

# Sonning Common Parish Council

## Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the Village Hall, Sonning Common, on Monday 19 August 2019 at 1915 hrs.

Present: Mr Rawlins (chairman), Mrs Lewis, Mr Kedge, Mr Scott-Giles, Mr Stoves, Mrs Diwell, Mrs Varnes (Deputy Parish Clerk), 10 residents and a Henley Standard representative.

P20/061 Apologies for absence: Mr Coombs.

P20/062 Declarations of interest: Mr Stoves declared an interest in agenda item 064.01 and Mr Rawlins in item 064.02.

P20/063 Public consultation time: 10 residents attended the meeting in relation to both new applications.

P20/064 New applications:

064.01/P19/S2401/PIP (Permission in Principle). The proposed erection of a new, detached residence with associated access following the removal of the existing detached garage serving the host dwelling at 67 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD.

After discussion members unanimously resolved to recommend the rejection of the proposal on the grounds of it being over-development, inappropriate infill, intrusive to neighbours and detrimental to the neighbouring Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see letter attached).

(Mr Stoves moved to the floor for the discussion and voting on this application).

064.02/P19/S2312/FUL. The construction of a three-bedroom dwelling on land to the rear of 4-6 Woodlands Road with a new access road off Hazel Gardens and associated external works at 4 Woodlands Road RG4 9TE.

After discussion members unanimously resolved to recommend the rejection of the proposal due to it being over-development, inappropriate infill, intrusive to neighbours and detrimental to the character of the surrounding area (see letter attached).

(Mr Rawlins moved to the floor for the discussion and voting on this application).

P20/065 Applications granted:

065.01/P19/S1950/HH. A single-storey rear extension at 52 Essex Way RG4 9RG. Noted.

065.02/P19/S1854/HH. A single-storey front and side extension with internal alterations at The Mulberry, Blounts Court Road RG4 9RS. Noted.

065.03/P19/S1614/HH. A single-storey rear extension at Rosewood, Gallowstree Road, Peppard Common RG9 5HS. Noted.

P20/066 To discuss and agree:

Recommendations for establishing a street-naming protocol with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) for future residential developments in Sonning Common. (Given the number of new housing developments taking place and expected to take place in the village in coming years, it is recommended by the Parish Office that a street-naming protocol be agreed with SODC).

Also, to make a recommendation to SODC for an appropriate name for the new six-dwelling residential development at the site formerly known as 69-71 Peppard. The developer has proposed the name 1-4 Sladeswood.

Members agreed that a street-naming protocol should be established and asked the deputy clerk to write to SODC outlining their recommendations (see email attached). They recommended that the 6 new dwellings on the site formerly known as 69-71 Peppard Road be named 69a, 69b, 69c and 71a, 71b and 71c Peppard Road.

P20/067 To receive updates on:

067.01. The Memorial Hall Field project to create new sport and recreation facilities off Reades Lane.

Mr Rawlins confirmed that, on behalf of the Memorial Hall Field Working Party, he had recently submitted to SODC an outline planning application for groundworks on the site.

067.02. The implementation of landscaping planning conditions at Lea Meadow and the response from Bewley Homes to the Planning Committee's recommendation that appropriate low-level lighting be installed along the footpath linking Lea Meadow with the Kennylands Road.

The deputy clerk informed members that Bewley Homes would not be installing low-level lighting along the footpath and had said that this was a matter for residents. She said that no further update on the implementation of planning conditions had been received from SODC.

067.03. The planning enforcement investigation into the fence at 50 Wood Lane.

The deputy clerk reported that a planning enforcement investigation had concluded that the fence at 50 Wood Lane required planning permission due to its height and proximity to the public highway. The householders were now required to apply for planning permission retrospectively or change the fence.

P20/068 Matters for future agendas: none were suggested.

The meeting closed at 20.30

Date of next meeting: Monday 02 September 2019 at 1915.

Chairman: .....

Dated: .....

# SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

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

Clerk – Philip Collings

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Mr Paul Lucas  
SODC Planning Officer  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon OX14 4SB

Tuesday 20 August 2019

Dear Mr Lucas

**Re P19/S2401/PIP. The proposed construction of a new, detached residence with associated access following the removal of the existing detached garage serving the host dwelling at 67 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD.**

Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee considered the above application at its meeting of Monday 19 August 2019. Members strenuously and unanimously object to permission in principle being granted for this proposed development.

Their chief objections to this proposed backland development are as follows:

- This proposal would extend the building line towards the immediately adjacent Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), having an urbanising impact and causing detriment to the public view from the public footpath running through the AONB.
- It would have an adverse impact on the character of the area since the application does not comply with the general pattern of development in the area.
- It does not qualify under local planning policies, including the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan, as being an appropriate infill development since it is not filling in a small gap in an otherwise built up area and is not closely surrounded by buildings. Rather, it is surrounded by gardens and the AONB.
- The development would create noise and disturbance and intrude unacceptably on the privacy of surrounding neighbours.

The committee is of the opinion that this proposal is largely unchanged from the 2015 proposal (P15/S2006/FUL) for a new dwelling in the garden of 67 Woodlands Road. This application was refused by SODC on 11 June 2015 and an appeal against that decision dismissed on 07 March 2016.

The appeal inspector, Amanda Blicq, notes in her report that this site does not qualify as being a suitable infill plot for residential development, as required by Policy CSR1. She states: "I disagree with the premise that the appeal plot is a small gap site closely surrounded by buildings."

She says that residential development on this site would appear, "isolated and unrelated to the building pattern of the linear frontage, or existing backland development" and continues:

"It would encroach into the rear amenity space, reducing openness and obstructing views across the adjacent gardens and the adjacent field. The stretch of undeveloped gardens in this area acts as a visual buffer between the AONB and the buildings on Woodlands Road. The development would shift the building pattern closer to the AONB boundary and also diminish the benefits of the remaining undeveloped gardens on either side. The dwelling would also be relatively prominent from the public right of way which crosses the field, from within the AONB."

The inspector notes that the development of this site would be contrary to planning policies CSR1, CSEN1, D1, H4, C4 and G2.

She concludes: "I consider that the harm to the character and appearance of the area, the setting of the AONB together with the adverse effect of living conditions of occupiers of nearby properties, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits arising from one additional dwelling on this site."

In arguing the case for this proposal, the applicant's agent quotes planning guidance relating to urban areas where efficient use of land is recommended. However, Sonning Common is defined as a rural location by the Office of National Statistics and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. (Sunning Common's rural designation was recently confirmed to the Parish Office by the Programme Director of Better Broadband for Oxfordshire as only public buildings in qualifying rural areas met the eligibility criteria for free, full-fibre broadband).

For the reasons outlined above, the committee urges you to refuse this application. We would be very grateful if you could keep us informed as to the progress of this application. If you are considering approving it, we ask, in view of the Parish Council's objections, that it be referred to your Planning Committee for a decision.

Finally, in view of this being the holiday season we ask that you consider any comments received from residents after your published deadline of 21 August 2019.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ros Varnes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ros Varnes  
Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council

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Parish Office

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Ms Davina Sarac  
SODC Planning Officer  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon OX14 4SB

Tuesday 20 August 2019

Dear Ms Sarac

**Re P19/S2312/FUL. The proposed construction of a new, three-bedroom dwelling on land to the rear of 4-6 Woodlands Road with a new access road off Hazel Gardens and associated external works at 4 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD.**

Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee considered the above application at its meeting of Monday 19 August 2019. Members strenuously and unanimously object to this proposed development.

Their chief objections to this proposal are as follows:

- It is contrary to planning policy, of poor overall design, oppressive and would have adverse amenity and environmental impacts.
- It represents a gross over-development of the plot with insufficient separation distances between neighbouring properties. It is proposed to site the new dwelling just 0.6m from the boundary of 4 Woodlands Road. The development would extend two-thirds of the way along the existing residents' garden fence, causing visual intrusion and harming their privacy.
- The separation distances to 4 and 6 Woodlands Road would be some 20 metres, falling below SODC's guideline of 25m.
- The proposal does not comply with the sylvan character of the surrounding area. The plot width is unacceptably narrow and the alignment does not fit with the general pattern of development in the area.
- It would threaten established trees with Tree Protection Orders on them, particularly the magnificent ash tree, which is of architectural importance and valued by local residents.
- There is no established use or right of access to this site for safety and environmental reasons. The land has been laid to amenity and landscape planting use for decades – at the direction of the local planning authority - and residents pay the Parish Council to maintain the established hedgerow along Hazel Gardens.
- The proposed dwelling would overshadow plots 1 and 2 of the new Knole Homes' development.

