

Wootton Rivers Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Planning Meeting held on 2nd March 2021

Present:	Cindy Creasy	Parish Council Chair
	David Butler	Parish Council Vice Chair
	Clare Bamforth	Councillor
	Dean Cowley	Councillor
	Nick Jones	Councillor
	Steve Rawlings	Councillor
	Anne Swift	Councillor
	Rob Mitchenall	Acting Clerk

Cindy Creasy welcomed councillors and members of the public to this meeting of the Parish Council as authorised by the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 issued during the current pandemic.

1. Declarations of Interest and the granting of dispensations.

Councillors were reminded of the Code for Conduct and the need to declare any interest relating to the items on the Agenda. None were declared.

Cindy Creasy advised that as a near neighbour to the development she had taken advice on whether she could be considered to have a pecuniary interest or bias on the planning application. It was judged that she would not.

2. Planning Application 21/00581/FUL –for the erection of a detached single storey 3 bed dwelling etc, adjacent to Church Barn – for Mr Neil & Mrs Maggie Worthington

Neil Worthington explained that the proposal was to build a smaller single storey house on land that he and his wife already owned which would enable them to continue living in the village. The design of the new house had no internal steps, wide doors and configured such that a “live in help” could be accommodated. The garden was small and easily managed. They were guided in the design by the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the building consisting of a series of smaller elements with pitched rooves linked by a central building with a sedum roof, rather than a typical bungalow with a large pitched and considerably higher roof. Their design had intentionally resulted in the “public” sides of the dwelling fronting the village street and the lane to Manor Barn having limited openings while the south and west elevations facing their garden were sheltered and had large windows letting in plenty of light.

The heating system was designed using economical and environmentally friendly air source heating and solar panels on the south facing roof would supplement their overall electricity needs.

Contributions from each of the councillors covered many similar points regarding the application, in general voicing their liking of the main features of the application, specifically:

Good sensitivity to surroundings: the site is surrounded by three important and historic village buildings viz. St Andrews church, Manor Farm and Wootton House.

Compliance with NDP requirements,

- the dwelling may be considered as infill,
- it met the preferred criteria of modest size and
- the design and use of materials were appropriate and in sympathy to the surroundings and rural nature of Wootton Rivers

Environmental issues: related to design, insulation, air source heating and low energy lighting

A point of concern for many of the councillors was the design of the entrance from the road. It was accepted that the initial response from Wiltshire Highways Dept had been favourable. The concern centred on the removal of a section of wall and the possibility that the resultant entrance with kerbing, could result in a rather hard urban look to the entrance area, inconsistent with the general rural look of the village.

Discussion ensued on the possibility and advantages/disadvantages of the entrance being moved either to the north side of the plot, entering directly from the privately owned lane to Manor Barn lane, either on to the proposed parking and garaging area or to the west of the plot, diametrically opposite the position of the front door. The Worthingtons had discussed the first option with the lane's owners, who were not in favour.

Several members of the public expressed their like of the low, broken design, the materials chosen and the way the dwelling sat in the setting in an unobtrusive way. Concern was raised that the glass roof light and external lighting could result in dark sky light pollution, an issue Neil Worthington said had been addressed in the design.

Following this discussion Cindy Creasy summed up the key points that would be incorporated in the PC's response to the Planning Authority:

- The site is important and central to the village, it being surrounded by three important buildings i.e. St Andrews Church, Manor Farm house and Wootton House, all listed buildings
- The size of the dwelling was as envisaged by the NDP to meet local needs, both for people downsizing and new families
- The size of the building, being a single storey three bed dwelling of a design to limit the roof height and to blend with the surroundings, was most appropriate and to ensure it remained that way permitted development rights should be withdrawn
- The scale of the overall dwelling and ancillary building was appropriate and did not overbuild on the plot, giving a pleasant open feeling to the development.
- The material chosen are in sympathy with the surrounding buildings
- The environmental designs incorporated good insulation, sedum roof, air source heating and solar panels were good

- The design of the dwelling and the materials chosen allowed it to sit well within the street scape, however there are concerns that the entrance design, requiring removal of a section of the wall and the building of a new entrance may adversely affect the area and would need careful consideration, including considering the viability of alternative entrance arrangement from the lane accessing Manor Barn.

