

DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Planning Meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Wednesday 9th October 2024

Present: Councillor's: Moscrop (PM – Chair), Bamber (SB – Vice Chair), Rotherford (JR), Hill (TH), Waddell (JW), Shears (SS) and Stephens (AS)

Councillor for Urchfont & Bishops Cannings: Philip Whitehead (PW)

Clerk to the Council: Lunn (BL)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Sally Stephens, Malcolm Smith, Graham Houlden, Richard Hawkins, Jill & John Durbin, Clare and Phil Milanes, Linda Jennings, John Beaty-Pownall, Alasdair Gordan, Tracey Lloyd, Lisa Gordon

1. Apologies: Cllrs Harding (RH) and Kendall (PK)

2. Declarations of Interest: None

3. Minutes of a meeting held on 11th September 2024

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of that meeting	JW	PM	AGREED with 3 abstentions due to absence

4. Matters arising from Minutes of 11th September 2024

a. Ratification of 11th September 2024 Planning Meeting Decisions – As the number of councillors attending this meeting was less than the stated quorum of 5 members, Standing Orders state that all decisions need to be ratified at the following meeting.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To ratify all the decisions taken at the Planning meeting held on 11th September 2024	PM	JW	AGREED unanimously

b. PL/2024/07035 – Application for Urchfont Garage site – potential further justification for OBJECT decision made in August 2024 – to consider.

Richard Hawkins was invited to speak – he reiterated his comments made in the past that the current Neighbourhood Plan is incorrect due to misinformation used at the time the examiner appraised the proposed Plan, he had tried to have this corrected but was 'out of time' in the ratification process. The fact that the garage is in the plan as a potential development site, WC Planning can approve the application. He is disappointed that the Village may now have to suffer the consequences of the previous NP WG shortcomings

The NPWG had submitted a proposal to the Council which seeks to further justify the OBJECT resolution agreed at the August 2024 meeting, this had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting and is now attached at Appendix 1 to these minutes (on the website version only). TH explained that if a material change has taken place since the publication of the initial Neighbourhood Plan, this needs to be taken into account by WC when considering applications. This is the case for this particular employment site.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To forward additional OBJECT justification document provided by NPWG to WC Planning	PM	JW	AGREED unanimously

JW explained that a set of amended proposals for this application had been received by UPC today, with a consultation deadline prior to the next meeting and far too late to include this in the agenda. However, in view of the circumstances she believed that Council should consider the proposed changes at this meeting. These amended proposals had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting.

JW commented that she believed the revised proposals are designed to solely try to satisfy previous objections from WC Highways regarding the entrance from the B3098, consensus indicated that these proposals appeared to do little to better the application and that the previous OBJECT decision should be reinforced.

PW explained that he will step down as Chair of the Eastern Area Planning Committee at their November 2024 meeting when this is likely to be discussed. If the application is refused by WC, then the inspector at any subsequent appeal will be obligated to take account of any material change in the use of the garage site. PW encouraged any member of the public to write to WC Planning to add further weight to the objections already submitted and also to attend the Area Planning Committee meeting in November.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To reinforce OBJECTION to this application following submission of amended plans.	PM	JW	AGREED unanimously

Despite being after the consultation period for the amended plans, it was agreed that this will appear on the 13th November Planning meeting agenda to facilitate further comment from members of the public, PW supported this action.

5. Plans for discussion

PL/2024/08715 - Prior approval Part 3 Class R: Agricultural buildings to a flexible commercial Use at Crookwood Farm, Crookwood Farm, Urchfont , Devizes, SN10 5QS

TH and JW had made a site visit on 30th September and met with the applicant. The proposals relate to a large barn previously used for the storage of thatching straw and now the applicant was to diversify. TH noted that this application is seeking advice on whether full planning is required and is simply going through the relevant process, TH recommended support. JW could not see any problems and supported any opportunity to diversify.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To SUPPORT this application	TH	JW	AGREED unanimously

PL/2024/08300 - Proposed Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Cherry tree - crown reduce by 30% (1m-2m); balance; shape and remove deadwood. Bay tree - reduce to 2m at ROWLANDS, HIGH STREET, URCHFONT, DEVIZES, SN10 4QL

JW and AS had made a site visit in the absence of the applicant. She could see no issues with the proposals. SB noted that the applicant had only moved in to the property about 8 weeks ago. TH commented that this appeared a very sensible proposal and recommended support.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
NO OBJECTION to this application	JW	AS	AGREED unanimously

PL/2024/08933 - Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area - T1 - Variegated Maple tree - overall reduction of canopy by up to 50% at 15 THE ORCHARD, URCHFONT, DEVIZES, SN10 4QX

JW commented that the proposals look fine for this maintenance application, she had sent photos to all councillors. No other comments were made.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
NO OBJECTION to this application	JW	PM	AGREED unanimously

6. Decisions Received from Wiltshire Council up until 30th September 2024

PL/2024/06296 - Proposed Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Copper Beech tree - 3 metre crown reduction at THE OLD BAKEHOUSE, HIGH STREET, URCHFONT, DEVIZES, SN10 4QL - NO OBJECTION

PL/2024/08217 - Proposed Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Field Maple tree - fell at GREENACRE, THE GREEN, URCHFONT, DEVIZES, SN10 4QU - WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT

PL/2024/07994 - Prior Notification - Proposed American Barn at Manor Farm, Lydeway, Devizes, Wilts, SN10 3PU - PP NOT REQUIRED

7. Matters for Report – Nothing was raised at the meeting.

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting: 13th November 2024 as part of the Full Council meeting.

APPENDIX 1 to the OCTOBER PLANNING MEETING MINUTES

Urchfont Garage Site – Planning Application PL/2024/07035: Further Representations by Urchfont Parish Council

As has been made clear by the very many objectors to the above planning application, this proposal is in fundamental conflict with policy 35 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, and policy 65 of the draft Wiltshire Local Plan, both of which afford strong protection to employment uses.

In order to try and overcome this failure to comply with employment land policy, the applicants are relying heavily upon the allocation of the site for residential development under policy H1 of the Urchfont and Wedhampton Neighbourhood Plan 2017 and the corresponding employment policy exception in Policy LB1(c) of the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan.

Urchfont Parish Council has reviewed this specific point with our Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (“NPWG”) and now wishes to make the following further representations in respect of the above planning application, in support of our previous objections.

- At the time the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared, the Parish clearly considered protection of existing employment facilities to be of significant importance, hence policy LB1. However, at the same time, the Urchfont and Wedhampton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was given to understand that the existing garage use was unlikely to be viable for the life of the Plan. At that time, therefore, it was considered that the loss of employment use on this site was justifiable.
- Whilst we accept that national planning policy guidance indicates that, as a general rule, planning permission should normally be granted for sustainable development that is in accordance with policy, the NPPF also makes it clear that this presumption in favour of development should not apply where policies are out of date or where there are material considerations that outweigh this presumption.
- It is clear that during the time that has passed since the 2017 plan was made, the garage business has not only survived but has indeed flourished as a valuable local service and provider of employment opportunities.
- The NPWG strongly believes that this constitutes such a significantly material change in circumstances that the employment policy exception that applied to this site in the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan is no longer valid and that its future potential development as a housing site should be regarded as conditional upon satisfying the strict criteria in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan for releasing employment land.

It is clear that there has been such a significant change in circumstances that there is very strong justification for overriding the relevant policies of the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan and considering this application in the light of circumstances as they exist now, not as they were incorrectly thought to be several years ago.

Accordingly, we strongly believe that planning permission for redevelopment of this site for housing should be refused.

Urchfont Parish Council
Date: 09/10/2024