

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2015  
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE WOODSTOCK**

**PRESENT:** The Town Mayor Cllr Elizabeth Poskitt, Deputy Mayor Cllr Colin Carritt  
Members of Woodstock Town Council (WTC) District Councillor Julian Cooper and  
some 90 members of the public

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The Mayor opened the proceedings who explained because of her house backing on to the so said field for development she would be leaving as it could be thought she had a pecuniary interest. She then handed over the chair to the Deputy Mayor Cllr Colin Carritt. Cllr Carritt welcomed everyone to the meeting and called upon Cllr Brian Yoxall to give an overview of the revised planning proposal for Woodstock East.

**2. Cllr Yoxall listed changes:**

- When the developers submitted their revised plans to the District Councils they offered two alternative options. We could either have the original option of 1500 new homes and some 750sq.m of employment space or 300 less new homes with up to 13,800sq. m. employment space.
- WODC said “ NO!”-it has to be one or the other.
- The applicants have now opted for the latter alternative of 1200newhomes and an almost doubling of the employment space up to 13,800 sq. m.
- Reduced the size of the care village from up to 150 units to 120 units and it has been relocated away from close to the Oxford Road to nearer Hedge End.
- They claim that their proposals now reflect, Woodstock and its heritage, and the unique long term proposed involvement and stewardship of the Blenheim Estates is reflected in the design. The plans now include tree lined avenues, high quality green areas and a more prominent central green space called Woodstock Park, which will be a place of play, wildflower meadows and a community orchard.
- The plans now include a realigned link between Oxford Rd. and Upper Campsfield Rd. joining the local centre with employment areas, parkland, the sports facilities and the care village. You can see the circuitous route on this plan..We are told that connecting this is a network of pedestrian and cycle friendly routes linking directly between the various facilities and creating attractive alternatives to the car.
- The original plans provided for a Link & Ride site with parking for 300 cars and a transport interchange. This has been moved closer to the Bladon roundabout. The buses emerging from the L&R site and proceeding towards Oxford are still going to be caught up in the traffic melee at the already congested Bladon roundabout even though there are now plans for traffic signals at that location.
- It states there will be 2 buses per hr. routed thro’ the W,East site but doesn’t seem to appreciate that this will mess up the even interval clock face timetable between Woodstock town centre and Oxford.
- The phasing of the development has been modified so that the main infrastructure improvements such as the new primary school, the care village, the central

facilities including the new supermarket and the football pitches will be provided first.

- The new facilities for the Football Club might seem very welcome but a cautionary word about that because Blenheim have flatly refused to give any assurances that they won't build on the existing football pitches at the Recreation Ground.
- This seems to be taking us from the frying pan into the fire. Indeed "from the frying pan into the fire" seems to sum up the whole scheme. It is like an assault from an invader which must be resisted with our last drop of energy, strength and determination.

### **3. Motion**

Proposed by Mrs Trish Redpath and seconded by Cllr Brian Yoxall

*"The meeting registers extreme concern at the failure of the developer – in revised plans for Woodstock East – to address the perceived shortcomings of their original plans including that the size and scale is excessive and unsustainable and will cause fragmentation and social and environmental harm to Woodstock and surrounding villages. We note that the site lies on the edge of the World Heritage Site and Blenheim is a listed landscape. It will urbanise and encroach upon the open approach to SE Woodstock. The meeting reaffirms its strong opposition to the proposal."*

Resolved 73 votes in favour 0 (none) against

Mrs Redpath went on to speak to her motion

- Same footprint as earlier proposal
- Reduction in numbers does nothing to change our view on the travesty of such a large and unwieldy development on our doorstep.
- We are faced with a potential doubling of the size of the Town. These proposed homes will not add to the community and the face of a nationally recognised historic town will be lost forever.
- Bulk of proposal outside the Woodstock area actually in Shipton on Cherwell within the Cherwell District Council.
- Cherwell's local plan has been accepted allocating the dwellings it has to deliver. It does not include the East Woodstock proposal. The Cherwell plan does not need these houses.
- The proposers will claim the need to provide for those taking jobs proposed for Langford Lane Technology Park and Begbroke Science Park. IF these are determined. The Cherwell Inspector has already rejected a small scale green belt view on Kidlington mooted to provide for such employees. He said there in no need to make additional provision. So – they are hardly to be needed for the Woodstock East/Campsfield site.
- Site used for food produce now and the forecast is that the World food production needs to rise by 70%
- Our near neighbours have concerns about congestion of traffic including Witney.

