

# Sonning Common Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the Village Hall, Sonning Common, on Monday 19 June 2017 at 1900 hrs.

Present: Mr Rust (chairman), Mrs Lewis, Mr Rawlins, Mr Kedge, Mr Stoves and Mrs Varnes (Deputy Parish Clerk).

P18/041 Apologies for absence: Mr Fort, Mrs Phillips-Tilbury.

P18/042 Declarations of interest: none.

P18/043 Public consultation time: 17 residents were present in relation to agenda item P18/044.01, the proposal by T A Fisher to build 30 new homes on SON 5. Two representatives of the applicant and agent attended along with a Henley Standard reporter.

P18/044 New applications:

044.01/P16/S3707/O. Outline application for a residential development of 30 dwellings with matters of access and layout for consideration and scale, appearance and landscaping reserved (alterations to position of dwellings and parking spaces, housing mix changed, vehicle tracking and arboricultural impact assessment updated, biodiversity calculator, daylight and sunlight study and indicative landscaping provided as shown on amended plans and supporting documents received on 8 May 2017) at 44 Kennylands Road RG4 9JT.

Mrs Miles, from Pro-vision, the applicant's agent, outlined why she felt the proposed scheme should be supported. She argued that there was no detailed justification for a restriction of the net developable area of the site; the proposed housing density was appropriate to meet housing needs; open space within the scheme was in excess of requirements; parking spaces were sufficient; the scheme was compliant with policies within the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan and district council's Core Strategy; and the proposal respected the site's proximity to the AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Residents outlined their strenuous objections to the proposed scheme. These included the failure of the proposed site layout to respect the adjacent AONB and the village's landscape setting, which would be adversely affected by the scheme; the number of new homes proposed – 30 instead of the 22 agreed within the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP); the proposal's housing densities being much higher than those in the surrounding area; the unacceptability of parking spaces in the access road; inaccuracies in the landscaping proposals (with much of the new planting being proposed already existing in residents' gardens); the inadequate size of proposed affordable housing; and the road layout next to the Alpen Rose site.

After much discussion members voted unanimously to recommend rejection of the application (see letter attached) because:

- it contravened the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan in terms of its spatial strategy (preserving the landscape setting of the village and keeping it separate and distinct from neighbouring settlements); and its proposal for an excessive number of new homes – 30 instead of 22
- the village's landscape setting, next to the AONB, would be permanently damaged and degraded by the scheme
- the proposed sizes of affordable housing were inadequate
- parking spaces along the access road were unacceptable
- the hammer head road arrangement next to Alpen Rose was unnecessary for turning. It was felt more houses could be accommodated in that area, which was well screened from the adjacent AONB.

044.02/P17/S1858/HH. The construction of a detached garage at 15 Peppard Road RG4 9SS. After discussion members recommended unanimously that the application be refused on the grounds that it was an inappropriate development, excessive in height and would be intrusive on neighbouring properties.

(The meeting was suspended at 2000 and reconvened at 2140 after the full council meeting which followed).

P18/045 To note:

P17/S2081/LDP. A certificate of lawful development is being sought for increasing the size of a dormer window to create a larger bathroom and bedrooms at 2 Old Copse Gardens RG4 9TH. Noted.

P18/046 Application granted:

P17/S1306/HH. A part single-storey extension and part side first-floor extension and new porch at 15 Reades Lane RG4 9LL. Noted.

P18/047 Applications refused: none.

P18/048 Notice of appeal:

APP/Q3115/W/17/3173144. A notice of appeal has been received against the refusal of planning permission on application P16/S2759/FUL – the change of use of woodland to ancillary domestic garden land and retention of the turfed ramp at Tacit, 47 Shiplake Bottom RG9 5HH. Noted.

P18/049 Status reports:

049/01. Update on the inquiry into the breach of planning consent at 31a Woodlands Road and the current planning application to amend the planning conditions.

The deputy clerk confirmed that the Parish Office was liaising with South Oxfordshire District Council's planning enforcement team over the breach of planning consent at 31a Woodlands Road. Further information would follow.

