

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 18th DECEMBER 2012
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr B Yoxall (Mayor)	Cllr Mrs E Stokes (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr C Carritt
Cllr J Cooper	Cllr S Parnes	Cllr E Poskitt
Cllr P Jay	Cllr Mrs P Richardson	Cllr Mrs V Edwards
Cllr G Fleetwood		

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 18 Members of the Public.

WTC/199/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs M Robertson.

WTC/200/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Poskitt declared an interest in Agenda Item 4: Draft Local Plan as she is a Member of the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) Uplands Planning Sub-Committee.

WTC/201/12 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a) Ref: 12/1788/P/FP Woodstock Methodist Church, 40 Oxford Street, Woodstock. Erection of single and two storey link extension.

RESOLVED

That WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

b) Ref: 12/1796/P/LB 17 Park Lane, Woodstock
Internal and external alterations to include replacement windows & new conservation roof light. Re-roofing using stonessfield slates to front elevation and cardinal slates to rear elevation.

RESOLVED

That WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

c) Ref: 12/1795/P/LB 2 Browns Lane, Woodstock
Internal and external alterations to include the widening of existing garage door.

RESOLVED

That WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

d) Ref: 12/1798/P/FP 6 Parkside, Woodstock
Erection of single storey front extension (to allow change of external wall finish from matching brick to smooth render)

RESOLVED

That WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

e) Ref: 12/1805/P/LB 4 Browns Lane, Woodstock
External alterations to include replacement front roof tiles

RESOLVED

That WTC wishes to make no comment about this planning application.

ACTION: The administrative assistant will relay the planning comments to WODC.

WTC/202/12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Seven residents had previously applied to address the council. The Mayor agreed that they could do so. Mrs S McGlynn, was not in attendance at the meeting but the following six residents utilised the public participation session:

(i) Dr Bob McGurrian (Chairman of the Woodstock Action Group (WAG))

Dr McGurrian reminded Cllrs that they were elected to represent Woodstock residents and that the majority of these rejected any more development in Woodstock or at its perimeter. He suggested that any Cllr who could not support the wishes of residents should consider their position. He considered that the Town Partnership Survey was a pre-determined document that would encourage more building in Woodstock against the wishes of tax payers. He asked for confirmation that no Town Council staff or stationery had been utilised in the production of the survey. The Town Clerk confirmed that no Town Hall resources or stationery had been used when the surveys had been produced.

(ii) Mr Tony Gardiner

Mr Gardiner said that he had attended the previous town council meeting, the recent town meeting and had read the Town Partnership survey. He said that any suggestion that Woodstock resisted development was not true because over recent years over 150 houses had been built in Woodstock and its quota had been met and so there was no need for further development. Mr Gardiner said that all polls amongst residents confirmed that the people of Woodstock do not want development because they care passionately for the town as it is a great place to live and so needs looking after for future generations. Mr Gardiner said that any new residents would use the large supermarkets and on-line shopping facilities. He noted that Woodstock was a destination for tourism and not a dormitory town. He read an extract from the manifesto of District Cllr Poskitt that said that S106 funding was not always available and noted disappointment that WODC doesn't always reflect the views of residents. He read an extract from Cllr Yoxall's manifesto that said he would be opposed to any further large scale developments in the town.

(iii) Mr Phil Keeley

Mr Keeley explained that he is an economist by profession. He said that on a number of occasions he had been asked to help small towns and had suggested that they develop tourism but that nothing then happened. It is his opinion that Woodstock is haemorrhaging spending power as there are so many people aged over 65 in the economy. Therefore something has to be done as the people don't shop in the high street anymore. He said that there will be an increase in under-utilised housing stock as people will stay in their homes for as long as they can. It was Mr Keeley's view that tourism alone will not keep Woodstock alive. Mr Keeley said that he liked the WODC report because it was balanced and recognised that you can't do just one thing or the other there has to be a balance. He commended the WODC report to the council.

(iv) Mr Dennis Allen

Mr Allen supported the Town Plan and commended it for its in depth detail. He said that he didn't support large developments. Mr Allen noted that traffic and parking were huge issues in Woodstock. He liked the facilities, the pubs and communities

but said that people need somewhere to park. He said that he would be happy to have very limited housing as long as any more development provided extra parking and affordable housing e.g. by adding a layer of parking to the Hensington Road car park. He noted that he and others on the Town Partnership had worked with WAG and co-operated over the Berkley Homes development. Mr Allen wanted developers to provide money for parking in the town for any developments of 15 or more houses in the town.