In summary:

- This cramped overdevelopment would degrade the character of the area and street scene and be contrary to policies CSR1, CSQ3, CSEN1, G2, G6, D1 and H4.
- It is in stark conflict with Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP) policies on infill, housing, design and environment (H3, H4, D1, D1b, ENV2a and ENV2b). Policy guidance is attached.
- It would have an adverse impact on trees, contrary to policies CSEN1, G2, G6, C9, H4 and SCNP policies: ENV2a and 2b.
- It would be an oppressive development with adverse effects on amenity, contrary to policies CSQ3, G2, G6, D4, H4(ii) and (iv), and SCNP policies H3, D1, D1b. (Note H4(ii) re SODC Design guide separation distances.)
- Adequate access, parking and turning requirements are not met by the proposal, which is contrary to policies D2, H4(iv), T1 and T3.

The committee considers this application to be very similar to the earlier application (P12/S1914/FUL) for a two-storey, three-bedroom house on the site and fully supports the case made by South Oxfordshire District Council in refusing it.

The previous application was refused on 08 November 2012 because, “the proposed dwelling would result in a cramped development which would form an intrusive feature in the landscape strip along Hazel Gardens and would result in the degradation of the street scene”.

SODC also concluded at the time that: “The proposed development would threaten the health and longevity of the trees on the site that are of significant amenity value and the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. The loss of trees would be harmful to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.”

The committee considers that this proposed development would have an urbanising impact and cause harm to the village’s rural setting. Members wish you to note that Sonning Common is defined as a rural location by the Office of National Statistics and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

For the reasons outlined above, the committee urges you to refuse this application. We would be very grateful if you could keep us informed as to the progress of this application. If you are considering approving it, we ask, in view of the Parish Council’s objections, that it be referred to your Planning Committee for a decision.

Finally, in view of this being the holiday season we ask that you consider any comments received from residents after your published deadline of 20 August 2019.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ros Varnes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ros Varnes  
Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council

Email from Deputy Clerk to Sally-Anne Worsley, of SODC, dated 03/09/19:

Dear Sally

My apologies for not responding to you sooner about recommending street names for the 6 new properties at 69-71 Peppard Road. I was on annual leave.

Our Planning Committee members discussed the issue at their last meeting. They wish to recommend to you that the properties be named 69a, 69b, 69c and 71a, 71b and 71c Peppard Road. This format was adopted for the new flats on the site of the old NatWest bank on Peppard Road and works well. Members dislike the suggestion of 1-4 Sladeswood. They feel that it would be unnecessarily confusing to have part of Peppard Road called something else, particularly for the Royal Mail and other deliverers, and Sladeswood bears no relationship to the site.

With new residential development taking place in the village currently and expected to continue, members feel it would be wise to agree a street-naming protocol with SODC. In the past the Parish Council was consulted by SODC at an early stage and asked to recommend potential names for new developments before any suggestions were made by any other party.

This system worked very well. For example, in the case of the 65-home development at Lea Meadow, on the Peppard Road, the Parish Council recommended a number of herb-related names because of the site's close proximity to the Herb Farm. These names were drawn from a list of potential street names, which the Planning Committee had drawn up previously and still retains.

We wish to suggest that our Planning Committee revisits this list and revises it in line with known new developments and that SODC consults the parish at the first opportunity when new street name suggestions are required, so that recommendations may be drawn from our list. It would be helpful to have some guidance from SODC on preferred street-naming criteria, which we could refer to in building our list, in consultation with the local community.

Please confirm if you are happy with this suggestion and your decision on the naming of the new dwellings at 69-71 Peppard Road.

Many thanks

Ros Varnes  
Deputy Parish Clerk to Sonning Common Parish Council  
0118 972 3616