

# Sonning Common Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the PLANNING COMMITTEE held via video conference on Monday 15 June 2020 at 1900 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 among committee members and a council officer.

Present: Mr Rawlins (chairman), Mr Kedge, Mr Giles, Mrs Lewis, Mr Fort, Mrs Diwell and Ros Varnes, Deputy Parish Clerk. Also present were Dr Kim Emerson, of Sonning Common Health Centre, a Henley Standard reporter and one member of the public.

P21/015 Apologies for absence: Mr Stoves.

P21/016 Declarations of interest: none.

P21/017 New application:

P19/S4576/O. Amended hybrid planning application for the development of a continuing care retirement community care village. Full planning permission for a 'village core' with 31 assisted living units and 16 care units and ancillary care facilities, community space, gardens, green space, landscaping and car parking areas with a further 26 assisted living units in blocks B1-B4. An outline application (all matters reserved except access) for 60 assisted living units, ancillary community space, gardens, green space and landscaping and car parking areas (as amended by plans received on 27 May 2020) on land at Little Sparrows, off the Blounts Court Road.

Dr Emerson, from Sonning Common Health Centre, outlined her continuing specific concerns about the proposed development. These included potential strains on the practice arising from a significant increase in numbers of elderly patients, problems with access and parking at the surgery, staff availability and recruitment and constraints on the expansion of the site.

Mr Fort took issue with a letter that had been sent to SODC on behalf of Inspired Villages claiming that the Parish Council had failed to engage with the proposed developer. He pointed out that three Inspired Villages' representatives had attended a meeting of the Planning Committee on 03 February 2020 to present their proposal to councillors and the 70 residents present. Both Mr Fort and Mrs Varnes confirmed that they had written to SODC refuting the applicant's claims. Mr Fort also drew attention to irregularities in emails sent to SODC supporting the application from non-residents of Sonning Common, which he was concerned could be potentially fraudulent.

Mr Kedge raised concerns about the proposed pathway to be used by retirement village residents to access the village centre. He said it was "virtually unusable by any elderly person".

After further discussion members agreed to unanimously recommend the refusal of the application. Mrs Varnes was asked to write to SODC confirming that all of the committee's previous objections remained and to draw attention to the 'urbanising' effect of some of the proposed amendments on the village environment (letter attached).

P21/018 Applications granted:

018.01/P20/S1299/HH. A two-storey side extension at 20 Reade's Lane RG4 9LP. Noted.

018.02/ P19/S1925/FUL. A detached dwelling with access, parking and amenity space at 1 Kennylands Road RG4 9JR. Noted.

P21/019 Application withdrawn:

P20/S0457/HH. A single-storey rear extension and balcony at 4 Gardeners Copse RG4 9JJ. Noted.

(The meeting was disconnected from Zoom at this point, so the following items were deferred to the next meeting).

- P21/020 To discuss and agree:  
Planning Committee representations in relation to the public hearing, beginning on 14 July 2020, on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034. (New written statements are required to be made by 5pm on 26 June).
- P21/021 Update on the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034.
- P21/022 Update following the committee's report to Planning Enforcement of new works at the Bishopswood Camp, Gallowstree Road.
- P21/023 Update on the application by the Johnson Matthey Technology Centre for a new Customer Innovation Centre and car park at Blounts Court Road.
- P21/024 Matters for future agendas.

The meeting closed at 1950.

Date of next meeting: Monday 06 July 2020 at 1900.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....

# SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office

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

Wednesday 24 June 2020

Dear Ms Smith,

**Re: P19/S4576/O. A hybrid planning application for the development of a continuing care retirement community care village. Full planning permission for a 'village core' with 31 assisted living units and 16 care units and ancillary care facilities, community space, gardens, green space, landscaping and car parking areas with a further 26 assisted living units in blocks B1-B4. An outline application (all matters reserved except access) for 60 assisted living units, ancillary community space, gardens, green space and landscaping and car parking areas (as amended by plans received on 27 May 2020) on land at Little Sparrows, off the Blounts Court Road, Sonning Common.**

Thank you for consulting Sonning Common Parish Council's Planning Committee on the above amended application. The committee considered this application at its meeting on Monday 15 June 2020 and members voted unanimously to recommend to SODC rejection of the proposal.

The amendments do not address any of the committee's previous objections, as outlined in our detailed letter of 13 February 2020. Hence all of those objections remain and I would draw your attention again to this letter (attached for your reference).

In addition, the committee is concerned that some of the proposed amendments – widening Blounts Court Road, installing street lighting etc. – would have an urbanising effect on a quiet, rural area that would increase light pollution and be detrimental to the AONB character and local wildlife populations.

The June Planning Committee was attended by Dr Kim Emerson, from Sonning Common Health Centre, who ably outlined the practice's concerns about the damaging impact the proposed retirement village would have on local health services.

We urge you to take on board our significant and numerous objections to this proposal which would impact severely on our community and undermine our emerging Neighbourhood Plan revision. Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely



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