behind the existing developed frontage and cannot be considered as a frontage gap and development would clearly result in the outward expansion of the village's built-up area. The development would therefore not constitute infilling, within the terms set out in the CS, and WNP. Furthermore, the site is not allocated for development in the WNP, and the proposal is not in any way related to agricultural or other special needs. Consequently, the proposed development would not come within any of the categories allowed by CS policy CSR1 or WNP policy HS10.

As backland development the site is not particularly prominent but the proposed development would be clearly visible from the site entrance in Bridle Path and the public footpath (411/9) that runs from Bridle Path to Potkiln Lane, a public view of some significance.

The effect of the development would be to change the site from its present mainly undeveloped state, into a fully developed housing site with roads and buildings. This would mean the loss of those characteristics which best reflect the local landscape's prevailing character and distinctiveness. The effect would thus be damaging to the AONB, and to the character and appearance of the area generally.

The proposed development would not conserve or enhance the area's natural beauty, but would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the local landscape and on the setting of the village of Woodcote and, because of its location outside the existing village, the proposed development conflicts with the relevant policies for housing in villages and in the countryside.

This application would provide 5 new homes but this is a modest increase in the local housing stock, **at a time when the WNP is being revised to comply with the emerging Local Plan**, when set against the loss of countryside, the harm to the area's character and appearance, and the resulting policy conflicts. In this context we, again, note the requirement of NPPF paragraph 115 that in AONBs conservation of the landscape should be given great weight.

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that. “Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas (AONBs) except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”

The addition of 5 houses will have no significant positive effect on the local economy, there are other locations for additional housing that would better meet the need for additional housing and this development has a detrimental effect on the environment and landscape.

3. Failure to comply with policies in the Core Strategy

The application fails to comply with CS policies on both landscape and housing.

a) Policy CSR1 Housing in Villages

Core Strategy policy CSR1 allows infill development where infill is defined as the filling of small gaps in otherwise built up frontages, or on other sites closely surrounded by buildings. The site does not meet this definition and, as admitted by the applicant cannot be considered as infill and therefore permissible under policy CSR1.

b) Policy CSEN1 Landscape

Policy CSEN1 requires that the district’s distinct landscape character and key features be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced and states that:

High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and planning decisions will have regard to their setting. Proposals which support the economies and social well being of the AONBs and their communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement.

The proposed site lies entirely within the Chilterns AONB and its development will neither conserve nor enhance the AONB.

c) Policy CSH2 Density (of new developments)

Policy CSH2 – on sites where housing is acceptable a minimum density of 25 houses per hectare will be required. This application creates 5 new dwellings on a 0.39 hectare site – a density of some 13 dwellings per hectare. No justification is provided for this failure to comply.

d) Policy CSH3 Affordable Housing

This policy requires 40 per cent of the new dwellings to be affordable homes. No such provision is made in the application and no justification is offered for this significant omission.

4. Failure to comply with policies in the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan

The Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan received a 91% Yes vote on a 60% turnout in the referendum and is, therefore, supported by an absolute majority of the community.

The proposed site was one of 24 considered for inclusion in the WNP for development but comprehensively rejected by the community as contrary to their wishes to protect open spaces and the AONB in the WNP consultations run on the 5th and 9th February 2013.

The WNP is delivering the new homes required. Since being ‘made’ in May 2014:

- 18% of the new homes identified have been built and are occupied;
- planning permission has been granted for a further 32%; and
- the Parish Council has recommended approval for a further 38%.

Thus the evidence suggests that nearly 90% of the new homes identified for development before 2027 will have been built within the next 18-24 months.

The application fails to show, or justify, the one parking space per bedroom required by policy T8 of the WNP.

The application fails to provide, or justify the lack of provision of, the 40% of affordable housing required by policy H3 of the WNP.

The applicant admits that this site cannot be considered as infill and as ‘backland’ the site fails to comply with policy H10(a) and policy H10(c) of the WNP.

The application will involve an outward extension of the built-up area of the village and therefore fails to comply with policy H10 (b) of the WNP.

The application fails to provide the required small home (a dwelling with two or fewer bedrooms) as required by policy H10 (d) of the WNP.

The entrance to the new development is some 175 metres from the junction of the Goring Road and Bridle Path and Beech Lane. This is a busy, highly congested junction with a Cooperative store, limited parking and a bus stop. This proposal fails to show that it will not, as required by WNP policy T1, exacerbate traffic congestion at this dangerous crossroads.

5. Other Considerations

1. The applicant claims (paragraph 17 of the Planning Statement) that *‘the buildings have been in commercial use in the past’*. What the applicant fails to mention is that commercial use was never permitted on this site and that such unpermitted use led to Enforcement Order SE00/186 which required the landowner to stop using the site for industrial/storage purposes.

A retrospective planning application (P03/E0511/RET) *for use of land and buildings for repair, maintenance and assembly of leisure/amusement machines (B1) and ancillary storage, also minor external alteration to building* was subsequently submitted but REFUSED. The reasons given were:

‘That the use of the site for repair maintenance and assembly of leisure / amusement machines and ancillary storage (including storage in the open) would result in an inappropriate activity in an open rural location, which would be detrimental to the character and visual amenity of the area, which lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The development would be contrary to the general, countryside and employment policies of the Council’s adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan particularly Policies G1, G5, C2 and E6 and of the Council’s Second Deposit Draft 2011 Local

Plan, particularly Policies G1, G4, C2 and E5.

That having regard to the nature of the business and the associated traffic and activity arising there from, including activity at all hours of the day and night, the proposal results in an inappropriate and unneighbourly form of development detrimental to the residential amenity of properties in Bridle Path and the immediate area. Therefore the development would be contrary to the provisions of the Council's adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan, particularly Policies G1, G7, and E6 and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Second Deposit Draft, particularly Policies G1, G3, EP2, and E5.

Having regard to the unsatisfactory impact of the use on the countryside and adjoining residential property, the development represents an inappropriate use of existing buildings contrary to Policy C11 of the Council's adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2001 and Policy E8 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, Second Deposit Draft'.

2. In paragraph 24 of the Planning Statement the applicant quotes selectively from paragraph 14 of the NPPF to support their application. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, in full, states that

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making this means that:

- *Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.⁹*

For decision-taking this means:¹⁰

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.⁹*

The Planning Statement omits the line

- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.⁹*
- when quoting from paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

This is significant because the NPPF, in footnote 9 to paragraph 14, says *'For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.'*

The omission of a section of paragraph 14 of the NPPF by the applicants would appear to be an attempt to ignore the requirement of the NPPF to protect Areas of Outstanding Beauty – a requirement underscored by the footnote being attached to the section on decision making in paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

