

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 18th JUNE 2013 AT 7.30PM
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, WOODSTOCK**

PRESENT: The Town Mayor, Councillor Mr J Cooper, members of the Woodstock Town Council (WTC), District Councillor Elizabeth Poskitt, Mr Huw Mellor from Kemp and Kemp and some 84 members of the public.

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Mayor asked residents whether they were happy to accept the proposed agenda and nobody opposed this suggestion and so this is the agenda that was adopted for the meeting.

2. **INTRODUCTION FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor said that meeting was being held following a request from residents. Its primary purpose was to discuss residents concerns about the proposed development in the field north of Marlborough Place, Woodstock and to receive advice from Mr Mellor about specific issues that were of concern to residents namely: environmental issues; the potential effects on services such as the Doctors surgery and the schools; potential traffic and parking problems in the area of Shipton Road and elsewhere in the town; the Budds Close exception site; and the suggested link between the proposed development site and income for Blenheim Palace as a World Heritage Site.

The Mayor confirmed that no planning application for this site had yet been received by WODC although Pye had held a public consultation. He reminded members of the public that only residents can vote at Town Meetings and also asked that they introduce themselves before speaking.

3. **INTRODUCTION TO THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING CONSULTANT**

The Mayor introduced Mr Mellor from Kemp and Kemp to residents. These are the planning consultants that are working for Woodstock Town Council.

4. **QUESTIONS**

The following questions were put by residents:

1. Could Mr Mellor tell residents/investigate the minimum highways requirements for highways serving 100 plus residents as she thinks that Randolph Avenue will have to serve the estate. She asked for information about highways width, surface, pavements, drainage and parking spaces?

Mr Mellor asked whether Randolph Ave had been adopted by OCC and explained that if the Highways Authority had not adopted it would be the responsibility of either an individual, or individuals or a private company and that each case would be different. Residents who had researched this matter said that County Cllr Hudspeth had confirmed that OCC, the Highways Authority, had not adopted it and so the responsibility rested with Pye at present. Mr Mellor said that he had different information to Pye Homes and explained why he did not necessarily agree with their traffic data calculations. One reason was because Oxfordshire County Council as the Highways Authority works to an industry standard called TRICS (Traffic Rate Information Computer System) and when Mr Mellor made some calculations using this industry standard his

results regarding the number of movements were double those suggested by Pye Homes. He noted that he did not know the basis of the Pye figures but speculated that OCC would use the TRICS established methodology when producing its data.

Action: The Mayor asked Mr Mellor to provide details of his calculations in order that they can be sent to County Cllr Ian Hudspeth.

2. A resident asked whether the highways requirements were the same for an unadopted Highway as for an adopted Highway.

Mr Mellor said that he would investigate this.

Action: Mr Mellor will investigate and report back.

3. Mr Mellor was asked to comment about the proximity of the two schools as there were 1500 children within 200 yards of the development and there were already massive traffic jams. Residents said that this was an accident waiting to happen and considered that it would be irresponsible for any Authority to approve the development.

Mr Mellor agreed and said that there were two parts that will be considered:

- (i) OCC will make a technical assessment based upon the evidence; and
- (ii) The resident's evidence presented to WODC will be taken into account.

Mr Mellor advised residents not to rely on the OCC analysis of actual evidence – it will need resident support to WODC to back this up.

4. Some residents asked Mr Mellor about environmental considerations including the rare orchids on the proposed site.

Mr Mellor said that the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 set out the details and said that he could make it available to the Town Clerk. In summary the presence of a protected species was a **material planning consideration**. Therefore Pye would have to submit an ecological site risk assessment covering all of the species present to WODC. Then WODC would consult with English Heritage and the OCC ecologists about displacement and/or disruption and then come to a view about whether this has a negative effect on the species and whether or not it could be relocated/replaced elsewhere.

A resident suggested that BBOWT may be willing to contribute to an ecological survey of the proposed site for residents.

Action: Mr Mellor will send the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act to the Town Clerk.

5. It was noted that the WODC Draft Local Plan responses are currently frozen and therefore it was queried how this might affect any planning applications that are submitted now.

Mr Mellor said that the two processes could run together. At this point there was no planning application but a proposed Local Plan. The latest timescales for the Local Plan suggest that it will come before WODC in autumn. Pye Homes may not wait until then to put in an application and there would be nothing wrong with that.

