



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Planning Meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Wednesday 14th August 2024

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

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): Frances & Matthew Carter, Celia Harrison, Tricia Howard, Kerry Stanley, Bob Organ, Corrine & Peter Rotherham, Sam Geiger, Nick Lemon, Sue Alexander, Sue Smith, Jane & Peter Cook, Marianne & Colin Whitehead, Aurora & Jonny Roche, Nicky Hammond, Ian Walker, Gill Hill, Lisa & Al Gordon, Jason & Janet Ledman, Liz & Kit Dark, John Adlington, Bill Donald, Alisan Taylor, Val Brockie, Malcolm Smith, Nick Church, Kevin May, David Alexander, Stephanie Szakalo, Nicky Mitchell, Graham Day, Elaine & Paul Bancroft, Roger Chadwick, Susan Fosbery, Ann Blunden, David Leigh, Peter Newell, Maria & Richard Kemp, Clare Cannon, Malcolm Turner, Tracey Lloyd, Mary Revill, Denise Adlington, Julie & Richard Eleder, Carole & John Beaty-Pownell, Janet & Richard Hawkins, Barbara & David Myers, Margaret Barclay, James Boyd, Simon Thompson, Simon Wright, Susie Grout, Kirsty Powell, Kelly Arnold, Shawn Scott, Di Harris, Bob Naylor, Nick Poole, Prof. Branford-White.

- 1. Apologies: Cllr Stephens (AS)**
- 2. Declarations of Interest: Cllr Kendall (PK) (Pecuniary)**
- 3. Minutes of a meeting held on 10th July 2024**

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	TH	JR	AGREED with two abstentions due to absence from meeting

- 4. Matters arising from Minutes of 10th July 2024 – None reported**
- 5. Plans for discussion**

PL/2024/07035 - Full planning permission - Demolition of existing buildings and construction of five dwellings and associated works at Urchfont Garage, High Street, Devizes, SN10 4QH

25 Representations had been posted on the WC website. 5 representations had been sent direct to UPC and copied to all councillors prior to the meeting – See Appendix 7 (on website version only). A site visit was made by three councillors on 12th August 2024.

JW (Lead of Planning) set out the process to be followed at this meeting including the need for time constraints on individual public participation, she then invited the following members of the public to speak:

Nick Church – read out statement - see provided text at Appendix 3 on website version only

Tracey Lloyd – As a Director of Urchfont Vehicles Ltd since 2016 when she took on the business including two staff who had served for 30 -35 years on site. A new lease was signed in 2021 and the business experienced tough times during COVID. On average they are now carrying out 1200 MOT's per annum. Two businesses are currently operating on the site employing 9 staff in total. As far as the suggestion that the business could relocate to allow development to proceed, she wished that this would be easy but there are no suitable sites in the area and it would cost at least £80k to move.

John Beaty Pownell – emphasized that at least two people have worked in the garage for many years for the benefit of the local community. He stressed that the Council should object to the application.

Richard Hawkins - see provided text of statement at Appendix 2 on website version only

Paul Bancroft – read out statement - see provided text at Appendix 3 on website version only

Bill Donald - read out statement - see provided text at Appendix 3 on website version only

David Leigh – expressed concerns about access visibility splays to the left and right which can be difficult even now with a forecourt bordering the road, this will become worse if and when the proposed house bordering the road is built.

Malcolm Smith - read out statement - see provided text at Appendix 3 on website version only

John Adlington - read out statement - see provided text at Appendix 3 on website version only

Corrine Rotherham – Emphasized that the garage provides a core business and a lot of kindness to members of the local community. Urchfont is not a sterile village but a thriving community which needs business opportunities to survive.

Prof Branford-White – objected strongly to this application. Being closely involved with diversity projects in Wiltshire, to approve the application would deny Urchfont the opportunity to grow and build sustainability.