Cindy Creasy confirmed that the full response to the Wiltshire Planning would be circulated to councillors for their final approval before submission. She emphasised that given the sensitivity of the site and the probability that the adjacent plot of land could be similarly proposed for development the PC's response will clearly explain the rationale for its decisions, both for Wiltshire Planning and as guidance for the appraisal of any future developments in the area.

Clare Bamforth proposed the motion, Dean Cowley seconded it and it was approved by all the councillors.

The full response from the PC to Wiltshire Planning is attached to these minutes. (Attachment A)

3. To agree a Response to Wiltshire Council's Consultation on their Local Plan Review

The attached document "Draft Response from Wootton Rivers PC to Wiltshire Council's Consultation on its Review of the "Local Plan" – for Discussion at the Meeting on March 2nd", had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the Meeting.

Cindy Creasy explained that she, Dean Cowley and Clare Bamforth had attended the video consultation meeting by Wiltshire Council.

Dean Cowley introduced the document to the meeting, explaining the background and rationale to the responses.

There was then some discussion by councillors followed by comments from Tony McGarry regarding the NDP document, particularly its use a benchmark for NDPs for three other villages in the area and the need to understand any development intentions of Ramsbury Estate, for example at Brimslade.

Anne Swift proposed the document be submitted to Wiltshire, Steve Rawlings seconded, all councillors supported the motion.

A copy of the final submission to Wiltshire Planning is attached to these minutes. (Attachment B)

Planning Meeting closed.

Next Parish Council Meeting is on Monday 15th March 2021.

Attachment A. to Minutes of Wootton Rivers Parish Council Planning Meeting: 2 March

Response to Wiltshire Council Planning Department re Planning Application 21/00581/FUL

The erection of a detached single storey 3 bed dwelling adjacent to Church Barn submitted by Mr & Mrs Worthington.

The submission plans and documents related to the development have been carefully assessed by WRPC councillors and discussed at this planning meeting.

The site is an important site in the village, sitting between three important and listed buildings, i.e. St Andrews Church, Manor Farm and Wootton House, the old rectory. The development now and in the future of any buildings in this area require special attention and consideration and recourse to the recommendations of the current Wootton Rivers Neighbourhood Development Plan. Thus the generic and overall criteria applied to this particular development should also apply to any future development nearby.

The size of the building both in terms of occupancy numbers and mass reflect the desire of the NDP for new houses to be of more modest size, suitable for all ages of occupancy rather than large new double storey houses with attendant high values. The proposed house meets the current needs of a couple downsizing but also in future, for families. To avoid future changes to upscale the dwelling from this ideal any approval to develop should be subject to withdrawal of permitted development rights

The buildings of the development, i.e., the house, garage and substantial garden store all sit well within the surrounding building and street-scapes. The design of single storey building with several low pitched rooves, created through the design of the overall dwelling as series of smaller buildings, has resulted in a building that does not overshadow the surrounding buildings; indeed it complements it and retains an effect of openness both within its own plot and with the surrounding built environment.

The materials used for walls and rooves reflect the agriculture nature of the Wootton Rivers area and of the building immediately behind the plot. The design itself has been optimised make good use of the plot location, the aspects (north and east) seen by the public from the road and the lane accessing Manor Barn and other houses are modest with a minimum of windows in the brick walls. The large windows to the south and west facing aspects look over the private garden and will not intrude upon existing surrounding properties nor the public view.

The new building is designed with economy and environmental issues in mind, the high degree of insulation proposed, the use of a sedum area on the house, an air sourced heating system and the use of discreetly placed solar panels all add to the environmental credentials and suitability of the house to this area of the village. Lighting will all be of energy efficient design and due notice should be made to keep exterior lighting to a minimum consistent with safety while preventing extraneous upward light from adversely impacting the dark skies of Wootton Rivers.

