

Sonning Common Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the Village Hall on Monday 02 November 2015 at 1915 hours.

- Present:** Mrs Lewis (chairman), Mr Rawlins, Mr Richens, Mr Reynolds, Mr Kedge, (ex-officio), Mrs Varnes (Deputy Parish Clerk).
- P16/074** Apologies for absence: Mr Rust.
- P16/075** Declarations of interest: none.
- P16/076** Public consultation time: Mr Roy Bennett sought informal, pre-application advice from the Planning Committee regarding his recently-acquired plot of land at the former prisoner of war camp on the Gallowstree Road (edge of Old Copse). Mr Bennett is interested in building two contemporary-style homes on the site. Members advised Mr Bennett to seek formal pre-application advice from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and expressed their reservations over the suitability of the site for development due to its location outside the village's built area within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- P16/077** New applications:
077.01/P15/S3372/HH. The construction of a single-storey extension to the rear of 14 Grove Road RG4 9RL. After discussion the committee voted unanimously to recommend the application for approval.
077.02/P15/S3399/HH. The enlargement of two roof lights at 86 Peppard Road RG4 9RP. After discussion the committee voted unanimously to recommend the application for approval.
- P16/078** Applications granted:
078.01/P15/S2919/HH. A single-storey rear extension at 9 Green Lane RG4 9NA. Noted.
078.02/P15/S2980/HH. The demolition of the existing single-storey garage and the erection of a double-storey extension to create a new family/dining room plus additional bedroom and en-suite at 60 Orchard Avenue RG4 9LT. Noted.
078.03/P15/S2880/HH. A two-storey rear extension (amendment to approved scheme P15/S0922/HH) at 10 Sedgewell Road RG4 9TA. Noted.
078.04/P15/S2805/FUL. The removal of Condition 5 (parking) of planning permission P97/S0498 - 47B Woodlands Road RG4 9TD. Noted.
- P16/079** Appeal allowed:
APP/Q3115/W/15/3022094. The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted for the construction of a two-storey house with accommodation in the roof space, parking provision and associated landscaping on land adjacent to 31 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD. Members expressed their dismay at the granting of planning permission for this new dwelling and resolved to ask the deputy clerk to send a letter to John Howell MP on their behalf (see attached).
- P16/080** Suggestions for future agenda items: members resolved to include on the agenda for the next meeting a discussion of parish council representation at the SODC Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 18 November 2015 at which planning application P15/S2778/FUL (2A Grove Road) is due to be discussed.

The meeting closed at 1958.

Date of next meeting: Monday 16 November 2015 at 1915.

Chairman: Dated:

SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

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Mr John Howell MP

05 November 2015

Dear Mr Howell

Members of the Planning Committee wish to register their dismay at the recent decision by a Government Planning Inspector to allow a new three-storey detached house to be built in the former garden of 31 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common.

This is despite well-considered objections to the application by residents and this Planning Committee and South Oxfordshire District Council which had refused the application (P14/S3419/FUL) in the Spring.

The Inspector's decision to permit this unsuitable development is in spite of the Government's own legislation, introduced in June 2010 to prevent the over-development of neighbourhoods by developing garden areas.

Regrettably, this decision has paved the way for a three-storey, three-bedroom house to be shoe-horned between existing residential properties and for an ugly shared access with 31 Woodlands Road to be constructed, which will be out of character with the area. Separation distances between adjacent properties will be minimal and the new dwelling will overlook neighbouring one-storey properties in Appletree Close, undermining the privacy of existing residents.

Sadly, this is just the latest example in a series of cases in Sonning Common where planning applications - objected to by residents and the parish council and refused by the district council – were granted on appeal by a Planning Inspector.

The decisions to allow 10 new houses to be built behind the Indian restaurant and the card/gift shop, in Wood Lane, are also cases in point. The Government promotes the sustainability of town and village centres. Yet, how can town and village centres become more sustainable by providing additional shops and services when potential space for this provision is given over to residential development?

The village centre is becoming increasingly busy leading to traffic concerns and more demand for car-parking spaces. Where is the space for additional car-parking provision now?

The Planning Committee recognises the need for new housing but it is vital that development occurs in the right places. Finding the most suitable sites for development, in consultation with residents, is the purpose of our Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Please, Mr Howell, for the sake of our residents and our village character, listen to local views, respect local democracy and use your influence to uphold the principles of sustainable development and prevent further detrimental development from taking place in our village.

Yours sincerely



Ros Varnes

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