6. It was noted that some discrepancies had already been identified in the Pye figures and Mr Mellor was asked whether further discrepancies might taint the process and the application.

Mr Mellor said that no planning application had yet been submitted. The Pye consultation was only draft. It was not part of any formal planning submission and so residents should not put too much weight on it as it was only indicative. When the planning application was submitted it would be scrutinised as a public record in the usual way.

7. Mr Mellor was asked to comment upon the fact that Blenheim Palace is the only privately owned World Heritage Site.

Mr Mellor said that the World Heritage Site status was a **material planning consideration** and that it didn't matter if it was publically or privately owned. Mr Mellor explained that there were two types of planning application. 95% of planning applications were assessed on their merits. The other 5% were **enabling** planning applications, treated in a different way and defined by English Heritage as follows:

Enabling Development is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring heritage benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved.

Mr Mellor told the meeting that these were very rare but that a World Heritage Site could apply for this type of application. Mr Mellor speculated that Pye homes would submit the application as an enabling development. Mr Mellor said that Pye would have to prove it and that this would be difficult to do as it is based upon the bare minimum amount of development required to support this application and NOT the maximum. He thought that they may decide instead to call it a supporting application but Mr Mellor did not think that this was a planning term. He therefore said that residents should wait until the application was submitted in order to see how it was framed.

8. It was noted that on the other side of the Marlborough School on Hensington Close and application for 18 dwellings had repeatedly been refused and that these were much smaller in proportion than the current proposals. Mr Mellor was asked if this was significant.

Mr Mellor said yes but that the reasons for the refusal were not really the same as those under consideration today. He suggested that the resident read the planning decision for further details.

9. A resident asked whether construction traffic could be used as a material planning consideration.

Mr Mellor said that material planning considerations needed to be precise and that disruption during planning construction would not be considered as such. He said that typical examples of material planning considerations were: traffic, neighbourliness and the impact on important species.

10. Mr Mellor was asked to comment upon concerns about the close proximity of the proposed site with the Cherwell District Council boundary resulting in two Local Authorities being involved.

Mr Mellor said that this was not uncommon and that the planning authority dealing with the application would be WODC. CDC would be a statutory consultee like the Highways Authority etc.

5. **OTHER CONCERNS**

The following additional concerns were raised by residents:

- (i) It was considered important that residents should be aware of what might happen if Blenheim Estates decided to build on the existing football field between New Road and Plan Tree Way and that the traffic survey should therefore include this area because this area of land opens on to New Road.
- (ii) Residents considered that the infrastructure was not good enough to support additional housing.
- (iii) Some residents were confused about the locations of potential developments within Woodstock so this was explained.
- (iv) That specialist traffic consultants should be employed by WTC to provide the ammunition to support resident's objections.
- (v) Some residents were worried that if rare orchids resulted in problems at the proposed site north of Marlborough Place Blenheim Estates might turn their attention to the field behind Hedge End.

6. **MOTIONS**

The following two motions were voted upon and resolved by the meeting:

1. The first motion was proposed by Tony Gardiner, seconded by Philip Redpath, amended by Ray Kinch and Honorary Townsman John Banbury and then resolved with the unanimous approval of the meeting (85 votes as Dr McGurrin was not eligible to vote)

This meeting requests Woodstock Town Council to commission a traffic survey using the Council's planning consultation fund to cover the Shipton Road, Banbury Road, Hensington networks and also Marlborough Place, Princes Ride, Flemings Road, New Road and Plane Tree Way.

2. The second motion was proposed by Tony Gardiner, seconded by Nathan Clark and resolved with the unanimous approval of the meeting (80 votes as several residents had left at this stage and Dr McGurrin was not eligible to vote).

The Woodstock Town Meeting wishes to urge Woodstock Town Council to engage Mr Huw Mellor to represent Woodstock against proposed development of a large scale as part of the Local Plan or independent developments.

7. **OTHER MATTERS**

1. Honorary Townsman John Banbury said that 'Town and Village Green Status' needed to be investigated and that he would suggest an agenda item to the Town Clerk for possible inclusion on the July Town Council agenda. He explained that all of the green spaces throughout Woodstock needed to be identified and recorded so that consideration could be given to what the town might look like if new developments were built. It was noted that you did not have to own the land that you were applying to save. It was therefore suggested that the meeting should make sure that land used by Old Woodstock Football Club should not be lost.
2. Residents asked that the motions supported by residents are sent to WODC.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed..... Date.....