 Watlington Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Kristina Tynan

Watlington Parish Council

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Watlington

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

**HELD ON TUESDAY 5th DECEMBER 2023 AT 7PM IN THE PARISH OFFICE**

**Present:** Gill Bindoff -Chair

**Councillors:** Ian Hill (IH)

Denise Mallon (DM)

Karyn Buck (KB)

Keith Jackson (KJ)

**Co-opted members:** Tony Powell

**Officer:**  Kristina Tynan

**Members of the Public:** 2 (For Forget me not Farm)

1. Apologies for Absence

James Herridge-Leng, Isla Woodcock, Leo Pesci, Nick Thomas.

2. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2023 which were accepted by Full Council on the 10th October 2023

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting above be agreed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none notified.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising as all matters were covered by the agenda.

5. To consider the following applications:

[P23/S3150/FUL](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3150/FUL) Lavender Cottage Greenfield

Installation of 11kw ground mounted solar panel array.

**NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE** – Unanimous

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies are P3(a) which protects views of and from the AONB and

P5 which makes provision for measures to provide resilience to the effects of climate change.

WPC welcomes the provision of renewable energy but does have some concerns about the visual impact on the AONB landscape as the size of the array is significant. However, in view of the location, it is considered that the AONB is unlikely to be harmed. There is also concern about the protection of biodiversity so that there is no loss as a result of the development. WPC would have liked to have confirmation that no trees will have to be removed to ensure that the array is not shaded.

[P23/S3796/FUL](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3796/FUL#exactline) Watlington Service Station

Change of use of existing workshop and showroom area to retail area, demolition of single storey building to frontage.

Enlargement and raising of existing forecourt canopy.

**OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies are: P1, P2 and P3

WPC supports the principle of this application. The service station provides an important local service and the shop could be a good, additional, retail facility. In addition, there may be opportunities for local employment which is also supported.

However, the parish council is extremely concerned that material changes to the existing building have been, and are being, carried out without any regard to the planning process and without any planning permission. Not only that, but the works have proceeded without any oversight by building control and without meeting any of the requirements detailed in the SODC officer’s response regarding contaminated land. The asbestos roof panels have been removed without any report on safety being submitted to SODC or compliance with HSE safety requirements. The parish council has been in contact with the Enforcement Team to report its concerns regarding the unauthorised works being carried out on the site and the implications for public safety.

The detailed comments submitted by the parish council to application P23/S2400/Full are still largely relevant even though the current application is for a reduced footprint and without the proposed first floor flats. That response is to be taken into account for the current application. In addition, the parish council makes the following points:

Policy P1: the Design and Access Statement makes no reference at all to the location of the site within the Watlington Conservation Area although the importance and sensitivity of the site was made clear in the responses from the parish council and from the SODC Conservation and Design Officer to the withdrawn application. The site requires a design which will fit in well with the CA. The parish council supports the comments on the withdrawn application by the Conservation and Design Officer. The roof is currently being re-tiled without any SODC approval of the external materials. This is unacceptable.

A floor plan of the upper floor has been provided but there are no cross sections. These would show that the space available is very restricted by the slope and height of the roof. Cross sections are required to show how the planned office/store, staff room and WCs can be provided. In addition, there would be no natural light in these areas.

The parish council objects strongly to the size of the proposed forecourt canopy. It is twice as long as the existing canopy and would be a very intrusive feature in the Conservation Area. The proposed increase in height appears to take it above the ridge of the service station building. It is essential to see proposals at this stage for how the canopy will be illuminated together with brand advertising. These proposals should not be in a separate application as they are integral to the canopy and will contribute to its visual impact.

The existing reception building is being retained but there is no proposal for its use. The parish council is also concerned that provision for deliveries to the shop may not be adequate. In addition, there does not appear to be any external access provided for the kitchen area. There is no specified use for an area inside the proposed entrance to the shop.

P2: The SODC Environmental Protection Team has confirmed the parish council’s view that the application should include an assessment of the impact of the development on air quality in line with SODC’s information for developers.

Parking provision is less than provision in the withdrawn application and is significantly less than the provision at similar service stations with shops in the local area. Staff parking will be required as well as customer parking. The parish council has already made the point that there is no spare capacity for parking within the town.

There is no provision in this application for air and water bays but it is expected that they will need to be provided. This provision will reduce the number of parking spaces available. Clarification of this point is needed.

P3: The design is expected to limit light spill from artificial light. External lighting should be kept to a minimum, not only to limit the impact on wildlife but also to avoid an intrusive impact on local residents and on the character of the Conservation Area.

