



WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL



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WoottonParishCouncilBedfordshire

Minutes of the **Planning Committee** meeting held on Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 7pm at
Wootton Community Centre, Harris Way, Wootton, MK43 9FZ.

Agenda no	Agenda item title	Resolution	Action	Power
Open Forum	There were several members of the public present who wished to discuss and observe discussions on agenda item P25/204 (25/020685/M73 – Wootton Upper School). There were no other members of the public or press present and so the meeting continued without adjournment.			Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(1).
Present	Cllrs O'Dell (in the chair), Bygraves, Hensher, Lloyd, Lincoln and Noakes. In attendance: Cllr Wheeler. Cllr Wheeler is also Borough Councillor for Wootton and Kempston Rural.			
Absent (no apologies received)	None.			
Agenda no	Agenda item title	Resolution	Action	Power
P25/197	Apologies for absence. Cllr Randell. Sue Edgar Playford (Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer) was not in attendance.	Noted for the minutes.	Clerk to keep on file.	Local Government Act 1972, Part V, s85 (1+2) & Sch 12, Part VI, p40.
P25/198	Disclosure of local and/or disclosable pecuniary interests. None.	N/A.	N/A.	Localism Act 2011, Ch 7, s31.
P25/199	To consider any dispensation requests received by the Clerk in relation to local and/or disclosable pecuniary interests, not previously recorded. No requests received.	N/A.	N/A.	Localism Act 2011, Ch 7, s33.

P25/200	Report from outside organisations – for information only. None.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.
P25/201	List of correspondence received (copies of correspondence can be requested from the clerk) – for information only. None.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.
P25/202	Minutes of the previous meeting. Members of the Planning Committee are asked to receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on the 29 th October 2025.	Resolved to receive and adopt. Proposed: Cllr Lincoln. Seconded: Cllr Noakes. Resolved by all present.	Clerk to keep on file.	Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, Part VI, p41 (1).
P25/203	Matters arising from the minutes – for information only. None.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.
P25/204	a) Planning Applications – for resolution. 25/02068/M73 – Wootton Upper School, Hall End Road. New artificial pitch with fencing, floodlights, acoustic fence, erection of a pavilion with changing rooms, new car parking and revisions to existing access. Relocation of cricket nets and long-jump pit, including variation of conditions: 3 and 12 attached to 22/00522/MAF, to allow for extended hours of operation to 9.30pm and to allow use of the pitch outside school term times.	The Clerk received a communication from Wootton Upper School which was circulated ahead of this meeting (refer to Appendix One). The Clerk and members of this committee received a communication from residents of Wootton House, Church Road which was circulated ahead of this meeting (refer to Appendix Two). It was noted planning condition 4 had not been implemented, agreed or managed, yet the facility was being used. After detailed discussion it was resolved NOT to object to the application, but to request the following planning conditions be implemented before the timings were changed: • A thorough investigation into light pollution affecting both sets of	Clerk to take forward.	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 & subsequent.

	adjoining neighbours was required. • The existing lighting columns needed to be correctly angled to reduce light pollution. • Sensors were required to ensure lighting was extinguished when the facility was not in use. Proposed: Cllr Lloyd. Seconded: Cllr Bygraves. Resolved by majority vote. Resolved NO OBJECTION. Proposed: Cllr Noakes. Seconded: Cllr Bygraves. Resolved by all present. Resolved NO OBJECTION. Proposed: Cllr Noakes. Seconded: Cllr Bygraves. Resolved by all present. No further comments received.		
	25/02098/FUL – Oak Cottage 6 Church Road. Demolition of rear conservatory, construction of a single storey rear extension, replacement of French doors and windows, removal of shower room window and insertion of a roof window on the rear slope. 25/02099/LBC – Oak Cottage 6 Church Road. Demolition of rear conservatory, construction of a single storey rear extension, replacement of French doors and windows, removal of shower room window and insertion of a roof window on the rear slope. b) Planning Approvals (by Bedford Borough Council) – for information only. 24/01596/FUL – 52 Elmsdale Road. Non-Material Minor Amendments to add two rooflights to first floor extension. This council previously raised NO OBJECTION. 25/01549/FUL – 1 Old School Gardens. Garage conversion with external alterations. This council previously raised NO OBJECTION. 25/01677/FUL – 6 Ellis Close. Car port conversion with external alterations. This council previously raised AN OBJECTION.		
		Clerk to keep on file.	

