

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday 26th April 2017

Firstly I would like to take a moment to introduce the Planning Committee to you, as there have been some changes since last year's Annual Parish meeting.

As I'm sure many of you are aware Councillor Cowan stepped down at the beginning of this year, and I have since taken on her role as Chairman. Together with Vice Chairman Councillor Hewins, Councillor Watts and Councillor Heywood, we now head up Bodicote Parish Council's Planning Committee.

We have large shoes to fill, but we strive to do as good a job as our predecessors in representing the residents of Bodicote.

Planning continues to be extremely busy, with a noticeable increase in applications over the last year. There are an ever increasing number of changing planning policies to familiarise ourselves with, and recently, it feels like an endless stream of public consultation documents to respond to.

Longford Park, although officially now no longer part of the electoral ward of Bodicote due to boundary changes that came into force in April 2016, continues to gather pace. Phase 3 of the development is well under way and Longford Park Primary school is finally set to open its doors in September.

Staggeringly we still have Barratt homes advertising its properties at 'Longford Park, Weeping Cross, Banbury', despite many complaints from both residents and ourselves. And unfortunately we have no forthcoming news on Cherwell District Council's Local Plan aspirations to situate Banbury United Football Club, and possibly a new Secondary School on the Oxford Road.

Cotefield, Phase 1, with its increased number of 86 homes is in full progress and should be completed by 2020. When Phase 2, of 95 homes, will commence with a project completion date of 2021.

Cherwell District Council's Local Plan Policy 'Banbury 17', which includes 1000 homes to be built along the south of Salt Way, 280 homes courtesy of Gladman Development, on land which resides in Bodicote Parish, a 34 space car park and the associated Link Road which will join the A361 (Bloxham Road) to White Post Road and then on towards the A4260 (Oxford Road), was granted approval in August 2016 subject to legal agreements.

Planning and Environment Committee members have met with Officers at Cherwell District Council, and I also spoke on behalf of Bodicote Parish Council when this proposal was put forward, to discuss many of the issues, coalescence, traffic, parking, road safety, air pollution to name but a few, raised by the hundreds of objections that were submitted by Bodicote residents.

We continue to be in constant dialogue with Planning Officers as this application moves forward, seeking to mitigate outcomes that could have detrimental effects on the Parish. And have recently objected to the recommendation that Bodicote Parish Council takes on the management of the proposed 34 space car park.

Unfortunately we have no further updates as it has recently come to our attention that Gladman have lodged an appeal for this application. So we now wait with anticipation for the outcome of the Inspector's report, which we hope will be completed by the Autumn.

Cherwell District Council Local Plan Part 2, which deals with allocating development and infrastructure solely in villages, is still in preparation.

750 homes, not including windfalls, is the number set to be spread across Category A villages, of which we are one. So far 470 have been allocated, which leaves a requirement of another 280 homes to be found.

Needless to say we are extremely concerned about what this could mean for the future of Bodicote. Especially when a review of Oxford's Unmet Housing Need, another plan still in preparation, has two local sites promoted as areas for potential development. An area behind Wykham Park Farm, which proposes to accommodate 700-800 homes, which would adjoin the approved 'Banbury 17' Gallagher application of 1000 homes and an area behind the back of Wards Crescent, which proposes to accommodate 70-80 homes, which would adjoin the Cotefield housing development.

Whilst in reality we know that the likelihood of these two sites being used to build Oxford housing on is slim, we are under no illusion that these sites won't be put forward under Local Plan Part 2 or simply as windfall sites.

Regrettably we have to inform you that the Bodicote Neighbourhood Plan has been put on hold for the foreseeable future. Our Neighbourhood Area was approved in January 2016, with a view to gather a team of resident volunteers together to start making headway in what would have been a mammoth task.

Sadly a number of different factors have colluded, a lack of volunteers, the approval of development in Hook Norton despite having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan and Oxfordshire County Council's proposal for a unitary authority, which could throw all current adopted development plans out of the window.

We will continue to assess the viability of Bodicote having it's own plan and if anything changes act accordingly.

As a Parish Council we find ourselves increasingly frustrated with the planning policies bestowed upon us, with our objections dutifully ignored. Nonetheless, we continue to fight to preserve our village identity for generations to come.

Zzazz Foreman
Chairman, Planning Committee