In addition to the additional points noted in the parish council’s response to the withdrawn application, the following points are made:

* The application form is not correct in several respects including the answer ‘No’ to the questions ‘Has the change of use already started?’, ‘Is there land where contamination is suspected for all or part of the site?’ ‘Will there be trade effluent or trade waste?’ and the question about the presence of hazardous substances.
* A neighbour has drawn attention to the corridor at the rear of the building along the boundary with Chestnut Place. The parish council was not aware that this corridor is provided as a fire escape route for employees of the neighbouring office building. This use needs to be checked with the fire service and retained, unobstructed, if it is required.
* Although the provision of food has been reduced, there is still not enough information about what is expected to be prepared in the kitchen area and how food waste will be disposed of. The impact on neighbours of noise and other disturbance has also not been adequately assessed. This is especially important given the proposed opening hours and the planned daily delivery of fresh produce either before the opening hour of 6.00a.m. or after closing at 10.00p.m.
* The parish council supports the concerns which neighbours have detailed in their responses.
* The parish council notes that a full surface water drainage scheme is required. The applicant is still stating that surface water will be disposed of via the main sewer. The application form also still states that the provision for sewerage is ‘unknown’. The plans submitted with the application show a drainage channel that drains into the site boundary at the side. This needs to be explained in the required submitted scheme.
* The application makes a reference to a ‘robust welfare check’ on the fuel tanks but the report has not been submitted. In view of known problems with the tanks in the recent past, this report is required to ensure public safety.

There is an opportunity to provide a good, viable, development on this site which is a benefit to the local community and contributes to the economy of Watlington. Unfortunately, the applicant has not taken account of the many issues raised in response to the initial application, which has been withdrawn, and has proceeded with the conversion of the car showroom and vehicle workshop without planning permission. The parish council hopes that, if the application is amended to resolve the serious concerns which have been raised, it will be able to support it.

[P23/S3774/HH](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3774/HH#exactline) 16 Gorwell Watlington

Extension to existing rear single storey extension roof extending over existing. Removal of one outbuilding.

**NO OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies are P1 which protects heritage assets, including the Conservation Area and P3 which expects good design to limit pollution from artificial light.

It was agreed that the proposed development would not be harmful to the Conservation Area and it was noted that neighbours support the application. However, there are concerns about the impact on local wildlife from light spill from the new roof lights. If the roof lights are definitely required there should be a condition for light spill to be mitigated. Although the building to be demolished is small, WPC would like confirmation that the demolition does not require CA approval.

[P23/S3712/HH](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3712/HH#exactline) 27 Ash Close Watlington

Demolition and removal of existing rear conservatory. Single storey rear extension.

**NO OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policy is P3 which expects good design to limit pollution from artificial light.

It was noted that this is a re-application for development where the planning permission has expired. As this will be a new extension, there is an opportunity to improve provision to limit light pollution from artificial light. The parish council would like the provision of roof lights to be reviewed and a condition to mitigate the impact of light spill.

[P23/S3913/HH](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3913/HH#exactline) 22 Gorwell Watlington

Install a small sash window to side elevation

**NO OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policy is P1 which protects the Conservation Area.

It was agreed that the installation of the new window would not harm the Conservation Area. In order to avoid harming the amenities of neighbours, a planning condition should make provision for the glazing to be obscure and the window opening to only be at the top.

[P23/S3949/FUL](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3949/FUL#exactline) Glendale Barn Glendale Farm Northend . Additional living area.

**HOLDING OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies are P3 which protects views of and from the AONB and P5 which provides policies for housing.

The application is to provide residential accommodation within an existing structure of an agricultural barn which is part of a larger land holding. A significant portion of the barn will remain as an agricultural building. The parish council would not support a new dwelling in this location as the site is beyond the envelope of the village of Northend and would have an adverse impact on the AONB. This application is unusual but the parish council requires further information before considering removing the holding objection. Information about the status of the existing residential use of the building is required. In view of the modern structure of the building, it seems very unlikely that it is unsuitable for agricultural use. Evidence that the building is redundant is also needed.

[P23/S3950/HH](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3950/HH) 3 Kestrel Place Watlington

Proposed rear extension and garage conversion

**OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policy is P3.

There is no objection in principle to the use part of the existing garage for an office, in association with the dwelling, as long as it does not reduce the overall provision of parking on this site. However, WPC is very concerned that the proposed extension would reduce the existing small garden so that the garden area would be below the minimum size for a three bedroom dwelling. The parish council has not seen the landscaping scheme which is mentioned in the application but considers that it is very unlikely that there could be a biodiversity gain from the proposed development. There is also concern about light spill from the proposed roof lights which, if they are really needed, would need to be mitigated to protect night time wildlife. The parish council would also like to have confirmation that light splays from the development would not have an adverse impact on neighbours.

[P23/S3994/HH](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3994/HH) The Well House Greenfield

Increased first floor window

**NO OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

The relevant Neighbourhood Plan policy is P3 which protects views of and from the AONB and expects good design to limit the impact of pollution from artificial light.

