



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL



3 Longden Close

Haynes

Bedfordshire

MK45 3PJ

Tel: 07531 930788

Email: Clerk@Wootton-PC.gov.uk

Website: Wootton-pc.gov.uk



[www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/WoottonParishCouncilBedfordshire)

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Minutes of the **Planning & Environment Committee** meeting held on Wednesday 12th April 2023 at 7pm at
Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way, Wootton, MK43 9FZ.

Agenda no	Agenda item title			Power
Open Forum	There were a significant number of members of the public present, all of whom wished to discuss and observe discussions on agenda item P23/087 (23/00588/FUL – Land Off and Adjacent to 61 Studley Road). Cllr O'Dell moved that appointed spokespeople be permitted to speak when the agenda item was determined, rather than under Open Forum and all members were in agreement. There were no other members of the public or press present and so the meeting continued without further adjournment.			Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(1).
Present	Cllrs O'Dell (in the chair), Hensher, Lloyd, Noakes and Randell. In attendance: Cllr Wheeler. Cllr Wheeler is also the Borough Councillor for Wootton. In attendance: Sue Edgar Playford (Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer).			
Absent (no apologies received)	Cllr Quirk.			
Agenda no	Agenda item title	Resolution	Action	Power
P23/079	Apologies for absence. Cllr Bygraves.	Noted for the minutes.	Clerk to keep on file.	Local Government Act 1972, Part V, s85 (1+2) & Sch 12, Part VI, p40.
P23/080	Disclosure of local and/or disclosable pecuniary interests. None.	N/A.	N/A.	Localism Act 2011, Ch 7, s31.
P23/081	To consider any dispensation requests received by the clerk in relation to local and/or disclosable pecuniary interests, not previously recorded.	N/A.	N/A.	Localism Act 2011, Ch 7, s33.

	No requests received.			
P23/082	Report from outside organisations – for information only. Bedford Borough Council. Ravensden Neighbourhood Development Plan has been adopted in Bedford Borough. The plan was made by an Executive Decision on 16th March 2023 and will now form part of Bedford Borough Council's development plan, meaning its policies will be used alongside other adopted local plan policies when determining planning applications within Ravensden parish. To view a copy of the plan and all relevant information please click here.	No further comments received.	Clerk to keep on file.	N/A.
P23/083	List of correspondence received (copies of correspondence can be requested from the Clerk) – for information only. None.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.
P23/084	Minutes of the previous meeting. Members of the Planning & Environment Committee were asked to receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 29 th March 2023.	Resolved to receive and adopt. Proposed: Cllr Randell. Seconded: Cllr Noakes. Resolved by all present.	Clerk to keep on file.	Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, Part VI, p41 (1).
P23/085	Matters arising from the minutes – for information only. P21/262 + P22/214 – Transfer of parish council-owned streetlights to Bedford Borough Council. Resolved 27th June 2018 (P18/154) to continue with the transfer and request Bedford Borough Council carry out structural examinations to all columns. Clerk has been told the Borough Council are dealing with this, but they have several other parishes to deal with too and timescales are not yet known. The clerk provided Bedford Borough Council with latest risk assessments and inspection reports on 24th June 2020. Bedford Borough Council has since requested further testing which cannot be undertaken due to the style of columns and it was resolved 28th October 2020 (FC20/228) that Bedford Borough Council take on the columns if further testing is required. The further testing issue has now been resolved and the clerk is currently awaiting the relevant paperwork, confirming bar one minor issue, all is in order. Resolved 31st March 2021 (P21/082) to accept that paperwork and again request Bedford Borough	No further comments received.	N/A.	N/A.

	Council take on the ownership/maintenance of the streetlights. The clerk has now been informed Bedford Borough Council will draft a scheme plan, costings and payback period for consideration and continues to chase for an update. Resolved 10th November 2021 (P21/262) to have Bedford Borough Council upgrade all parish council-owned streetlights to non-heritage style, on the understanding Bedford Borough Council would then adopt the same, at no additional expense to the parish council. Upgrade works should be completed by the end of May 2022; however Bedford Borough Council has stated (9th March 2022) two columns (one at Hall End and one at Potters Cross) are situated on private land (unadopted road) and cannot be upgraded/adopted *. Upgrade works were completed week commencing 12th September 2022. Resolved 28th September 2022 (P22/214) not to undertake any further maintenance works to the one silver-style column at Hall End. The clerk is awaiting further information from Bedford Borough Council regarding the final transfer, lastly chasing on 14th March 2023.			
P23/086	To receive and approve the Income & Expenditure report for all Planning & Environment cost centres and Earmarked Reserves report for all cost centres for 2022-23, to date and to resolve a suitable course of action.	Resolved to receive and approve both reports without further comment. Proposed: Cllr Randell. Seconded: Cllr Hensher. Resolved by all present.	Clerk to keep on file.	Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance for Smaller Authorities in England 2022/23.
P23/087	a) Planning Applications – for resolution. 23/00588/FUL – Land Off and Adjacent to 61 Studley Road. Erection of detached house with associated parking and amenity spaces.	<u>Spokesperson One</u> Refer to Appendix One. <u>Spokesperson Two</u> This spokesperson stated they had lived in Studley Road since 1970 and understood Cowlgrove Ltd's original planning application referenced the relevant area of land as a play area or open green space. <u>Spokesperson Three</u> This spokesperson understood Bedford Borough Council had written to	Clerk to take forward.	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 & subsequent.