	25/01696/LDP – 5 Hutchings Close. Single storey rear extension. Certificate to confirm that the details submitted do not require planning permission. This council was not previously consulted on this application. 25/01754/TCA – 25a Church Road. T1 – Conifer – Fell. This council was not previously consulted on this application. c) Planning Applications withdrawn (notified by Bedford Borough Council) – for information only. None. d) Planning Refusals (by Bedford Borough Council) – for information only. None. e) Planning (other – including Bedford Borough Council and the Secretary of State). None.			
P25/205	To request above application(s) be considered by the Full Planning Committee of Bedford Borough Council.	Resolved planning application 25/02068/M73 – Wootton Upper School, Hall End Road be called in for consideration by the Full Planning Committee of Bedford Borough Council by BBCllr Wheeler. Proposed: Cllr Lincoln. Seconded: Cllr Hensher. Resolved by all present.	Clerk to take forward.	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 & subsequent.
P25/206	To consider representation of the Council at the Full Planning Committee meeting of Bedford Borough Council discussing the above application(s).	Resolved Cllr O'Dell would represent the parish council at the Full Planning Committee meeting of Bedford Borough Council. Proposed: Cllr Lincoln. Seconded: Cllr Hensher. Resolved by all present.	Clerk and BBCllr Wheeler to take forward.	Town & Country Planning Act 1990 & subsequent.

Meeting closed at 7.51pm.

Letter of Representation – Wootton Upper School

Dear Members of the Council,

The 4G sports facility at Wootton Upper School was completed and commissioned in November 2024, in full accordance with the granted planning approval. This process was supported by a number of specialist reports, including environmental, acoustic, and lighting assessments, ensuring that all planning conditions were properly considered and addressed.

Since the facility has become operational, we have identified some disparities between two of the planning conditions issued by the Planning Department. These specifically relate to the hours of operation permitted during term time and those permitted during school holidays.

Our current application seeks to standardise and align these operating hours, extending the permitted hours of use during school holidays to match those during term time. This adjustment is intended to resolve the inconsistency between the planning conditions and the Community Use Agreement. The facility was designed and funded as a community asset, and the current restrictions unintentionally limit the community’s ability to benefit from it during school holiday periods.

We have also been made aware, through communication with some of our neighbours, of concerns regarding light glare from the facility onto nearby properties. In response, during the spring we instructed our contractor to measure the lighting levels within the 4G boundary and to make the necessary adjustments to ensure compliance with the approved lighting specifications.

We recognised that further testing would be most effective during the darker months and therefore arranged for the contractor to carry out light level assessments on neighbouring land during the week commencing 3rd November 2025. We are currently awaiting their report. Should the findings indicate any inconsistencies between the planning conditions and the on-site reality, we will ensure that additional mitigation work is undertaken promptly to address these.

We remain in ongoing contact with both the Bedford Borough Council Planning Department and the Environmental Health Officer, and we are committed to working collaboratively with them and with our neighbours to resolve any outstanding issues. Our goal is to ensure that the 4G facility can continue to be enjoyed safely and responsibly by the school and the wider community, while maintaining good relations with all residents in the surrounding area.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate the opportunity to present this matter to you and wish to assure the Council of our continued commitment to compliance, transparency, and community partnership.



Phillips Planning Services Ltd.
Town Planning and Development Consultants

Our Ref: F225888

LPA Ref: 25/02068/M73

5th November 2025

Ryan Cummins (Case Officer)

Planning

Bedford Borough Council

Borough Hall

Cauldwell Street

Bedford

MK42 9AP

Sent by email to: planning@bedford.gov.uk

Dear Mr Cummins,

RE: Representation regarding Planning Application 25/02068/M73 – New artificial pitch with fencing, floodlights, acoustic fence, erection of a pavilion with changing rooms, new car parking and revisions to existing access. Relocation of cricket nets and long-jump pit, including variation of conditions: 3 and 12 attached to 22/00522/MAF, to allow for extended hours of operation to 9.30pm and to allow use of the pitch outside school term times.

