

# Sonning Common Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held via video conference on Monday 01 June 2020 at 2000 hrs.

Due to the exceptional circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 outbreak and in line with local government policy, this meeting was conducted via video conference.

Present: Mr Rawlins (chairman), Mr Kedge, Mr Giles, Mrs Lewis, Mr Fort, Mr Stoves and Mrs Varnes, Deputy Parish Clerk. Also present were three residents and a Henley Standard reporter.

P21/007 Apologies for absence: Mrs Diwell.

P21/008 Declarations of interest: none.

P21/009 New applications:

009.01/P19/S4350/O. Outline planning application for up to 26 dwellings including affordable housing, new public open space, and landscaping and surface water attenuation with detailed vehicular access, (as amended by plans received on 07 May 2020), on land to the south of Kennylands Road.

The neighbour closest to the site, Mrs Stavropoulos, outlined her main concerns about the amended application in relation to the proximity of the proposed new access, the loss of public open space, pollution, noise, increased traffic and the effect it would have on her property. Similar and additional concerns were raised by two other Kennylands Road residents.

After discussion the committee voted unanimously to recommend the refusal of the application (letter attached).

009.02/P20/S0626/FUL. Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 (details of levels prior to foundations), 9 (parking & manoeuvring areas retained) and 16 (tree protection) of application P18/S2631/FUL for various alterations, including garage enlargements and window and internal layout changes. This is in relation to the construction of 25 dwellings together with associated landscaping, public open space and access on land to the rear of 44 Kennylands Road RG4 9JT.

After discussion the committee voted unanimously to recommend the refusal of the application (letter attached).

009.03/P20/S1570/HH. Alterations to and the extension of the existing dwelling at 59 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD.

After discussion the committee recommended the application for approval.

P21/010 Applications granted:

010.01/P20/S1152/HH. A single-storey side extension and 4m dropped kerb at 74 Lea Road RG4 9LJ. Noted.

010.02/ P20/S1287/PDH. Permitted development agreed for a new extension to provide an accessible bedroom and bathroom at 19 Ashford Avenue RG4 9LR. Noted.

P21/011 Notification of:

A public hearing, beginning on 14 July 2020, to examine the soundness and legal compliance of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034. Planning inspector Jonathan Bore has been appointed by the Secretary of State to lead the inquiry. New written statements to be made by 5pm on 26 June. Noted.

P21/012 Update on the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034.

Mr Rawlins reported on latest developments with regard to the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034. He confirmed that he would like to provide a written statement to the public inquiry on the draft Local Plan (detailed above) on behalf of

the Planning Committee. Members agreed that Mr Rawlins and Mrs Varnes should confer on the submission since it was proposed to send it on behalf of the committee.

P21/013 Update following the committee's report to Planning Enforcement of new works at the Bishopswood Camp, Gallowstree Road.

Mrs Varnes reported on her liaison with SODC Planning Enforcement over works at Bishopswood Camp.

P21/014 Matters for future agendas: none.

The meeting closed at 2130.

Date of next meeting: Monday 15 June 2020 at 1900.

Chairman: ..... Date: .....

# SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

VILLAGE HALL, WOOD LANE  
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Ms Katherine Pearce  
Planning Officer, SODC  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon OX14 4SB

Friday 05 June 2020

Dear Ms Pearce

**Re: P19/S4350/O. Outline planning application for up to 26 dwellings including affordable housing, new public open space and landscaping and surface water attenuation with detailed vehicular access (as amended by plans received on 07 May 2020) on land to the south of Kennylands Road.**

Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee considered the above amended application at its meeting on Monday 01 June 2020. Members were deeply concerned about the proposal to change the layout of the proposed scheme.

Members resolved to vigorously object to the proposal to amend the original site layout by introducing an agricultural access to the allocated residential site. They urge South Oxfordshire District Council – in the strongest possible terms – to refuse it.

The site, known locally as SON 6, is allocated for up to 26 new dwellings in the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP), the most up-to-date planning policy for the site.

As you will see from the attached extract from the SCNP, the agricultural access situated to the south-east of the site and shaded in light green, is not within the red line of the site boundary.

This amended proposal seeks to take an agricultural access, which is not part of the allocated SON 6 site, and deposit it in the middle of a public open space amenity area, close to existing residential dwellings.

The proposal to relocate the public 'open' space to the midst of the tree-filled landscape buffer zone next to the busy Kennylands Road is unacceptable. This would mean that the space could not be used as a public open amenity area, particularly for children's play, in any meaningful way.

The current agricultural access beyond the site boundary of SON 6 is not currently used; farm vehicles access the neighbouring farmland from the south-west. Even if the access was in use, most farm vehicles can work within a 3m or 3.6m wide space.

The Planning Committee simply does not accept the applicant's contention that the relocation of this access is necessary for farming purposes.

Furthermore, the idea of both residential traffic and heavy farm machinery using a shared access, positioned closer to existing dwellings and the village centre, is both impractical and potentially dangerous and is, therefore, contrary to traffic safety policies.

The proximity of the proposed dual use access to existing dwellings will increase noise and pollution for current residents and will detrimentally affect their privacy and amenity space.

The family home at 56 Kennylands Road would be particularly and significantly impacted by a proposed new road running immediately alongside the house and garden. Many of the ground and first floor windows

overlook the SON 6 site. For the residents there, an adequate landscape buffer and public open space area is especially important.

The Planning Committee well understands that this proposal concerns development within the site boundary only. However, the applicant's interest in developing the area of open countryside behind the linear site is well-known and is vehemently opposed by village residents.