Public Participation was closed and the Council Meeting re-opened:

TH confirmed that a site visit had been made on 12th August which identified issues regarding visual splay onto the B3098 which is considered critical and a potential danger to the public. He then highlighted the following:

- Current garage business for over 70 years, previously a blacksmith
- Service provided by the garage valued by the community
- Is defined in the 2017 UWLNP as a development site, this does not mean that it has to be developed
- NP examiner was given information that the garage was perceived to be failing at that time and would become a vacant site, on this basis the examiner confirmed that the site should be included in the plan
- UPC has set up a WG to look at the new NP which will start in 2026 and currently will be required to identify 34 new properties for development
- If this application is approved, then it is believed that the garage business will be lost to the community due to perceived relocation costs and lack of alternative sites locally

JR referred to his notes distributed to all councillors (see Appendix 8 on website version only) prior to the meeting regarding his concerns on visibility splays from the proposed site. JW echoed concerns on visibility and access. RH reiterated that the state of the garage business is now very different to that 8 years ago, it is now thriving largely down to the efforts of Tracy Lloyd, this must be protected. He also noted that the site could be subject to significant contamination and was also concerned about access and increased traffic activity as a result of a developed site. PW suggested that the garage site should be registered with WC as a Community Asset.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To submit a Community Asset application in respect of the garage business site to WC	PM	JW	AGREED unanimously

PM stated that any proposal on this application must clearly set out the reasons, it is not acceptable just to just OBJECT or otherwise.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To OBJECT to this application with the reasons being clearly defined post the meeting.	JW	TH	AGREED with one abstention due to declared interest.

The above OBJECT resolution has been submitted to WC Planning as follows:

“Note to Planning Officer - It should be noted that the below ‘Objection’, and ‘Reasons for Objections’ to a development site identified within the Urchfont Wedhampton Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan (UWLNP) is as a result and following representation by members of the community who attended a UPC Planning Meeting held on Wednesday 14th August at Urchfont Village Hall. Over 70 members of the public attended this meeting, and the overwhelming views of those attending were for UPC to ‘Object’ to this planning application.

To OBJECT to this planning application on the basis that, although this site is identified within the UWLNP (‘Made’ in 2017) the circumstances which applied to this site at the time the Plan was ‘Made’ has totally changed since and that the business on this site should now be protected and the site should no longer be considered as a housing development site. Furthermore, UPC has serious concerns regarding Site access / egress and the risk from site contamination.

Reasons for OBJECTION

- a) **Protecting Local business** (Policy LB1) verses Housing Development (Policy H1) - This site was included as a development site under UWLNP Policy H1 (Housing Site Allocation) as the garage business was incorrectly identified as a failing business which was not expected to survive the life of the NP.
- b) In 2016 The Plan examiner, Mrs Ann Skippers, questioned why this site was identified as a site under Policy LB1, (Protecting existing employment facilities) **AND** as a site for development, under Policy H1? She was given the answer that the garage business was failing, and the site would become a vacant Brown Field site before the end of the plan. By rejecting this site for development, the Examiner was also aware that the Plan would fall short of its housing quota. She agreed that the site could go forward for future development under Policy H1.
- c) The assumption made at that time and the information given to the Examiner that this business was failing has been proven to be totally wrong as this garage business continues to operate and thrive to this day (8 years later) providing a valuable local service and employment opportunity and should only be subject to clauses a) and b) of UWLNP Policy LB1 and clause c) should no longer apply (see para (d) below).
- d) Policy LB1 (UWLNP) states; The loss of land and buildings used for employment purposes will not be permitted unless a) and b) are satisfied: a) There is valid evidence that the land and/or buildings are no longer viable for their current employment use, or capable of redevelopment for alternative employment use, in terms of need or demand b) The land and/or building has been genuinely marketed on reasonable terms for employment use, for at least 6 months, and have remained unsold or unlet; full details of marketing must accompany any development proposal. Or c) The site has been allocated under Policy H1
- e) One of the main cornerstones of the **Wiltshire Core Strategy** is the support of existing business and the encouragement of new business within Wiltshire to generate sustainable employment and economic growth. f) **Core Policy 35 – Existing Employments sites** – protecting viable business in all communities as stated in this policy with specific reference to para 6.16 of the supporting text makes

it clear that this is not just for principal settlements but about protecting existing employment area anywhere to maintain diversity and allow for local business expansion.

g) This site has been a garage business for over 70 years and prior to that was the site of a Blacksmith's. The garage provides a much-needed community service and is greatly valued by residents and provides local employment within the heart of the village.

h) Up until recently, this site was occupied by, not just the garage business but 3 other smaller businesses all providing local employment. Some have had to vacate the site, not because they are unviable but because the owners of the site raised a technical issue relating to the lease agreement with the garage managers.