We write on behalf of our clients, David and Anne Palmer, of Wootton House, Church Road, Wootton, MK43 9HF, who wish to **OBJECT** to the proposed variation of conditions 3 and 12 regarding the change of hours for the artificial pitch at Wootton Upper School.

Wootton House is situated due east of Wootton Upper School, is a direct neighbour to the school and is the second closest dwelling to the artificial pitch. Our client is gravely concerned that the change of hours would exacerbate the harm to residential amenity that has been endured over several months as the school has operated the site in breach of the planning conditions - conditions that were specifically put in place to mitigate the potential adverse impacts on the residential amenities of its occupants and the setting of Wootton House (a Grade II* listed building).

Since the pitch has been in operation, the school has operated beyond the times stated in condition 3. This persistent breach of condition has had adverse impacts on neighbours,

especially in terms of both noise and light pollution on properties in the locality. The harm is of a magnitude that is currently the subject of a statutory nuisance complaint, being investigated by Environmental Health.

What makes the situation worse is that before the original permission was granted, reasonable and considered objections were raised by neighbours who were rightly concerned about the likely impacts from this development and that the proposals had not adequately addressed the potential harm from noise and light from the pitch. This included very fair criticism that the noise assessment had failed to even consider the location of Wootton House as the second closest dwelling, a matter that the Council sought to downplay but which remains a stain on this approval.

The Council chose to approve the scheme, with officers stating at the committee meeting that the proposed conditions had been carefully considered and that they would mitigate the harm that neighbours were concerned about. Now our clients are faced with those protections being removed, despite the fact that by operating in breach of the condition, the harm has become unbearable for them and their neighbours.

In this application for variation, the applicant refers to the agreement of community use (required by Condition 4), which was agreed by the council with different operating hours to those shown in conditions 3 and 12 of the decision notice, leading them to believe that there is a conflict between the separate hours of operation stated, and that somehow they can operate beyond the hours and times stated. However, condition 4 did not require hours of operation to be stated; it is only the use that is relevant, and so it is completely irrelevant what it states regarding times of operation, as condition 3 cannot be overridden by a separate agreement under another condition. This is a very important legal point, which the Council will be fully aware of - you cannot apply for approval of a detail that is not reserved by that specific condition. The community use agreement can only relate to use and cannot alter the parameters of operations set by other conditions.

Furthermore, this application does not present any additional mitigation to offset the harm to neighbouring residential amenities. The policies that the Council cites as reasoning for the controls imposed by condition haven't changed, and as the application proposes no additional mitigation, or any evidence to support the claim that the extended hours can work without harm to neighbours, the scheme cannot be considered to conform with the Development Plan. On which basis, it must be refused without further consideration.

In assessing the conditions and the previous determination, condition 3 of the Decision Notice states:

The artificial pitch and cricket nets hereby permitted shall not be used at any time between 21:00 hours and 09:00 hours Monday to Friday during term time and between 18:00 and 10:00 at weekends and out of term time.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and heritage impacts in accordance with policy 32 and 97 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.

As stated in the reason, policies 32 and 97 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 have influenced the creation of these operating hours. These policies are as follows:

Policy 32 – The Impact of Development – Disturbance and Pollution Impacts:

Development proposals should ensure that they minimise and take account of the effects of pollution and disturbance. Planning applications should give particular attention to all of the following considerations:

- i. Noise, vibration, smell, harmful emissions, impact on water quality, light glare or other disturbance or pollution which is likely to be generated by the development.*
- ii. The existing tranquillity of the area.*
- iii. The suitability of the existing environment in relation to nuisance or pollution in the vicinity of the site.*
- iv. Factors which might give rise to disturbance to neighbours and the surrounding community, including overlooking, crime and community safety concerns.*
- v. Arrangements for dealing with waste (including recyclable materials) storage and collection.*
- vi. The impact of development on locally, nationally and internationally important habitats (including Natura 2000 sites) as a result of changes in ground water and surface water.*

Developers will be required to implement or contribute towards measures to mitigate adverse impacts.