		Cowlgrove Ltd in 1997 in relation to a breach of planning conditions – namely that tree planting within the area had not been undertaken. It was their understanding this was an area of open green space (and therefore amenity land), as opposed to a play area. <u>Spokesperson Four</u> This spokesperson referenced the footpath which had been used as an access point to fields and was now a safe route to school and access point from Studley Road to the Little Wootton development, via Latimer Close. They also referenced Wootton's Neighbourhood Development Plan which had identified alternative sites for development. The spokesperson noted the parish council had maintained the grass since 2014, following Cowlgrove Ltd's placement into receivership in 2012 and also following complaints that the area had fallen into disrepair. A temporary fence erected by Cowlgrove Ltd and due for replacement by them, remained in place, also in a state of disrepair. Before members had opportunity to speak, Cllr Lloyd requested an agenda item for the next meeting of this committee – namely to engage with the applicants of this planning proposal to discuss the parish council's ongoing grass maintenance and remedial works to the temporary fencing.		
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		Cllr Lloyd then detailed a visual display of the land in question (Appendix Two), which detailed the turning bay and lighting columns in the area. After detailed discussion the following material considerations were deemed appropriate when objecting to the proposal: • The footpath crossing the proposed site was adopted Bedford Borough Council land and formed a safe route to school (Wootton Upper School and buses to Kimberley College) by students from the north of the village. It was also well used by other pedestrians and houses three borough council-owned street lighting columns, one of which was only recently installed by the borough council in response to concerns raised that the safe route to school was dark in winter months. One column was so close to the proposed driveway it would have to be moved; • Highways safety concerns. The use of the turning bay by vehicles entering or leaving the proposed dwelling would be hampered (likely at all times) as the bay was already regularly used as a parking spot for other vehicles; • The proposal was an over development of the site; • The proposal would adversely affect the existing street scene. In addition to the above material considerations, the following points were taken from Wootton's Neighbourhood Development Plan: • The Neighbourhood Development Plan references low density development		
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		and the accompanying Village Design Statement specifies 20 dwellings per hectare; • Objectives (Housing) Page 18 (1b). This application was not in the right location (given the safe route to school) and did not protect the village from poorly placed development; • Objectives (Housing) Page 18 (1e). This application was not sympathetic to the area; • Objectives (Environment) Page 18 (2a). This application did not protect, improve or enhance community open space; • Objectives (Environment) Page 19 (2d). This application did not protect the ecological corridor between Studley Road and Latimer Close; • Objectives (Sustainable Community) Page 19 (5b). This application did not ensure the continuation of a safe route to school nor did it consider the needs of pedestrians or cyclists. • Objectives (Sustainable Community) – Page 20 (5c). This application would not seek to reduce traffic congestion in the area; • Policy W1 (New Residential Development) – Page 21 (d). This application would affect and compromise an area of open land which has great significance to the form and character of the village, given it was used as a safe route to school; • Policy W1 (New Residential Development) – Page 21 (h). This application would not seek to protect or		
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		enhance the existing corridor for local habitats or wildlife; • Policy W2 (Housing Delivery) – Page 22. Wootton’s Neighbourhood Development Plan had identified sites for up to 105 homes and did not include this site; • Policy W7 (Local Housing Needs) – Page 25. This policy identified a need for starter/affordable housing or bungalows aimed at (for sale or rent) young people and/or the elderly. This proposal did not accord with that policy; • Policy W8 (Residential Parking in New Developments) – Page 26. This policy stated proposals should provide sufficient parking to meet assessed need and noted that additional on-street parking should not result in congestion for other road users, nor cause a serious threat to road safety. Whilst sufficient parking spaces were provided, the proposed use of a turning circle was misleading as the existing bays were in constant use for vehicular parking. • Policy W12 (Development Design Criteria) – Page 29 (c). This application did not protect or enhance the existing street scene nor would it protect adjacent properties from being overlooked or loss of daylight and sunlight. It would create both visual bulk and noise pollution. Were Bedford Borough Council minded to grant permission, the following planning conditions would be necessary:		
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		• Developers during construction and afterwards must maintain and keep clear the existing safe route to school (as adopted by Bedford Borough Council). There can be no diversions, obstructions or endangerment to anyone using it. The pavement must remain clean at all times to avoid pedestrians facing health and safety issues with a muddy surface. Cllr Lloyd thanked the clerk for giving up time from their annual leave to begin preparations ahead of this meeting and urged all members of the public present to ensure anyone over 18 years of age in the same household submit their own objections. Resolved TO OBJECT using the above material considerations and objectives/policies from Wootton's Neighbourhood Development Plan. Proposed: Cllr Lloyd. Seconded: Cllr Randell. Resolved by all present. Cllr O'Dell then suspended the meeting for two minutes to allow all members of the public to leave. Resolved NO OBJECTION. Proposed: Cllr Noakes. Seconded: Cllr Randell. Resolved by all present. Resolved NO OBJECTION. Proposed: Cllr Noakes. Seconded: Cllr Randell.		
	23/00632/FUL – 3 Stevenson Walk. Single storey rear extension.			
	23/00633/FUL – Keeley Grange. Replace existing summer house in the rear garden with a new summer house and			