i) **Core Policy 48 – Supporting rural life** - the garage supports rural life by maintaining the local services and infrastructure. This is key to the survival of villages such as Urchfont and is something that was observed by CPRE in their recent statement about why Urchfont was again chosen as Best Kept Village, Winner of Winners, 2024 in Wiltshire.

j) **Core Policy 49 – Protection of rural services and community facilities** - This is a viable business and should be protected as such. Small communities thrive on local businesses that can offer additional facilities that would not otherwise be available. For example, the garage site provides storage for Urchfont Scarecrow Festival materials a key aspect of life in Urchfont, and which provides significant funding to the village community. During the Covid pandemic this garage remained open throughout, providing the local community with an invaluable service and ensuring a degree of normality during this worrying time.

k) Once this business site is lost to housing development there is every likelihood that the current business will fold, not because it is unviable but because the cost of relocating all its specialist equipment to a new site / building will be financially restrictive.

l) **The Next Neighbourhood Plan** - The Parish Council has setup a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to look at and prepare the next Urchfont Parish Neighbourhood Plan (UPNP) which is expected to run from 2026 (on the expiry of current Plan) to 2038. WC expects the Parish Council via the new Plan to identify development sites for a further 34 dwellings. Local landowners are currently being approached to ask if they have suitable sites which may be considered for development. UPC expects the response to provide more than enough sites to accommodate the WC quota of houses.

m) These new sites will undoubtedly provide sufficient land to accommodate the 5 dwellings which would be expected to be built on this site

n) **Community Asset** – given the importance the community places on the garage, as shown by the over 70 residents attending the village hall when this topic was discussed, Urchfont Parish Council will shortly apply to have the garage listed as a Community Asset.

o) **Site Access** – Access and egress visibility splays are shown in Appendix D of PFA Consulting 'Transport Statement' document. With the positioning of the proposed dwelling (Plot1) so close to the B3098 the visibility splays for vehicles leaving the proposed site onto the B3098 High Street will be greatly restricted for vehicles turning both right (west) and left (east). Traffic approaching the proposed site entrance will have very limited view and stopping distance/time on seeing vehicles alighting the proposed site entrance. Appendix D assumes that the visibility splay for vehicles leaving the site and turning left (east) will include a view across private property (Hillsborough). This cannot be assumed as the owner of Hillsborough is expected to block this view, to protect their property, should the site be developed, and will make vehicle egress from the site dangerous for both site residents and B3089 traffic.

p) **Contamination** – The report by Ground Investigation Ltd on the assessment of the land quality concludes that 'Based on land usage at the site, it is concluded that the potential risk from ground contamination could be significant and should be addressed by appropriate intrusive ground investigation'. No such ground investigation report is available, and any report will need to include measures to mitigate the risks."

PL/2024/06935 & PL/2024/06955 - Consent under Tree Preservation Orders - T1 – T4 – 4 x Larch trees – crown reduce by 2m-2.5m and deadwood T5 – Lawson Cypress tree – crown raise to 6m T6 – Monkey Puzzle tree – crown raise to 6m and deadwood T7 – Holly tree – fell at LITTLE OAKFRITH, 6 PEPPERCOMBE CLOSE, URCHFONT, DEVIZES, SN10 4QS

JW explained that the two applications were submitted due to TPO's. Three councillors visited the site, a blanket TPO appears to cover most trees in the garden, all seemed perfectly reasonable. TH

commented that that the applicant has been quite sensitive on proposals to maintain and ensure the quality of the trees. JR was of the view that the trees are massive.

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

PL/2024/04926 - Full planning permission - Installation and operation of a renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted PV solar arrays, together with switchgear container, inverter/transformer units, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements on Land East Of Blount's Court Farm, Potterne, Devizes, Wilts, SN10 5PH

It was noted that there are already 314 representations on the WC website, mostly objecting. TH displayed a map showing the locations of the two current solar farm applications, access for HGV traffic was the main concern of the application (PL/2023/10532) on and south of Potterne Wick. This could still be a problem with this application, but better routes are indicated. RH questioned the relevance of this application to UPC as it is outside the Parish. It was noted that the site is overlooked by an ANOB which extends into Urchfont Parish and is proposed to be built on superior agricultural land to the previous application. PM noted that the earlier application has now been called in because of the extent of objections. RH asked whether other solar farm sites in the area are likely in the future. PW indicated that more applications are likely, Wiltshire already has more solar farms than anywhere else in the country. SB was of the view that more farms will destroy food supply opportunities. JR commented that the government is determined to increase solar power opportunities, farmers will naturally take the opportunity to benefit from land sale.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
To OBJECT to this application largely for the following reasons, that: 1. the proposed site is overlooked by an ANOB. 2. they had already objected to a similar application PL/2023/10532 (land south of Potterne Wick) which was to be built on lower grade arable land than this application. 3. they need better visibility of the potential cumulative impact of current and likely to be proposed solar farms on local rural communities.	TH	JW	AGREED unanimously