In response to our Neighbourhood Plan consultation this February, Barton Willmore, on behalf of the applicant, made clear their intention to press for an additional 25 homes behind the allocated SON 6 Kennylands Road infill site (see letter attached).

As you will know, an earlier application to develop more than 90 homes within the AONB setting, adjacent to the allocated site, was refused by SODC and an appeal against that refusal quashed. The appeal inspector recognised that the site was more than ordinary countryside and was, in his view, "part of a valued landscape". He concluded:

*'The site fulfils an important function in maintaining the rural setting of Sonning Common and the setting of the built up area in the wider landscape, including with the AONB'.*

The Chilterns Conservation Board echoed and amplified the inspector's view in a letter to you in January.

Maintaining Sonning Common's separation from surrounding settlements and preventing conurbation with Reading remains a key priority for the revised Neighbourhood Plan, which has been under development for 18 months now.

Consequently, SON 26, the area of open countryside site behind SON 6, will not be taken forward under the Neighbourhood Plan revision. Following two residents' survey exercises and several public consultation events the view remains clear that village residents firmly want to keep Sonning Common separate and distinct from surrounding settlements.

The plain intent of this application is contrary to the spatial strategy of the SCNP and threatens the clearly expressed opinion of the local community.

Our Planning Committee notes also that this is an outline application, making it extremely important to apply firm conditions to the development of this site. Members strongly recommend that future housing is limited to two-storeys in height. And, as noted by your tree officer, future development should be adequately separated from the boundaries with numbers 56 and 80 Kennylands Road to safeguard root protection zones.

In its design brief for SON 6 (see attached), our SCNP sets out the need for deep, planted areas to adequately screen this site from the Kennylands Road and the AONB.

For all the reasons outlined above the parish's Planning Committee urges SODC to reject this unsuitable and dishonest application.

The Parish Council would also like to re-iterate its earlier offer to take on and maintain the public open space area within the original application to ensure that this important resource can be looked after and properly enjoyed by residents.

Please keep the Parish Council informed of all developments in relation to this proposal.  
Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Ros Varnes  
Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council (On behalf of the Planning Committee)

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Parish Office

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Ms Nicola Smith  
Major Applications Planning Officer  
SODC  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon OX14 4SB

Friday 05 June 2020

Dear Ms Smith

**Re: P20/SO626/FUL. Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 (details of levels prior to foundations), 9 (parking and manoeuvring areas retained) and 16 (tree protection) of application P18/S2631/FUL for various alterations, including garage enlargements and window and internal layout changes for the construction of 25 dwellings together with associated landscaping and public open space (as amended by plans received on 22 May 2020) on land to the rear of 44 Kennylands Road RG4 9JT.**

Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee considered the above amended application at its meeting on Monday 01 June 2020. Members were deeply concerned about the proposal to change the layout of the approved scheme.

The parish's support for the approved scheme was given following extensive and protracted negotiations with Pro Vision, on behalf of the developer, TA Fisher.

Finally, a way forward was agreed, allowing the developer to increase housing numbers on-site while respecting the site's particular complexities, the adjacent AONB setting, the privacy of existing residents and the spatial strategy of the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP): primarily to keep Sonning Common separate and distinct from surrounding settlements.

The applicant's proposal to alter the site layout once again, by removing the garage from the end of the access road at Plot 18, represents a breach of faith by the developer and conflicts with the company's assurances that the site would be developed in line with the adopted SCNP, which is the most recent planning policy for the site.

The proposal to remove the garage signifies the developer's clear intent to attempt to extend development into the adjacent Orchard at Alpen Rose, which would, in turn, potentially open the way to the development of the large, adjoining SON 26 site, which is within the village's AONB setting. (An attempt by Gallagher Estates to develop SON 26 failed at appeal in 2018).

The Orchard was originally proposed by TA Fisher as part of this site (see attached an aerial map of the original site promoted by TAF) but that proposition was rejected on appeal and rejected by the current SCNP. The Orchard is still being promoted by its owners and was considered again for potential housing development as part of the Neighbourhood Plan revision. However, following widespread research and consultation with residents, the SCNP working party has decided not to take it forward.

Turning to this current amended application, which must be judged on its merits, the Planning Committee resolves, reluctantly, to not object to the amended proposal provided that specific conditions are met. Namely that:

- Strategic planting around the southern side of the site is improved. The hedgerow screening in this part of the site is particularly weak (see the attached arboricultural assessment from the P18/S2631 application) and would be strengthened by additional tree-planting.

Members recommend that high quality trees, which could be given TPO protections, are planted in the oval-shaped zone marked up on the latest TAF layout (site map attached). Members recommend that any trees planted, under the direction of your tree officer, should be at least 4-5 metres high and 10-years-old.

Additional tree-planting in the marked zone would enhance screening, improve the amenity space and help mark the agreed end-point of this development as well as contribute to SCNP policy ENV2b of tree-planting within sites to contribute to local character.

- Protected trees and their root zones are safeguarded.
- The developer is encouraged to create a landscape buffer strip, outside the gardens of numbers 13, 14, 16 and 17 of the new development, which could be accessed from beside 46 Kennylands Road. The ability to position suitable planting within this buffer zone and outside the new garden boundaries would ensure that planting could not be removed at a later date. This would enhance the site's screening from existing residents and better protect their privacy. Existing residents and the Parish Council would be open to further discussions with TA Fisher/their agents about this prospect.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. Members request that you keep the Parish Council informed of all developments in relation to this proposal.

Yours sincerely



Ros Varnes  
Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council (On behalf of the Planning Committee)