- National upsurge against rape of the countryside, we must band together and shout **LOUDLY**
- Do not be seduced by the mantra - "but people have to live somewhere" Cherwell have found its housing numbers elsewhere and Woodstock has already delivered more than its fair share of supposed affordable homes.
- 30% of 1200 houses is 360. Are there 360 people in Woodstock needing these houses? Of course not – these houses would go to people outside our existing community.
- This proposal is all about profit based on greed and with no thought for our heritage, history, ancient market town or surrounding countryside.

Dr McGurrin Chairman of WAG (Woodstock Action Group)

- Thanked the WTC for their support with this constant battle.
- Requested a meeting with District Councillor Julian Cooper.
- Reported the vandalism to the Save Woodstock banner sited in Oxford Road on private property.
- The proposal is now to be considered in September 2015
- Although there are two District Councils involved the granting of the application could possibly be decided by only one of them.
- The pink objection cards available are for Cherwell District Council relating to the amended planning and need to be filled in even if you have already written in and it is necessary for each person to fill in a separate card
- On 29<sup>th</sup> June talks between WTC and the Blenheim Palace group took place. Members of the public were not allowed to attend, but minutes would be published.
- Chief Executive Mr John Hoy stated that it would be helpful if the language used in the W&B News was toned down. Dr McGurrin ended by saying we see this as an attempt to curtail and deny free speech and freedom of expression. We will not be cowed by these people and their obvious lack of understanding of the democratic process.

The meeting was then opened for observation and questions.

- Although the pink cards are better than nothing it is far better as it will weigh more heavily to write a letter even if only 4-5 lines.

Cllr Parnes

- Application consideration changed from July to September (date in September not yet confirmed)
- Worth keeping an eye on District Council website, it is interesting to read submissions
- Application considered by 2 District Councils. WODC being the first but not at the Uplands Sub-Committee but by the Development Control Committee - a higher tier with more councillors
- If one council refuses and one agrees, it could be recovered by the Secretary of State
- Lobby to get WODC to refuse first and then there is time to turn attention to Cherwell to get them to refuse then it will not be eligible to go to the Secretary of State

The application includes

- A proposed cycle path through the Bladon Roundabout
- OCC has objected to the proposal but added at the end of their objection that should the application be approved they would like to see some funding go towards establishing a Car Club for residents on the new site illustrating the lack of Car Park facilities
- Bladon, Cassington and Loop Farm roundabouts to be fully signalised all the way towards Pear Tree illustrating the scale and radius a far wider range than the immediate local vicinity being affected
- Infrastructure to go in first, particularly in relation to the football pitch with flood lighting, the reason being that if it were to come later would attract objections where as if already there potential residents are stuck with it.
- They are also proposing, between the two Shipton Road bends, a bus parking road and bus parking facility which in a sense would link up with the entrance to what's now the haul road to the Marlborough field site that's being developed now, there is concern that it may become a permanent road, those concerns are aggravated by the fact that the entrance would connect to what is proposed to be a bus parking area. So we see linkage to other sites.
- Resubmission, which is also online on their website, if you look at the front page illustration you can see they've omitted to show the existing Marlborough Place development, the adjacent [Holdings] smaller development, what is the airport isn't indicated or visible as the airport, the 9 Shipton Road flats development – so showing open fields which are now developed so it is misleading.
- Please be encouraged to take a look and see what you know is there but what [in the publication] isn't, and maybe consider individually writing to the Advertising Standards Authority with a complaint about that. Obviously illustrations are bound to be adjusted but the images and photos are not up to date

### **Questions and observations from the floor**

- With regard to the pink cards as non residents are also horrified with this huge proposal can they also fill them in? It was thought this could do no harm as anyone can object.
- Concern about the Haul Road re: development behind Marlborough Place as uncertain to if planning consent had been given already
- Planning consent has been given for the dwellings behind Marlborough Place.
- Haul Road supposed to be temporary for 2 years but extended permission can be sought and these so called temporary Roads have a tendency to become permanent
- Why if the application is to come before WODC first are we being asked to send the pink cards to Cherwell District Council?
- This is at their request as they are going to share the information with WODC

### **The Chair**

**Councillor Colin Carritt advised that if anyone at all worried about whom to write to then write to both District Councils with concerns.**

### **The Floor cont.:**

- We are not isolated there is fighting over development proposals all over the place.
- We have the opportunity to limit growth; development has to be economical and sustainable.
- Non elected bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPS) and the Oxford Growth Board are attempting to dictate employment and housing numbers. In what order is a mystery.
- Who are these people mixing with some very uncomfortable looking District Councillors?
- They don't own our infrastructures yet try to sell it and we ultimately pay but what for.
- Long Hanborough now up in arms with latest proposal for 150 houses and 400 car parking spaces on Farm land
- The Woodstock Town Partnership and Blenheim Palace Groups have taken over the show. We don't like it!