PL/2024/07319 - Householder planning permission - Demolition of attached garage and replacement with single storey extension at Fosbury Cottage, The Green, Urchfont, Devizes, SN10 4RB

Three councillors had made a site visit. JW commented that a previous application had been rejected, this new application proposes a slightly larger footprint. The latter has already been criticised by the Conservation Officer and may need to be further adjusted. All external finishes will match the current and no trees are impacted. TH mentioned that proposed bi-fold doors into garden would have no impact on neighbours. JR was of the view that the existing garage is out of character with the proposals.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconded	Resolution
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SUPPORT application	JW	PM	AGREED unanimously
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6. Decisions Received from Wiltshire Council up until 4th August 2024

PL/2024/04407 - Householder Application - Erect a small, timber domestic garage on a concrete base, and extend the existing driveway at 7 The Orchard, Urchfont, Devizes, SN10 4QX - APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

PL/2024/04977 - Proposed Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Beech tree - Crown reduce 3mtrs . Oak tree - Crown reduce 3mtrs. Pine tree - Crown reduce 3mtrs LARKS GATE, PEPPERCOMBE CLOSE, URCHFONT, DEVIZES, SN10 4QS - NO OBJECTION

7. Matters for Report – None Reported

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting: 11th September 2024 as part of the Full Council meeting.

APPENDIX 1 TO PLANNING MINUTES 14TH AUGUST 2024

Statement read by Nick Church (Gaiger)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at your meeting. My name is Nick Church, I work for Gaiger Brothers, the applicant. Policy Basis The Wiltshire Core Strategy and the Urchfont Neighbourhood Plan collectively form the local 'Development Plan' against which development proposals are assessed in planning policy terms. Policy H1 of the Neighbourhood Plan identifies Urchfont Garage as a site allocated for 'approximately 5' houses. There was a specific discussion at the Neighbourhood Plan examination about the policy to retain the Garage site for employment use (protected by Policy LB1) and to allocate it for housing development. The policy wording was finalised, confirming the housing allocation and that this site does not fall within the scope of the employment site policy LB1. The Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by the local community, informed by supporting evidence, public consultation, independent examination and a local referendum with 367 votes for and 43 votes against 'adoption' of the Neighbourhood Plan in April 2017. Policy CP35 in the Wiltshire Core Strategy relating to the protection of existing employment sites does not apply to sites in Large Villages such as Urchfont. Section 5 of our submitted Planning Statement sets out our detailed planning assessment and rationale behind our proposals. Landowner The landowners have maintained clear and consistent dialogue with the tenants over many years. A new tenancy agreement was signed in 2021, confirming a new 5-year lease and no right to renew at the end of the lease – on the basis the tenant was fully aware of the intention to deliver the Neighbourhood Plan housing proposal. This includes a break clause which can be served by the landowners anytime from November 2023, giving a minimum of 6-months' notice to the tenant. Last year, the landowners decided to pursue a sale of the site and gave the tenants 1st opportunity to purchase the site, following which no offer was received. The landowners then opened discussions with Gaigers to pursue a planning application and subsequent sale of the site. Planning Application Gaigers wrote to the immediate site neighbours and the Parish Council in late May / early June this year, to explain the background to the proposals and offering to meet to provide further explanation and listen to feedback. Following meetings with many of the neighbours, scheme designs were reviewed and finalised prior to the planning submission at the end of July. The proposals include:

- 5 new homes, including o 2 x semi-detached 2-bedroom homes o 1 x 3-4-bedroom home o 2 x 4-bedroom homes

Conclusion We believe our proposal conforms with all relevant planning policy including the locally prepared Neighbourhood Plan. This planning application need not lead to the closure of the existing garage business. There are potentially suitable premises within the local area available to relocate to and the landowner continues to provide time to the tenant to enable this to happen. Designs have been carefully considered, - sufficient parking is provided - drainage betterment and biodiversity improvement achieved, and - neighbouring residential amenity fully assessed The proposed layout and scale reflect the locality and complements the settings of the nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as borne out by supportive Conservation Officer comments. Thank you for allowing us to speak.