The PC notes that Highways have made no objection to the new entrance directly on to the main road, they consider it to be safe having taken notice of the good visibility in both directions, despite the slight reduction in visibility to the south should vehicles be parked in the parking area. The PC has noted that the wall through which the entrance will pass has no known historical importance and it is not currently known when it was originally constructed. However, the PC has some concerns regarding forming a new entrance through this wall, which together with the connecting kerbs and tarmac from road to gravel drive could result in an undesirable urban effect, out of keeping with the local street-scape. While it was not the view that that the proposed change was of such substantial harm that it should be refused on that basis, the PC would prefer that viable alternatives be explored, but would not insist on adoption if the only viable access alternative would be to the detriment to the ideal layout and form of the new development.

In conclusion the PC supports the application and felt that it had been put together with great consideration for this sensitive location, but notes concerns over the proposed entrance arrangements. We note that this will be considered and advised upon by the Conservation officer in their review of the development.

Attachment B. to Minutes of Wootton Rivers Parish Council Planning Meeting: 2 March

Response from Wootton Rivers PC to Wiltshire Council's Consultation on its Review of the "Local Plan" – for Discussion at the Meeting on March 2nd

Emerging Spatial Strategy

- We strongly support the focus on protecting the countryside and on building planning decisions on local (and democratic) decision-making
- We support the hierarchy proposed for housing development, of three Principal Settlements, then Market Towns and then Rural Areas and of the four Housing Market Areas (HMAs) of Chippenham, Trowbridge, Salisbury and Swindon
- We strongly support the view that planning should support rural jobs, rather than encouraging anything other than very short commutes, in order to reduce carbon emissions and private car use
- We agree that Neighbourhood Planning should be further encouraged as the means of expressing local needs and preferences
- We strongly support the "Swindon-B" option for the Swindon HMA (developing mainly around Wootton Bassett) in order to limit further growth of Marlborough, where the infrastructure is increasingly stretched

Empowering Rural Communities

- We agree that the priority for development should be proportional growth of Service Centres (Pewsey) and Large Villages (Burbage and Great Bedwyn)
- We agree that Rural Housing Needs Surveys will be important tools **but** they must focus on real community employment, not encourage or enable further commuting
- The suggestion that more/most Survey data should be collected online is **likely to discriminate unfairly** against people, especially older and/or less affluent people, who have less online access and/or capability
- We agree that being more specific about "affordable housing" will be helpful **but** terms like 'key workers', 'entry level', 'smaller homes' etc. will need unambiguous definition
- **We do not agree** that potential sites for development should be identified in Neighbourhood Plans for small villages, as this may prompt unwanted development proposals
- We support the plan to require developments of more than five dwellings to include 40% affordable housing
- As stated in our Neighbourhood Plan, we support the suggestion that significant extension of smaller, new homes should be prevented by denying "permitted development" rights

Core Policy 44

- We strongly agree with the constraints preventing developments of more than 20 houses or more than 5% of the current settlement size
- We strongly agree that development in villages should be limited to infill, **so are not comfortable** with the suggestion that development in villages should be "... generally limited to infill ...", which is too vague. The wording of the current definition of "infill" should be retained

Neighbourhood Plans

- We agree that a current NP may still be relevant and in line with the updated Local Plan
- We agree that it may be helpful to update a NP when material change has occurred e.g. after new development has taken place
- **We believe it to be utterly unreasonable, impractical and unaffordable for a small community to be required to produce a new Neighbourhood Plan every two years** (in the event that Wiltshire Council cannot meet its 5 year land supply target)
- If a NP is only effective for two years after it has been “made”, then villages need guidance on how they can contribute effectively to the Local Plan without creating a completely new Neighbourhood Plan

Other

- **We do not support** the idea of a 100 metre buffer, if it is meant to apply to the built area of small villages
- We strongly support the view that no development target should be set for “green space”
- We seek confirmation that Core Policy 48 will remain in the updated Plan, as its controls over the re-purposing of rural buildings are important to small villages