**Health Issue** (*flagged up by Professor Stephen Westaby*)

- With expansion of this size there will be public health issues
- Are there any provisions to address these health issues?
- What is the situation re: GPs
- The journey into our Headington Hospitals is diabolical now the roads cannot cope. This in itself is a danger to public health.

**District & Town Councillor Julian Cooper**

- The reason that the application is going before the Development Control Board is because the proposed site is not in the present Local Plan.
- Great impact on the gap between Woodstock and Bladon
- Development very near the Buffer Zone of World Heritage Site
- Do we have a duty to cooperate with Oxfordshire County Council take the over-spill?
- OCC should prove they have done all they can to accommodate their housing requirement
- Woodstock since 1980 has had social housing at Kerwood Close, Budds Close, Bens Close and we have 2 new sites in Bladon
- Happy to meet with Dr McGurrin (WAG)
- Suggests taking this proposal up with Prime Minister (our local MP) David Cameron

At this point Cllr Cooper asked for an amendment to the motion that Mrs Redpath proposed. "We note that the site lies on the edge of the World Heritage site and Blenheim is a listed landscape"

***This amendment was accepted by Mrs Redpath and duly appears on the first page of these minutes within the complete motion voted on and the result as shown.***

- If the Police station site goes ahead as suggested a Drs Surgery will be allocated there with the promise of 2 more full time GPs and 7 consulting rooms
- Parking problems for the Drs has been an issue and this new site with the suggestion of 1200 new dwellings will not accommodate the need.

- It is not believed the affordable housing will help Woodstock and that Woodstock people will get the affordable housing
- Allocation of Affordable housing not up to Pye but from the WODC waiting list
- Concerns about sewerage, dealing, with doubling up of waste.
- Can our present system accommodate this?

**Chair Councillor Carritt** stated that Thames Water would have been consulted and would be seeking funding **for any updating of the Sewerage system that may be needed**, but he did not know how the developer would find the funding.

- This question was put to the developers by an attendee of the meeting on visiting the developer's consultation held in Woodstock Town Hall.
- The answer being this would come at the cost of cutting the number of affordable houses
- A lady from Stonesfield attending the meeting stated she was very sympathetic with Woodstock and strongly opposed the development. She said Woodstock is recognised as an International Treasure and should stay that way. She was shocked by the vandalism of the Save Woodstock Banner and suggested the need to spread the word which she would certainly do her best to do and offered her assistance.
- The Woodstock East proposal will affect everyone going north.
- A great need to use new technology to spread the word
- The campaign does have a facebook page and all welcome to join.

Cllr Parnes

- Earlier the Police Station site was mentioned for the possibility of a new Drs Surgery. This is only part of the suggested development of this site. 26 dwelling are also part of the provision less space for everyone and less parking.
- There have also been suggestions of removing other things surrounding the site to have further development.
- The original announcement by the Town Partnership was there would be a modest quantity of houses.
- A new surgery is one thing but 26 houses also on this small site, is this modest?
- Woodstock Town Centre parking is awful so people go elsewhere
- It is suggested people will walk or cycle to the new development Supermarket
- The Supermarket in the proposal is the size of the Long Hanborough Co-op so if one has to get in a car to travel from Woodstock to shop they will not use the proposed little supermarket they will go further afield to Kidlington to large shops.
- A complaint was heard that a letter had been sent to WTC requesting that should be possible to object via the Council's website. She had to date not had a reply.

Cllr Carritt replied that he dealt with the Councils website and would deal with this situation.

Cllr Carritt warned the audience that only people on the electoral role could vote he then read out full motion (this including the amendment from Cllr Cooper) and the vote taken.

Result of vote recorded on first page of these minutes.

Mr Philip Redpath requested that WODC be made aware of this motion asap

Cllr Carritt gave assurance it would be

Meeting closed at 8.35pm.

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