

Minutes of Bucklebury Parish Council Planning Committee
Meeting held on Monday 27th January 2014 at 8.00pm in The Victory Room, Bucklebury.

Present: Mr. B. Dickens; Mr. A. Dunkerton; Mrs. P. W. Frankum; Mr. T. Banks; Mr. J. Brims; Mrs. L. Clarke; Mrs. A. Hillerton; Mr. T. Slatford; Mr. A. Aldridge; Mrs. H. Cairns; Mrs. H. Pratt(Clerk); Mr. G. Pask (District Councillor).

Apologies: Mr. A. Gilbert; Mr. T. Slatford.

Others: Mr. David Pearson (WBC); Mr. Bob Dray (WBC); Mr. Billington.

Declarations of Interest:

Mr. Brims declared an interest in application 13/03027/FUL as a member of Bucklebury Tennis Club.

Planning Training – Questions and Answers with David Pearson and Bob Dray.

Mr. Dickens introduced Mr. Pearson, WBC, Manager of the Eastern Area Planning Team and Mr. Dray, Senior Planner within the Easter Area Planning Team.

Mr. Dickens commented that parish councils consider and send back their comments on applications and in approximately 85% of cases WBC endorse the comments of BPC; does WBC consider the comments made by parish councils and what is their opinion of the comments made? Mr. Pearson commented that he views parish councillors as colleagues in the planning process, and that parish councils are a statutory consultee and in some instances the primary consultee. If an application complies with the Local Development Plan, that must be adhered to. However Bucklebury is within the AONB and is not a service village and therefore there is generally a strong case against development.

At the moment, BPC is not exploring a Neighbourhood Plan - is this the right thing to do? It is up to BPC to determine the need for a Neighbourhood Plan. If the Local Development Plan supports what the parish wants, a Neighbourhood Plan will not provide any extra assistance. Neighbourhood Plans are designed to show where local people would prefer development to go and not as a protection against development.

They are also proving very costly to produce, although there are some grants available.

There is a settlement boundary around Upper Bucklebury, new development is not permitted outside of the settlement boundary.

Mr. Pearson warned that there is tension between the localism policies and planning. House sales have been used to drive increases in the housing stock and as a result in some places development has been allowed on greenbelt land when applications have been taken to appeal. In addition there has been relaxation on planning rules in terms of extensions and some changes of use.

Mrs. Frankum commented that in the past developers have speculatively approached some parishioners about developing within their back gardens, within the settlement boundary. Would there be any specific planning issues with this type of proposal? In very general terms, providing the impact on existing dwellings was acceptable and access was sufficient, there are no obvious issues. Mrs. Frankum then asked about the possibility of moving the settlement boundary so that it is closer to buildings, rather than following the edge of curtilages in order to try and prevent this “garden grabbing” scenario. During the next stage of the Local Plan, settlement boundaries will be reviewed, however it is more difficult to protect land on the edge of settlements and on settlement boundaries.

Mrs. Clarke asked about the rate of agreement between WBC planning decisions and decisions made by planning inspectors when WBC decisions are taken to appeal. Historically, there has been a high level of agreement, however more recently appeal inspectors are becoming more “pro” development.

Mr. Aldridge commented on the consistency of planning applications. Mr. Pearson commented that Central Government think that Local Government is being too onerous on applicants. Currently only 45% of applications received by WBC are valid. Many councillors were surprised that a planning office, assigned to each application, visits the application site on at least one occasion and generally puts up the

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orange notice. When an application is referred to “Committee”, there is a site visit for every application, unless the site has already been recently visited.

Mrs. Clarke asked for clarity and guidance about dwellings not being increased by more than 50%. Mr. Pearson commented that the 50% rule is there for guidance and has been in place since 1999. It has caused more tension between officers, the public, members and parish councils than any other rule. Appeal decisions in the past have proved that applications don’t have to “tick all the boxes”, but are based on a balanced view; however an effort should be made to be consistent.

There being no more questions, Mr. Dickens thanked Mr. Pearson and Mr. Dray for attending the meeting.

- P1. 13/03200/HOUSE Stable Cottage, Upper Woolhampton.
Single storey extension – bedroom and bathroom.
This application adds approximately 50% to the footprint of the existing dwelling, however it reduces the size of the amenity space considerably. There is some question about how much of the land between the property and Carbinswood Lane is under the same ownership as the property and whether or not there is space for the second parking space within the curtilage.
The meeting was **closed** for Mr. Billington, the applicant to speak.
Mr. Billington said that Stable Cottage was originally one of the outbuildings of Bucklebury Place, but was developed as a completely separate dwelling in 2001. Mr. Billington understands that the hedge parallel to Carbinswood Lane is the boundary and that WBC Highways have claimed the strip inbetween.
The meeting was **reopened**.
BPC agreed **no objection** to the application, but it was felt that the concerns over loss of amenity space and the land ownership issues should be mentioned.
- P2. 13/03027/FUL Bucklebury Memorial Hall.
Installation of floodlighting to 2 Tennis Courts involving the erection of 6 no 10m columns mounted with 8 no floodlight lamps. Removal of 5 No redundant wooden columns with associated floodlights and overhead wiring.
As the applicant, it was agreed that BPC should **support** this application.
- P3. 13/03198/HOUSE Fernleigh, Burdens Heath.
Single storey extension.
BPC unanimously agreed **no objection** to this application.
- P4. 13/03014/FULD Bushnells Green Farmhouse.
Erection of new agricultural workers dwelling on an alternative siting from that approved by planning consent ref 13/00331/FULD dated April 2013, and removal of existing temporary timber chalet.
This application re-sites a dwelling which has already been approved for this location. BPC unanimously agreed **no objection** to this application.
- P5. 14/00047/AGRIC Kings Copse, Southend.
New access track.
The track will be a haul road, made of temporary hoggin across Bucklebury Common to Kings Copse, an SSSI. The route of the track appears to be completely new, although it may have existed historically.
BPC agreed **no objection** to this application on the grounds that the applicant said that there would be a very limited number of vehicle movements (one or two a year).

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P6. 13/02903/HOUSE Eaton, Turners Green.

New garage/car port construction.

BPC objected to this application; however an amendment has been received, removing one bay from the car port and thus reducing the footprint of the construction.

BPC agreed **no objection** to the amended application.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Next Planning Committee Meeting:	Monday 24 th February 2014, 8pm, Victory Room.
Next BPC Meeting:	Monday 10 th February 2014, 7.45pm, Memorial Hall.

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