

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2009
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr P Jay (Town Mayor)	Cllr C Carritt
Cllr J Cooper	Cllr Mrs V Edwards
Cllr A Glees	Cllr Mrs A Grant
Cllr G Myatt	Cllr E Poskitt
Cllr P Redpath	Cllr Mrs P Richardson
Cllr Mrs E Stokes	Cllr I Thomas
Cllr B Yoxall	

Honorary Townsman I Lenagan and some 35 members of the public.

WTC/398/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs T Gardiner, Mrs E Jay and Mrs T Redpath.

WTC/399/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

WTC/400/08 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mr P Luff stated that the timescale of consultation on this application had disadvantaged local residents and had left questions unanswered. He was not hostile to the Club and would accept a democratic decision if these issues were addressed.

Mr R White asked the Council not to request the Planning Committee to defer a decision on this application. He provided evidence to show the number of occasions when the floodlights would be used during the season and the length of time that they would be on. The PA system had been in use for two years and had not caused any complaints that he was aware of. The average crowd for a home game was 33 people with a maximum of 90 and a minimum of 15. Of these, many were local residents who walked to the ground and therefore car parking would not be a problem.

Mrs U Parkinson spoke of the potential adverse impact on local residents if this application was granted. It would impair residential amenity and was the thin end of the wedge. The Football Association laid down conditions for Clubs of this standard to meet. Floodlights would be followed by a permanent boundary, a PA system for the whole area, etc. She reminded Members of a previous decision of the Planning Committee to refuse an application for "unreasonable disturbance and loss of amenity" which applied in this case also. The Club should move to an edge of town location.

Mr I Lenagan commented that the number of people who supported the application significantly outweighed those who were objecting. Recent comments about the erection of a 1.8m high fence, a new PA system, turnstiles, and blocking off the recreation ground to public access were incorrect and he offered to confirm this in writing. He had given a copy of the national Rules regarding the need for such facilities to the Town Clerk. Car parking would not be a problem. No new facts had come to light since the Town Council had first considered the application and there was no reason to ask for deferment. Such action would mean that the floodlights would not be installed for the start of the season.

Mr M Massey-Chase complained of loud shouting and swearing from players and spectators at the ground. There were problems relating to anti-social behaviour, motor and pedestrian traffic.

A young member of the Club spoke of the emphasis on youth football at the Club and the benefits that this brought. Because of the lack of floodlights, current home games had to be played at Bicester. He advised Members of new Regulations that required players not to swear during games and asked the Town Council not to request a deferment of the application.

In response to questions from Members, Mr I Lenagan confirmed that permanent turnstiles were not required. On-site car parking could be found for approx 77 cars, which was far in excess of the number of cars that visited the site. The stand could accommodate 100 people, it would be located next to the existing club house and it would be smaller than that structure. Permission for the stand would be applied for once the floodlights were approved, as delivery and erection time was far shorter than for the floodlights and it was not regarded as being contentious. The Club had decided to apply for permission only six months previously as previous attempts to move to an edge of town site had been unsuccessful. The Club had undertaken wide consultations.

Mr R White responded to questions by illustrating the amount of consultation that had been undertaken locally in a relatively short space of time. A local Committee of local Councillors, local residents etc would be formed to monitor what was going on at the Club

Mr P Luff stated that he had not been consulted by the Club prior to the meeting of the Town Council on 14 April. This had happened since. There was still a lack of clarity on a number of issues and proof of effective consultation was required.

WTC/401/08 OLD WOODSTOCK TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB – APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION - FLOODLIGHTS

This application for planning permission had been considered by the Town Council at its meeting on 14 April 2009 (Minute WTC/363/08 refers). The Council had decided as follows:

“That Woodstock Town Council supports this application but seeks approval subject to assurances that any increase in the number of columns, lanterns, or the intensity of illumination, or the periods of use are subject to consultation with residents and the Town Council and that West Oxfordshire District Council takes note that penalties must be applied for breaches of the consent up to and including discontinuation of lighting for non-compliance. As it presently stands Woodstock Town Council would not support any such increased use or facility.”

It was now PROPOSED by Cllr Mrs A Grant, seconded by Cllr A Glee

“Woodstock Town Council respectfully requests West Oxfordshire District Council’s Uplands Planning Sub-Committee meeting of 27 April 2009 to defer a decision on planning application 09/0287/P/FP (floodlight proposal – Old Woodstock Town Football Club) as it is now considered by Woodstock Town Council that further information and consultation is required for this Council to reach a balanced decision on the matter.”

In response to a Point of Order, the Mayor, stated that he had considered carefully whether the Motion before the meeting contravened Standing Order 36 as a special Notice signed by 10 Members of the Council had not been produced. He had consulted on this matter and, although he did not find it as straightforward as the Town Clerk, he ruled that the Motion was acceptable for debate and determination, as it did not explicitly amend the decision of the Council taken at its meeting on 14 April 2009, although he recognised that almost everyone in the room was there because he or she either hoped or feared that the Council would do just that.

Some Members were of the view that there was a need to ask for deferment as there were procedural issues and processes that required further consideration. The investigations by the Club about moving to another site were not known to some Members and the short time-frame for comments had not been helpful. Reference was made to the late availability of letters of objection to Members, noise pollution,

more traffic and loss of amenity for local residents. New facts had come to light which meant that deferral had to be requested, although that did not necessarily mean that the Council should change the decision it had reached at its meeting on 14 April 2009.

A Member asked whether the Civil Aviation Authority had been consulted as the lighting might impact on planes approaching Oxford Airport. Attention was drawn to the extensive advertising and consultation undertaken by the Club. It was alleged that the Motion was only before the Council as some Members wanted to change their minds.

RESOLVED (By nine votes to four)

Woodstock Town Council respectfully requests West Oxfordshire District Council's Uplands Planning Sub-Committee meeting of 27 April 2009 to defer a decision on planning application 09/0287/P/FP (floodlight proposal – Old Woodstock Town Football Club) as it is now considered by Woodstock Town Council that further information and consultation is required for this Council to reach a balanced decision on this matter.

The meeting rose at 9.00pm.

Signed Date