	relocate existing summer house to the wooded area at the front of the house. 23/00647/LBC – The Chequers Inn PH, 47 Hall End Road. Internal alterations to the kitchen and cellar, including relocation of dividing wall to increase the kitchen area, making good floors and ceilings, installation of new commercial kitchen, along with electrics and plumbing and the relocation of the kitchen door from the public bar. 23/00679/FUL – Changing Rooms, Church Road. Change of use of part of changing rooms and associated store rooms to Sui Generis for kitchen serving hot and cold take away food and drinks with associated toilet facilities, erection of bin store enclosure and installation of photovoltaic panels to roof (amended since the publication of this agenda by Bedford Borough Council to change of use of part of changing rooms and associated store rooms to Sui Generis for kitchen serving hot and cold drinks and cold snacks with associated toilet facilities, erection of bin store enclosure and installation of photovoltaic panels to roof). b) Planning Approvals (by Bedford Borough Council) – for information only. None. c) Planning Applications withdrawn (notified by Bedford Borough Council) – for information only. None. d) Planning Refusals (by Bedford Borough Council) – for information only. None.	Resolved by all present. Resolved NO OBJECTION. Proposed: Cllr Noakes. Seconded: Cllr Randell. Resolved by all present. Resolved NO OBJECTION. Proposed: Cllr Noakes. Seconded: Cllr Randell. Resolved by all present.		
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	e) Planning (other – including Bedford Borough Council and the Secretary of State). None.			
P23/088	To request above application(s) be considered by the Full Planning Committee of Bedford Borough Council.	Resolved to request that BBCLr Wheeler be asked to call in planning application 23/00588/FUL to be considered by the Full Planning Committee of Bedford Borough Council. Proposed: Cllr Noakes. Seconded: Cllr Lloyd. Resolved by all present.	BBCLr Wheeler to take forward.	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 & subsequent.
P23/089	To consider representation of the Council at the Full Planning Committee meeting of Bedford Borough Council discussing the above application(s).	Resolved that Cllr O'Dell attend the relevant Full Planning Committee meeting of Bedford Borough Council as a representative of Wootton Parish Council. Proposed: Cllr Hensher. Seconded: Cllr Randell.	Cllr O'Dell to take forward.	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 & subsequent.

Meeting closed at 7.35pm.

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Site: Land adjacent to 61 Studley Road, Wootton, MK43 9DL.

Application No.: 23/00588/FUL

Background:

The strip of land immediately adjacent to houses No. 61 and 77 Studley Road has been maintained for many years by the residents, including extensive hedge and grass cutting, with no compensation from the landowner Cowlgrove. There has been no interest by the owners in this area of land since it was completed in approximately 1995. However it is of great value to the neighbourhood.