APPENDIX 2 TO PLANNING MINUTES 14TH AUGUST 2024

Statement read by Richard Hawkins

- We have a problem – Garage site is designated in our Neighbourhood Plan as a development site.
- Why? - when public consultation wanted it kept for business.
- I have sent a detailed report to Wiltshire Council & Parish Council.
- It was the result of a ques on asked by the Independent Examiner of our Plan in July 2016.
- The examination copy of the Plan stated 'Keep Wildman's Garage for employment use' but it was also designated as a development plot. The examiner queried this.
- The ques on sent by the Examiner was meant to be a public document.
- A response was sent - It is unlikely that the site of Wildman's garage has a long-term future as a garage. Hopefully the business will relocate elsewhere in the Parish – ideally at Planks where vehicle access etc. will be much easier. The existing site would therefore be available for redevelopment, without contravening policy LB1.
- The Parish Council were unaware of the ques on or answer given but the Examiner stated 'Therefore I have queried this with the Parish Council and I am informed that it is unlikely that Wildman's Garage

has a long-term future as a garage and the hope is that the business will relocate elsewhere in the Parish'.

- Who answered the ques on we do not know – it wasn't the Parish Council or The Steering Group and the ques on had not been made public. Someone knows!
- A similar situation arose with the Uphill development and despite 90 objections and only 1 support the plans were passed as 'IT WAS IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN'
- With regard to the answer given - The garage did have a long term future (8 years ago) and the site should be deemed unavailable for development now.
- Is there any way for the Parish Council to protect the site at this late stage.
- A sad me for democracy.

APPENDIX 3 TO PLANNING MINUTES 14TH AUGUST 2024

Statement read by Paul Bancroft

1. Unfortunately, I have no useful understanding of planning regulations concerning change of use from commercial to domestic sites nor the definition of a "Brown Site", both of which seem to defy common interpretation. Therefore, I can only make my plea to the Parish Council to reject this awful planning application based on grounds of common sense and human decency, (which will probably cut little or no ice with the planning authorities).

2. In my email submission to the Parish Council dated 1 August I made 2 main points:

a. That supportive community infrastructure should be protected, even strengthened and certainly not diminished just for the sake of only 5 new builds.

b. And the harmful impact of our garage's closure on single car owners, the elderly and more vulnerable within the local community and, to some extent, the environment by virtue of extra travel that will be involved in our routine vehicle management.

3. I would like to make 2 further points please:

a. When this parish lost its shop and post office 20 odd years ago they were located in domestic dwellings, as had been the custom for centuries. There were thus no planning issues involved. However, it took 5 years of determined voluntary application and a certain amount of good luck to reinstate those vital community support amenities. There is no way that, once lost, a vehicle repair facility and MOT centre could be replicated by volunteers even if a suitable site could be found. Thus, once gone, this important element of our support infrastructure will be lost for ever.

b. Some might argue that a property owner should have authority to decide how their property is utilised, no matter how acquired. However, ownership of anything does not come without responsibility. For example, if you own a shotgun or a car, their use is dictated by consequences for the safety and consideration of the public at large. The same should surely apply to land property owners, where the ultimate driver should not be the acquisition of a "swift buck" by an absentee landowner but a responsibility to the wellbeing of the community within which that property is located.

4. So, in the name of common sense and moral decency I ask you please to reject this application in the strongest possible terms. And I haven't yet even mentioned the Wildman family that, with bated breath, stands to lose its livelihood if this so called "development" goes ahead. I rest my case.

APPENDIX 4 TO PLANNING MINUTES 14TH AUGUST 2024

Statement read by Bill Donald

The Urchfont Neighbourhood Plan was one of the first in the country to be completed and was seen as an important document to shape where we build new houses.

We need to remember that it was made very clear at the time that this was only a plan, not necessarily a green light to build on any of these sites in the list. Furthermore, other new sites could be considered during the lifetime of the plan.

At the time, we got very little guidance from Wiltshire Council or the Government on how to put a plan together or no guidance on how to assess site viability.

So how was the list of sites created? The committee at the time created a scorecard to evaluate each site and asked residents to indicate their preferences. What's debatable is that 75% of the final score was attributable to the scorecard devised and marked by the committee and the remaining 25% on the public vote. With hindsight, perhaps this wasn't very democratic.