049.02. The Memorial Hall Field project. Update provided.

P18/050 Matters for future agendas: none.

The meeting closed at 2145.

Date of next meeting: Monday 03 July 2017 at 1915.

Chairman: ..... Dated: .....

# SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

VILLAGE HALL, WOOD LANE  
SONNING COMMON, OXON, RG4 9SL

**Clerk – Philip Collings**

**Tel 0118 972 3616**

**Email: [clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk)**

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Mr Paul Lucas  
Planning Officer  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon OX14 4SB

Thursday 13 July 2017

Dear Mr Lucas

**Re: P16/S3707/O. Amended outline application for a residential development of 30 dwellings at 44 Kennylands Road RG4 9JT.**

Members of the Planning Committee considered the above application at their meeting on 19 June 2017 and voted unanimously to recommend to SODC a rejection of it.

I refer to our Planning Committee's earlier response, dated 16 December 2016, in which they outline, in considerable detail, their strenuous objections to the proposal. Members do not consider that the application has changed in any significant way since then and so the concerns expressed in our earlier communication remain current and valid.

In summary, members consider the proposal to be contrary to the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP) in terms of the housing numbers proposed – 30 instead of 22; and in terms of its design and layout.

They believe the proposal, in its current form, would cause permanent and serious harm to the landscape setting of village, next to a prized AONB; the site itself; and to the privacy and amenity values of existing residents.

Additional concerns expressed by councillors and residents at the meeting related to:

- **the unacceptability of parking spaces in the access road**
- **inaccuracies in the landscaping proposals (with much of the new planting being proposed already existing in residents' gardens)**
- **the inadequate size of proposed affordable housing**
- **and the road layout next to Alpen Rose.**

I do not wish to repeat in detail what has been already said. However, I will take this opportunity to express the strongly-held belief of our members and many residents that this site is a special case. The site, SON 5, has specific sensitivities and complexities which require it to be considered on an individual basis rather than by the application of blanket planning policy.

Why do we consider SON 5 to be a special case?

1. It is adjacent to an AONB of exceptional quality, as recognised by expert landscape architects. The need to preserve and enhance the village's landscape setting, in relation to the adjoining AONB, and the desire to keep Sonning Common separate and distinct from neighbouring settlements is a primary strategic objective of the adopted SCNP.

The proposed site layout does not respect the site's proximity to the AONB. For example:

- large two-storey houses are proposed for next to the AONB when 1-storey or 1.5 storey homes would be less intrusive on the landscape
  - the proposed scheme does not make proper use of the southern corner of the site, next to Alpen Rose, for new housing. This area is lower-lying than other parts of the site and is well-screened from the AONB by mature trees and hedging
  - the proposed housing number is excessive for the site.
2. The specific complexities and sensitivities of the site mean that its true net developable area, as recognised by the agent, is less than one hectare. The chalk nature of this previously-mined site, with inherent risks from sinkholes and solution pipes, limits the extent of the development that should take place.
  3. This proposed high density housing development would abut a residential area of particularly low density along the Kennylands Road. While it is accepted that such low stocking densities cannot be replicated in a modern housing development, nevertheless the scheme should attempt to blend better with its surroundings by reducing the proposed housing numbers and placing similarly-sized new housing next to the existing.

A total of 17 residents attended the Planning Committee meeting at which this application was discussed. It is difficult to convey in words just how angry and frustrated residents feel about what they see as an attempt to subvert their democratic will, as expressed through the SCNP.

This site was included, reluctantly, as an allocated site within the SCNP. The Parish Council, Neighbourhood Plan Working Party and residents were reluctant to include it because of its specific complexities and sensitivities. It was felt the number of new homes this site could comfortably accommodate was 20 – a concession was made to increase that to 22. The 30 new homes now being proposed is excessive for the site.

We urge SODC, once again, to recognise the permanent harm that would be caused to this area of village and the amenity values of existing residents by allowing this application to proceed in its current form. If the proposal proceeds as is, we urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to reject it.

Yours sincerely



Ros Varnes  
Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council