

# Sonning Common Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held in the Village Hall,  
Sonning Common, on Monday 16 March 2020 at 1900 hrs.

Present: Mr Rawlins (chairman), Mrs Lewis, Mr Stoves, Mrs Diwell and Mr Collings (Parish Clerk). Also two members of the public.

P20/153 Apologies for absence: Mr Fort.

P20/154 Declarations of interest: none.

P20/155 Public consultation time: Mrs Pearman and Mrs Snowden, both of Kennylands Road, attended the meeting in relation to agenda item 156.01.

P20/156 New applications:

156.01/P20/SO459/FUL. The creation of a permanent public vehicle access, in the form of a priority junction, to Memorial Hall Field using an existing temporary construction access onto Reade's Lane which was built by Linden Homes for the construction of their housing development to the north of Memorial Hall. Also, the creation of six car parking spaces, in addition to the existing five spaces created by Linden Homes, with one of the new spaces being for disabled drivers at Memorial Hall Field, Reade's Lane RG4 9LL.

After consideration the committee resolved to fully support the application.

156.02/SO626/FUL. The variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 (details of levels prior to foundations), 9 (parking and manoeuvring areas retained) and 16 (tree protection) on application P18/S2631/FUL for various alterations, including garage enlargements and window and internal layout charges. The application relates to the construction of 25 dwellings together with associated landscaping, access and public open space on land to the rear of 44 Kennylands Road RG4 9JT.

After consideration the committee resolved to object to the application (see attached letter).

156.03/P20/SO433/FUL. The restoration and change of use of barns to create five dwellings at Bishopswood Farm, Reade's Lane, Gallowstree Common RG4 9DR.

After consideration the committee resolved to fully support the application.

156.04/P20/SO798/DIS. The discharge of condition 3 (external materials) on planning permission P19/S1198/HH for a single-storey rear extension, replacement windows, rendered insulation to existing brick work, dormer design and the demolition of a sun-room at 45 Woodlands Road RG4 9TD. Noted.

P20/157 Applications granted:

157.01/P19/S4108/FUL. The demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of two detached dwellings (four-bedroom) with garage at Indaba Lodge, Peppard Road RG4 9NJ. Noted.

157.02/P20/S3092/HH. A single-storey rear extension at 96 Kennylands Road RG4 9JX. Noted.

157.03/P20/SO012/FUL. The removal of condition 5 from application P16/S1603/FUL for the conversion and extension of a stable block into one-bedroom self-contained holiday accommodation at Pond Farm, Blackmore Lane RG4 9NU. Noted.

P20/158 Matters for future agendas: none raised.

The meeting closed at 1955.

Date of next meeting: Monday 06 April 2020 at 1915.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....

# SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

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

Monday 30 March 2020

Dear Ms Smith

**Re: P20/S0626/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 on land to the rear of 44 Kennylands Road RG4 9JT.**

Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee considered the above application at its meeting of Monday 16 March 2020. Members were deeply concerned about the proposal to change the layout of the approved scheme and do not consider the proposed changes to be 'minor' in any way.

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, under the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan's pre-application protocol. A copy of a letter from the parish's Planning Committee, dated 27 November 2018, is attached confirming the parish's support for the now agreed scheme and urging SODC to support it.

The applicant's proposal to significantly change the site layout at this late stage - when development is advancing on-site - is a complete breach of the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP) and represents a breach of faith by the developer, TA Fisher. (Please note pages 86-89 of the SCNP and particularly the two opening paragraphs of page 86, which provides the background and explicit intent of the plan.)

This application to alter the site layout conflicts with the developer's assurances, provided previously to Parish representatives and the community and accepted in good faith, that the site would be developed in line with the adopted SCNP, which is the most recent planning policy for the site.

Consequently, the Planning Committee vigorously objects to the proposal to amend the approved site layout around Plot 18 and urges South Oxfordshire District Council – in the strongest possible terms – to refuse it.

Following pre-application discussions with the Parish, TA Fisher agreed to position a garage at the end of the internal access road outside Plot 18. This agreement was later reflected in application P18/S2631/FUL and supported by the Planning Committee because it provided reassurance that the developer would not seek to extend development into the adjoining site, the orchard of Alpen Rose – an outcome that would significantly conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan's policy of maintaining Sonning Common's separation from surrounding settlements and avoiding conurbation with Reading.

The Parish Council and Sonning Common residents have always strongly opposed the development of the Orchard at Alpen Rose as it would potentially open the way to the development of the large, adjoining SON 26 site, which is within the village's AONB setting.

An attempt to build more than 90 homes on an extended SON 6 site, instead of the 26 new homes allocated to it under the Neighbourhood Plan, was successfully defeated at appeal due, in large part, to the detrimental impact on the neighbouring AONB.

In point 34 of his decision the Inspector notes:

*The appeal site is in the semi-enclosed dipslope landscape character type. The site displays many of the characteristics of the LCT. The site is located adjacent to the Chilterns AONB and to the south is part of a wider area of open countryside. The site and the wider area of open countryside to the south have many of the attributes of the LCT and indeed incorporate some of those that are identified as the special qualities of the AONB, in particular the dry valleys, ridges and plateaus and wooded areas. These are physical attributes which*

*lead me to conclude that in itself, and in its wider context, the site is more than ordinary countryside and is in my view part of a valued landscape. 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.*

Application P20/S0626/FUL does not constitute a minor amendment to the planning consent but represents an attempt to significantly alter it. The Planning Committee does not accept that the proposed amendments to the layout can be dealt with under Section 73 because they are not minor and the overall nature of the proposed scheme would be significantly different to the approved scheme.

In addition to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan being the most recent planning policy for the site, a revision of the Plan is significantly underway and is not, "at an early stage", as incorrectly claimed in Pro Vision's letter to you of 14 February 2020.

Given all the background and the known history whereby there have been contractual arrangements between TA Fisher and the Alpen Rose land the concerns here are plainly not mere speculation. The plain intent of this application is contrary to the spatial strategy of the SCNP.

Under the revision process to date the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party has organised a Community Survey of all village households to inform the revision process and has held a public presentation in November 2019 as well as a public exhibition in February 2020 to engage with residents and establish their priorities for the future development of the village. A second public consultation on the revision process closed on 23 March and the results are currently being analysed.

Maintaining Sonning Common's separation from surrounding settlements and preventing conurbation with Reading remains a key priority for the revised Neighbourhood Plan.

Objection to this application is also made on design grounds. It is in conflict with SCNP policies D1b and ENV2. The previously agreed layout provided a more attractive design – recognising the enclosure of the site with a clear end-point in the south as required by the SCNP.

The revised design, as submitted, provides a drive, without purpose, all the way to the southern boundary and moves that land from being in private householder ownership, as previously indicated, to developer-owned land. Planting and softening in the previous design was much more effective and in keeping with local character.

The Parish Council has no objections to proposals to change the design of the residences being constructed, simply the site layout.

Members recommend to SODC that the proposal to change the site layout be rejected. Please keep the Parish Council informed of all developments in relation to this proposal, particularly if you are considering approving the plan. In this case we ask that the application is referred to SODC's Planning Committee for a decision.

Yours sincerely



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