As a result, the site in question called Wildman's Garage was included near the bottom of a list to achieve 37 new houses in the village.

In the plan there are a number of Policies, in particular Policy LB1 : "Protecting existing employment facilities."

It states: 'The loss of land and buildings used for employment purposes will not be permitted unless both a) and b) are satisfied or c):

a) Clause a: there is valid evidence that the land and/or buildings are no longer viable for their current employment use: This is clearly not the case as the site employs more now than when the plan was published, with 9 employees and 2 viable businesses.

b) Clause b: concerns the site if it is vacant, so...as this site is still a viable ongoing site of employment this is irrelevant

The Policy states OR clause C. I think this clause may have been added as an afterthought and basically states..... IT'S OK TO BUILD IF IT'S ON THE LIST

Clause C should not have been added as it clearly contravenes the purpose of this policy and puts too much faith in a scorecard rather than on public opinion.

In conclusion, this site has a good future as one of few sites in our Parish for ongoing employment and permission for housing should be strongly objected.

APPENDIX 5 TO PLANNING MINUTES 14TH AUGUST 2024

Statement read by Malcom Smith

I welcome the decision to call in this application.

The shortcomings of the current Neighbourhood Plan are well documented elsewhere. It does not matter whether you think these were the result of devious skulduggery or gross incompetence; we are stuck with the Neighbourhood Plan until it expires in 2026.

However, the cynical misinterpretation of its contradictions and ambiguities by those advocating development of this site must not go unchallenged when the application is heard before the Eastern Area Planning Committee. I trust the Council will emphasise that the community wholeheartedly supports retaining this site for commercial use, as demonstrated both in the original consultation and in more recent soundings for the next Neighbourhood Plan.

The application also contravenes the Wiltshire Core Strategy for retaining employment opportunities. I urge as many people as possible to lodge objections directly with Wiltshire Council. Democracy (if it still exists) is, after all, a numbers game.

APPENDIX 6 TO PLANNING MINUTES 14TH AUGUST 2024

Statement read by John Adlington

I assume the council members have all been able to review the comments placed on the Wiltshire planning portal.

I strongly object to this planning proposal as it will result in the loss of a much-needed widely used local service and for a family to lose their livelihood as we have heard this evening. I personally patronise the garage for MoT, servicing and general auto repairs. They also provide excellent support for the local charitable motor assets (notably Oakfrith Woods vehicles) within the village. In addition, they also provide much needed secure storage for the scarecrow stores, which will need to be relocated within the village which I suggest would be no trivial issue. I suggest that retention of the garage far outweighs any benefit from the 5 planned houses.

The difficulties of access to the busy main road (B3098) even with use of the current forecourt has already been noted by others this evening, The restricted access on the plans to this busy main road would exacerbate this risk particularly impacting both children and adults exiting the site.

However, I am most concerned at the potential loss of the garage as a service to the local village especially when balanced against the provision of 5 modern, undoubtedly expensive, houses. The loss of the current owner's livelihood and the employment they provide is of great concern and as we have heard from other speakers tonight its loss would be of significant detriment to the village. The site is still being used for a viable business which provides a service and employment for the local community. It should be noted that Para 88 (e) of the current NPPF states that 'policies and decisions should enable...': 'the retention and development of accessible local services.'

Finally in terms of moving the garage to a different site: The bizarre suggestion that this commercial operation can be moved locally without a rational supporting plan is not only nonsensical but also completely impractical due to significant financial overheads of not only acquiring a suitable site, but also in moving the garage equipment and facilities. Any move would not be a trivial undertaking even if a local site were available. The forced closure would undoubtedly cause the business to close with the loss of employment and more importantly the loss of the garage service which has been in the village for many years. I urge you to reject this application, thank you.