Although the proposal is to significantly increase the size of the first floor window it was agreed that, in view of the location, the increase in glazing was unlikely to have an adverse visual impact on the AONB. However, there are concerns about the design which unbalances the pattern of glazing on one elevation of the house and, in particular, adds to light spill which has an adverse impact on wildlife. As the house is in a relatively isolated rural location within the AONB the parish council would like to see a planning condition to mitigate the impact of light spill.

6. To consider or note the following amendments/Discharge of Conditions/Withdrawals:

[P23/S3732/DIS](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3732/DIS) [P23/S3733/DIS](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3733/DIS)

Land between Pyrton Lane and Cuxham road. Discharge of conditions.

The committee was interested to see the comments from SODC and OCC Officers and was concerned there are landscaping issues to be resolved and improvements to be made regarding provision for cycle parking and surface water drainage. The parish council has expressed its concern many times over the absence of an assessment of the possible impact of surface water from Site B draining into the chalk stream (Chalgrove Brook) on the opposite side of Cuxham Road.

[P23/S1431/FUL](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S1431/FUL) 82 Shirburn Road -Amendment.

Further information is needed as it is not clear what amendments have been made.

[P23/S3840/DIS](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3840/DIS)  [P23/S3881/DIS](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3881/DIS) [P23/S3378/DIS](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3378/DIS)

Land at Britwell Road. Discharge of conditions.

The key application is P23/S3881/DIS which is a street lighting scheme. The parish council will contact the planning officer to explain that the proposed solar bollards are not acceptable in this location. The bollards will be close to the wildlife area and to the countryside boundary of the site. The white LEDs are harmful to wildlife and it is clear that the spill from the lights is substantial. The lights have a 360 degree spread and extend sideways over several metres. The bollards can be wildlife friendly as well as providing safe lighting for residents. The light colour needs to avoid harm to wildlife by using a more orange spectrum and the light spill needs to be significantly reduced by avoiding side lighting and directing the light downwards.

[P23/S3202/FUL](https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P23/S3202/FUL) 40 Couching Street - Amendment.

**NO OBJECTION** – UNANIMOUS

A report on the viability of the retail use of the application premises has been provided. This included information about the offer of the premises to alternative retail tenants. In view of the report it was agreed that the holding objection should be removed.

7.Willow Close Proposal

Presentation from Tim Horton and David Parker. – **This item was deferred to next year.**

*8.* Decisions

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| ***APPLICATION*** | ***SODC DECISION*** | ***WPC RECOMMENDATION*** |
| P23/S3244/HH 7 High Street Watlington | *Permission Granted* | No objection |
| P23/S3246/LB 7 High Street Watlington | *Permission Granted* | No objection |
| P23/S1431/FUL 82 Shirburn Road Watlington | *Permission Granted* | No objection |
| P23/S3168/HH Porthmeor 7 Brook Street | *Permission Granted* | No objection |
| P23/S3208/HH 6 Allnut Close | *Permission Granted* | No objection |
| P23/S3252/HH 36 Pyrton Lane | *Permission Granted* | No objection |
| P23/S2876/LDE Woods Farm Britwell Hill | *Refusal of certificate for lawful development* |  |

All decisions were noted.

9. Possible breach of planning conditions Forget-me-Not Farm – Christmas Common Ox49 5HW

It was noted that there had been a previous planning application for a house on this site which was not granted. It then went to appeal and was dismissed on the grounds that it would impact on the character of the area and the landscape of the AONB.

It was agreed that the current change of a substantial part of the site to hard standing and the changes to the access are also harmful to the character of the area.

This agricultural site is now being used for an equestrian business. It is now impossible to appreciate the agricultural character of the site, especially as the new entrance gateway restrict the view into it.

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**Resolved:** That there are sufficient reasons for concern and that we contact the SODC Enforcement Team with our comments and concerns.

10. Woods Farm

Following the refusal of a Lawful Development Certificate for the site it was agreed that the Parish Council should ask SODC to ensure that the existing planning permission covers all the buildings and structures which are currently in use for storage and light industrial purposes. The caravan on the site does not have permission for residential use and this use would be inappropriate in this location. In addition, SODC would be asked to remind the applicant that the planning condition which limits the hours of use of the site must be complied with.

11. Chalgrove Airfield

The Committee noted that the emerging Joint Local Plan has removed Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic housing site. The technical problems at the site have made it unlikely that it will be developed and the policies for housing now reduce the need for greenfield sites.

12. Highwood House – trees felled

It was noted that a section of woodland has been felled which makes the site for the replacement dwelling much more visible in the landscape. The ash trees have to be felled due to die-back. It was noted that all the permissions to fell are in order and that there is a good replanting scheme in place.

13. Correspondence/Attachments

1. Email from Christmas Common residents re: planning breach of conditions land south of Northend Road - **Noted**

2. Update on Chalgrove Airfield – proposal to de-allocate Chalgrove airfield as a strategic site – **Noted.**

3. Letter from Sachan GB regarding redevelopment of Watlington Garage **– Noted.**

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.45PM**