(v) Mr Chris Baylis

Mr Baylis said that the Town Partnership survey had been produced at no cost to the town council. He noted that this had been a long project that had been undertaken over four years and that there had been no pre-determination. He said that he was disappointed by the response rate. He said that Mr Keeley had spoken eloquently about tourism which is important, as is an increase in housing stock. Mr Baylis said that you just can't say no because the town needs more tourism and it became apparent from meetings with WODC that the only money will come from development. He considered it probable that the site of the car park in Hensington Road would be developed at some point and said that this could be the 'saviour' of Woodstock. He supported Cllr Carritt's motion that was deferred from the WTC meeting on 11th December 2012 and considered it dangerous to go against what is already in WODC's paper.

(vi) Mr Philip Redpath

Mr Redpath said that the town must stand up for what it wants. He said that there were simple measures that could be taken to increase tourism in Woodstock such as diverting buses into Blenheim. He said that he thinks that no proper plan has ever been done and suggested that Woodstock could have a better parking system and increase the availability of parking through the use of chicanes. Mr Redpath said Woodstock should look at its assets before 'taking the 30 pieces of silver'. He reminded Cllrs that residents had paid for the swimming pool. Mr Redpath suggested that there had been attempts to hijack the Town Meeting. He said that Cllr Jays motion of March 2010 still stands. Mr Redpath said that if any dialogue were to be entered into this should be led by Cllr Jay as the residents trust his integrity. Mr Redpath noted that although some Cllrs might consider the attendance at the recent town meeting to be insignificant, several hundred letters from residents had already been sent to WODC.

WTC/203/12 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN (DLP)

Cllr Poskitt declared an interest as she is a Cllr on West Oxfordshire District Council and sits on the Uplands Planning Committee.

The council then discussed the deferred proposal of Cllr Carritt. Cllr Carritt proposed that WTC should adopt the recommendations agreed by the Woodstock Town Partnership Working Group (WTPWG) on 21st November 2012 as modified (shown in italics) to take into account the views of residents at the recent town meeting below.

1. THE VISION

WTC supports the general vision for West Oxon, in particular the key features:-

- a) retention of the District's rural qualities given the proximity to areas of major urban growth at Oxford and Swindon;
- b) consolidation of the role of the main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton; and

- c) protection of the distinctive qualities of the smaller towns and villages to be protected

2. HOUSING PROVISION

- a) We support the general strategy to concentrate major development at the three principal towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton;
- b) We note the need to find a further total of 450 homes in the area of which Woodstock forms part to meet the overall target;
- c) Accordingly and giving full weight to the *Town Partnership report and other town consultative polls* the council:-
 - i. Agrees that WODC must protect the distinctive qualities of market towns like Woodstock and that development in Woodstock is constrained;
 - ii. Accepts the housing allocation numbers identified in the draft LDF provided that Woodstock's share is approximately proportionate to its *present* population in comparison with Eynsham, Hanborough, Freeland and Standlake
 - iii. Given the level of housing need in the town and the length of the present housing waiting lists, WTC seeks assurances that the proportion of affordable homes will be maintained at the 50% level identified in the draft plan and that adequate extra care homes for older people will be supplied in accordance with the standards set by OCC
 - iv. *Seeks assurances that future development within the plan period will not take place unless the infrastructure can take the demands placed upon it.*
 - v. Seeks assurances that adequate funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy (and/or S106, S278 etc) will be secured for local infrastructure projects within the town

3. ECONOMY AND TOWN CENTRES

We support the concept and promotion of the town as a leisure and tourism centre, but reaffirm the need for the pattern of retail outlets in the town to balance the expectations of tourists with the every-day needs of residents. We believe that this can be accomplished through stronger planning policies preventing the loss of shops in the town centre area and with business rate relief for start-up enterprises. We support the District Council's policy of free parking throughout the District but recognise that this only works where the permitted waiting times are properly enforced. We call upon the District Council to conduct an urgent review of the parking problems in Woodstock with a view to finding additional spaces, standardising and rationalising the waiting times and providing effective enforcement. We support the call for the encouragement of public transport and sustainable travel modes but call upon the LDF to recognise the inevitability that small towns such as Woodstock, that attract visitors from places from which public and/or sustainable travel may not be appropriate, need the facility to accommodate adequate parking to sustain commercial vibrancy.

4. CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

- a. *We seek from WODC an urgent review of the Central Conservation Area and consideration of an appropriate buffer zone around the Blenheim World Heritage Site*

5. TRANSPORT

- a) We re-affirm our wish to see highway improvements to the A34 and A40 and for as much heavy lorry traffic as possible to be diverted off the A44.
- b) We support the modernisation of the rail route between Southampton and the West Midlands running through Oxfordshire to carry more freight,

- c) We support the introduction of an alternative rail route between Oxford and London via Bicester and High Wycombe incorporating a new station at the Water Eaton Park and Ride site.
- d) We see complete redoubling of the Cotswold Railway Line in Oxfordshire as a desirable long term objective
- e) We wish to see full implementation of the Premium Routes concept for the Woodstock/Oxford bus route as soon as practicable.
- f) The development of the East West rail link between Swindon/Bristol and Milton Keynes (incl. electrification) is recommended.
- g) Electrification of the London (Paddington) to Oxford and the Oxford, Banbury, Leamington route is recommended

6. INFRASTRUCTURE

- a) We re-affirm our wish to see an improved medical centre on a new site in a central location.
- b) The need to improve outdated Youth facilities in the town is imperative.
- c) We support the continuing arrangement for the Marlborough School to share some of its facilities with the community at large and see this as adding to the case for future investment at the school.
- d) Current and future housing development will add to the already considerable pressures on car parking facilities in the town and ways of addressing this problem will have to be found.

Cllr Poskitt seconded this motion.

It was noted that this motion had not been supported when it was put to the residents who attended the recent Town Meeting. It was also noted that the Town Council was under no obligation to follow a vote at a town meeting.

The council agreed that the vote on this motion was deferred until Cllr Jay's alternative proposal had also been received and considered by the Council.

Cllr Jay proposed that the council supports the view consistently expressed by a majority of the Woodstock electorate that Woodstock has completed its contribution to the district's housing strategy and opposes any further allocation to Woodstock within the Local Plan 2012. Cllr Mrs Edwards seconded this motion.

A following discussion debated, amongst others, the following considerations:

- (i) Local democracy and the need to represent residents from all parts of the town
- (ii) The possibility of S106 funding
- (iii) WODC members are local politicians
- (iv) WAG is a pressure group established to fight development
- (v) The Town Partnership was trying to do what's best for the whole town
- (vi) The statistical evidence in the Woodstock Town Partnership report and at the Town Meeting
- (vii) The number of respondents to the Town Partnership report and the residents who attended the recent town meeting
- (viii) Whether it was realistic for Woodstock to try and oppose any further development until 2029
- (ix) The possible effects of too much further development
- (x) The Town's infrastructure
- (xi) The need to send WODC a clear message
- (xii) The plan talks about small scale developments
- (xiii) The advice of Kemp and Kemp, the council's professional planning advisers
- (xiv) The definitions of small and large-scale development

- (xv) This is an emotional subject
- (xvi) Parking and infrastructure can be considered separately
- (xvii) The rapid speed at which new residents integrate and contribute to the community

The two proposals were then taken in turn. A Cllr called for a named vote.

Proposal One: proposed by Cllr Carritt and seconded by Cllr Poskitt:

For: Cllrs Carritt and Poskitt (2)
 Against: Cllrs Mrs Edwards, Fleetwood, Jay, Cooper and Mrs Richardson (5)
 Abstentions: The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and Cllr Parnes (3)

This motion therefore failed.

Proposal Two: proposed by Cllr Jay and seconded by Cllr Mrs Edwards:

For: Cllrs Mrs Edwards, Fleetwood, Jay, Cooper and Mrs Richardson (5)
 Against: Cllrs Carritt and Poskitt (2)
 Abstentions: The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and Cllr Parnes (3)

RESOLVED (5 votes for, 2 votes against and 3 abstentions)

That the council supports the view consistently expressed by a majority of the Woodstock electorate that Woodstock has completed its contribution to the district's housing strategy and opposes any further allocation to Woodstock within the Local Plan 2012.

Cllr Carritt made the following personal statement:

'I resign with immediate effect from the chairmanship of the Town Partnership working group. I intend to speak with members of the working group and to re-establish the Partnership outside of this Council and to act as an independent to work with WODC and, when and where appropriate with developers'.

The proposal made by Cllr Parnes and deferred from the Town Council meeting held on 11th December was not seconded and so was not discussed.

The Mayor said that the motions taken at the Town Meeting would be included in the response to WODC.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will send the Woodstock Town Council response to the Draft Local Plan consultation of WODC.*

The meeting rose at 8.35pm.

Signed Date