Criterion i. of this policy mentions noise and light glare as a particular consideration. Both of these considerations have had a significant impact on the living conditions at Wootton House, especially at night when the flood lights have been lighting up rooms within the house that making it an uncomfortable living space for its residents. Extending the operating hours would only worsen these effects.

Noise has also made a significant impact on this property. There was no protection put in place to mitigate noise levels between the pitch and Wootton House, with a barrier erected on the west side only. We also believe that the barrier on the west side reflects noise back in the direction of Wootton House, amplifying to elevated levels that not only affect the residents at this property, but also several others along Hall End Road and beyond.

Policy 97 – New Sports and Leisure Facilities

Planning permission for new sports/leisure facilities (including indoor and outdoor facilities) will be granted where:

- i. It is demonstrated that the location is suitable for the proposed facility and*
- ii. Provision is made for access for users travelling by foot, cycle and public transport and*
- iii. There is no adverse effect on the highway network or the amenity of local residents and*
- iv. Any outdoor lighting is positioned to illuminate the area required and not to cause light spill beyond the site and/or the sports pitch or leisure facility and*
- v. It is demonstrated through a robust assessment of existing and future need for indoor/outdoor sports facilities, that the proposed facility or facilities are meeting an identified need for such facilities and*
- vi. Any new facilities are constructed to have regard to Sport England/NGB technical design guidance, to ensure new facilities are fit for purpose.*

Criterion vi. outlines that any outdoor lighting is positioned to illuminate the area required and not to cause light spill beyond the site and/or the sports pitch or leisure facility. We have attached photos taken from Wootton House that show the extent of the light spill into this property. There is a clear effect from this which cannot be ignored, with the established operating hours as they are already failing to comply with this policy.



Illumination of the rear garden



The direct light spilling into the living room



Light spills over the landscaping



Images of the bright flood lights at night from Wootton House
directly illuminating the facade

As you can see from these photos, the lights illuminate the property both on its exterior and through the windows into the living room. It is clear that there has not been adequate cover over these lights to prevent light spill, and neighbours have felt the effects nightly. The lighting needs addressing as a matter of urgency, and extending operating hours out of term time will make this light pollution an almost nightly occurrence all year round, which is unacceptable to say the least.

Condition 12 of the decision notice states:

The illuminated floodlights (all six of them) hereby permitted shall be retracted and switched off between 21:30 hours and 09:00 hours Monday to Friday during school term time and shall be retracted and switched off between 18:30 and 10:00 hours at weekends and out of school term time.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and heritage impacts in accordance with policy 32 and 41s of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030.

Policy 32 has already been addressed above, and we have proven that the application already fails to abide by the points stated within it. With regard to policy 41S, it states:

Policy 41s – Historic Environment and Heritage Assets

- i. Where a proposal would affect a heritage asset the applicant will be required to describe :
 - a. The significance of the asset including any contribution made by its setting and impacts of the proposal on this significance, and*
 - b. The justification for the proposal, how it seeks to preserve or enhance the asset/setting or where this is not possible, how it seeks to minimise the harm.**
- ii. This description must be in the form of one or a combination of: a desk based assessment; heritage statement; heritage impact assessment; and/or archaeological field evaluation. Further information will be requested where applicants have failed to provide assessment proportionate to the significance of the assets affected and sufficient to inform the decision-making process.*
- iii. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset or non-designated heritage asset of archaeological interest of demonstrably equivalent significance to a scheduled monument, consent will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the*

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heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