Objections within Material Planning Considerations:

1. Adverse impact on nature conservation interests & biodiversity opportunities:

a. The clearance of the site will result in the loss of established trees, shrubs and grass habitat, which provides biodiversity and likely habitats for bats, toads and birds. Any replacement planting in the plans is of a considerably smaller scale than that lost, exacerbated by 25m² of proposed concrete driveway, where once stood trees. Part of the plans would result in the destruction of established flower beds managed by the residents of 61. New tree planting had begun on the proposed site to help with drainage issues and to replace a tree that died within the hedgerow. There is no inappropriate use of the land at present, as it is valued and maintained by nearby residents.

2. Highway Issues:

a. The cul-de-sac in Studley Road regularly sees traffic congestion with residents' existing vehicles needing extra parking, delivery vehicles, upper school parents waiting for students, and visitors. When the street is at full capacity, there is limited or no space for turning vehicles.

b. Wootton Upper School is set to expand in the next few years, which will mean even more parents using this residential road to park in at drop off/pick up times, causing even more blockages of driveways and turning areas.

c. Safety concerns: during the construction of the property the pathway will be obstructed by building materials and scaffolding, forcing pedestrians into the road and onto private property in order to reach the safe school route. Alternative routes will mean that all the pedestrians are required to walk around the Cause End Road/Church Road pavements, which are very narrow and on a blind corner, which is made worse by the road narrowing, school traffic and the passing buses, putting the youngsters at risk.

d. The loss of the street lamp will further impact the safety of pedestrians and drivers, and the planned new driveway involves driving over the busy footpath. This area is very dark in the winter evenings without the street lamps, a new one of which has recently been fitted in the alley due to this safety concern.

e. There is no space or parking available for construction vehicles in the cul-de-sac, since it would cause blockages of driveways and access for vehicles such as council bin lorries or emergency vehicles.

f. The collection of the wheelie bins from the proposed property has not been provided for, since bins cannot block the pathway used daily by pushchairs and a mobility scooter, or on the road due to the use of the 'turning area'. On the plans the 'bin collection area' has incorrectly been sited on land owned by No. 61. This will not be acceptable, nor is it practical, since that space is often behind parked cars.

3. Layout and density of building:

a. The proposed house design is not in keeping with the rest of this 90s development, instead resembling a house within the new developments of Wootton such as those in the Folkes Road. The design of the property states that it will have white window frames, however virtually all the houses in the road have brown window frames.

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4. Overshadowing/loss of outlook:

a. The area of trees, shrubs and grass provides a green respite for the neighbourhood, from the nearby over-developments that resulted in the loss of outlook for many of the homes in the street. If this development was permitted, it would result in no green areas at all being visible from homes in this area of Studley Road. These homes are already overlooked by neighbours at the back, and the loss of the green area at the front would be great.

5. Physical Infrastructure:

a. This area of Wootton suffers considerably from flooding, with very poor drainage. The back garden **floods** at the adjacent property, after **every** rainfall. The use of soakaways is completely ineffective in this immediate area, especially during wet periods. A big concern is that it will increase the flooding into the property at No. 61, since it is of slightly higher elevation. The loss of all the trees and grass on the proposed site will also remove the natural water absorption, creating even more flooding issues.

b. The new housing estate off Roseberry Avenue and Latimer Close that was built recently and involved the removal of natural drainage areas, has already raised the water table in Studley Road, causing flooding and sodden grass for months at a time, for a number of homes.

6. Inappropriate Landscaping:

a. The planned landscaping has not shown consideration to the adjacent property, where drawings show the blocking of existing gate access into the garden, which is required for wheelie bin access and maintenance. There is also very little green replanting, compared to that which will be removed by this development.

Conclusion:

It is of our opinion that this proposed planning application is concerned not with creating more, suitable housing for Wootton, but instead only with creating profit from a small greenfield space.

The impact of the construction period will be extremely detrimental to the residents and users of Studley Road and the safe footpath to school, including with safety concerns and definite traffic issues. A better use of the land would be to either leave it as it is, or as a parish owned, resident maintained, community garden, or to be included in the Marston Vale forest project.









1st BBC lamp post on safe route to Wootton Upper School via Little Wootton

2nd BBC lamp post on safe route to Wootton Upper School
via Little Wootton



3rd BBC lamp post on safe route to Wootton Upper School via Little Wootton



Highway Safety - Parking - Pedestrian Safety



The developers are proposing to use the bay (highlighted above) as a turning aid so that vehicles at this proposed development do not have to reverse the entire length of the street in order to turn around. Even in the developer brochure (23+00588+FUL + V07— see top right), the bays are full. Observations show this area is frequently used as vehicular parking. It should be noted this bay forms part of the public highway and as such cannot be annexed for private use.