- iv. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*
- v. In considering proposals affecting designated heritage assets or a non-designated heritage asset of archaeological interest of demonstrably equivalent significance to a scheduled monument, involving their alteration, extension, demolition, change of use and/or development in their setting, the Council will include in their consideration as appropriate:*
 - a. The asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interest and any contribution to its significance from setting (including the wider historic landscape)*
 - b. scale, form, layout, density, design, quality and type of materials, and architectural detailing*
 - c. boundary treatments and means of enclosure*
 - d. implications of associated car parking, services and other environmental factors*
 - e. effect on streetscape, roofscape and skyline including important views within, into or out of heritage assets*
 - f. impact on open space which contributes positively to the character and/or appearance of heritage assets*
 - g. the positive benefits of the proposal in addressing heritage at risk.*
- vi. Where heritage assets are included on a Local List and are affected by development proposals the Council will afford weight proportionate to their heritage significance in the decision-making process to protect and conserve the significance which underpins their inclusion. Partial or total loss adversely impacting this significance will require clear and convincing justification.*
- vii. The effect of proposals on the significance of non-designated heritage assets will be taken into account in determining applications for development. Applications which result in harm or loss of significance to non-designated heritage assets will only be supported if clear and convincing justification has been demonstrated. In*

making a decision, the Council will weigh the significance of the heritage asset affected against the scale of any harm or loss to it.

- viii. Where applications are permitted which will result in (total or partial) loss to a heritage asset's significance (including where preservation in situ of buried archaeological remains is not necessary or feasible), applicants will be required to arrange for further assessment of and recording of this significance in advance of, and where required, during development/works. This assessment and recording must be undertaken by a suitably qualified specialist in accordance with a design brief set by the Council's Historic Environment Team. The work might include:*
- archaeological and/or historic building fieldwork,*
 - post-excavation/recording assessment, analysis, interpretation,*
 - archiving with the local depository, and*
 - presentation to the public of the results and finds in a form to be agreed with the Council.*

As a minimum, presentation of the results should be submitted to the Bedford Borough Historic Environment Record and where appropriate, will be required at the asset itself through on-site interpretation.

The setting of a heritage asset must, therefore, be preserved or enhanced according to this policy, or the harm must be minimised if this is not possible. The only way that this development minimised the harm to the setting of Wootton House was with the reduced operating hours, coupled with the retraction of the flood lighting. Extending these hours without providing mitigation for the listed building would be a significant issue that would result in less than substantial harm to a heritage asset at the higher end of the scale.

Therefore, on heritage grounds, this application should not be approved when appropriate mitigation has already been considered and imposed through those conditions.

Officer Report – Neighbour Objections

Part 2.8 of the Officer Report aims to address objections raised by neighbours. It states:

In terms of the hours of use conditions to be imposed, the application varies with what is being sought as some parts say 21:00 and others 22:00, while Sport England have requested 21:30. Given the design and access statement states 21:00, a condition requiring the pitch to shut at

21:00 is being imposed. However, it is reasonable to allow the lights to remain on for a further half hour while the pitch is cleared, people are leaving the area and the place is secured.

This statement informed conditions 3 and 12. If an agreement has already been made to ensure neighbouring amenity is mitigated, an application that worsens it without any sort of mitigation provided simply cannot be supported. This section also states:

In regards to Wootton House not being addressed in the noise report, the Environmental Health Officer has been contacted in regard to this issue and has stated that given the distance between the development and residential property this proposal will have no noise impact on this property.

Unfortunately, this observation has proven to be incorrect, resulting in the decision having a significant and adverse impact on the residential amenity of my clients. Considering that a statutory nuisance report is currently under investigation by Environmental Health, serious consideration must therefore be given to any proposal to change the operations in a manner that will result in a potential increase in harm to amenities.

Finally, if we may make a simple point to the decision maker, we want you to consider your own dwelling, and how you would feel if your primary living space was illuminated by floodlighting throughout the week and beyond up to 10 pm, or that during a summer's evening you attempted to enjoy your garden with your children, while listening to the choice language of the amateur game. No reasonable person would consider that acceptable, and so anything that makes a bad situation worse should be resisted.

Our clients, therefore, register their **OBJECTION** to the proposed development, and we trust our objections will be taken into account in the determination of this planning application.

Yours faithfully,



Frazer Hickling
Director

PHILLIPS PLANNING SERVICES