APPENDIX 7 TO PLANNING MINUTES 14TH AUGUST 2024

EMAILS RECEIVED BY PARISH COUNCIL AND DISTRIBUTED TO ALL COUNCILLORS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

Jonathan and Emma Leigh, Old School, High Street

We object to this application for the following general reasons:

1. Overdevelopment of the site which will benefit only the developer and the landowner. 5 properties is excessive.
2. Access on a dangerous corner.
3. Overflow parking down the already congested High Street.
4. Increased light pollution from both domestic and security lights.
5. Further stress on drainage systems.
6. Noise pollution with overcrowding of people and cars in too small a space in the heart of the village.
7. The loss of Urchfont Vehicles Garage; this is a sound economic business employing 8 people and catering to the residents of the SN10 postcode rural area. It is madness to lose this viable facility.
8. Although this application is based on the current Neighbourhood Plan, on close examination, this lacks clarity and provides contradictory statements supporting the maintenance of village services and small economic enterprises. It was drawn up in April 2017 and provision is stated to be up to 2026. The optics suggest this application is being rushed through before that date. Since a new Neighbourhood plan is now under consideration early consultation indicates the village requirements have shifted.

We object to this application as owners of a neighbouring property, specifically to Plots 2 & 3:

1. The height as shown in the Existing and Proposed Site Sections (see Site Section D existing and proposed), raises the proposed roofline unacceptably high. The elevation drawings show the entire proposed roof, guttering and top of the windows of Plots 2 & 3, to be above existing levels and in particular our house roof gutter. This means the upstairs windows of these plots will look straight into our bedroom and bathroom windows as well as into the garden, a deprivation of privacy.
2. It will also directly obscure our light as well as preventing light from reaching the existing solar panels installed on our garden outhouse. The drawings include solar panels on the south side of the

proposed roofs shadowing the existing ones on our roof; one set of green credentials destroying another.

3. The proposed landscape plan shows a strip of land behind the existing wall running between Plots 2, 3 & 4 and the site boundary adjoining our property. The proposal to cap the wall with new reconstituted stone coping is inappropriate and unsightly. If this land proves to be polluted, as queried by the Environmental Health officer, this strip of ground cannot be a contaminated no-man's land. What provision will there be to clear it, maintain it, and by whom?

4. The siting of the ASHPs will cause constant noise to all the adjacent properties, particularly from Plots 1, 2, 3 & 4.

We vehemently object to this application, also believing the neighbourhood plan is flawed, as has been well covered in other letters of objection.

Richard Hawkins

I wish to object to this planning application for the reasons detailed below:

The site provides premises for Urchfont Motors (formerly Wildman's Garage) and several other businesses

as well as storage facilities for the Urchfont Scarecrow Festival. Urchfont Motors is used by many living in

the local and nearby communities providing an easy, reliable and accessible service without excessive travelling.

In public consultations for our previous Neighbourhood Plan and also recent consultations for our new Neighbourhood Plan the site has always clearly received support for being kept as an employment and business site. Indeed, the draft copy of our Neighbourhood Plan sent for Independent Examination had the following statement on page 42:

Community views

In the residents' questionnaire of Oct 2013, people were asked if the Neighbourhood Plan should allocate more land for employment - 60% were in favour. In addition, people were asked if existing employment sites should be protected from changes of use - 61% were in favour and if the neighbourhood plan should encourage working from home - 78% were in favour.

- Keep Wildman's Garage for employment use

So why was the statement 'Keep Wildman's Garage for employment use' removed from the final Neighbourhood Plan document and the site kept as a development site?

I detail the reason below:

When the Examiner published her report in January 2017 I was disturbed to find in Appendix 3 of her report, which was dated 17th July 2016, a note from her to Wiltshire Council and the Parish Council raising

a series of 17 questions. The final paragraph reads:

'Please note that this list of clarification questions is a public document and that your answers will also be in the public domain. Both my questions and your responses should be placed on the Councils' websites as appropriate'.

One of the questions related to Wildman's Garage (as below)

3. The supporting text to Policy LB1 (Protecting Existing Employment Facilities) refers to Wildman's Garage amongst other sites, but this site is also allocated for housing development under Policy H1.

I would welcome your comment on this apparent contradiction in the Plan.

It should of course be noted that if Wildman's Garage site were intended to be subject to Policy LB1, then this would affect the provision of housing numbers under Policy H1.

Response - It is unlikely that the site of Wildman's garage has a long term future as a garage. Hopefully the business will relocate elsewhere in the Parish - ideally at Planks where vehicle access etc. will be much easier. The existing site would therefore be available for redevelopment, without contravening policy LB1.

There was no Parish Council meeting in August 2016 but in September 2016 the minutes relating to the Neighbourhood Plan indicate that:

'DM confirmed that the examiner reports directly to WC not to UPC or the UWLNP SG as such the SG has not been made aware of anything from the examiner which needs to be passed on.

Total transparency has been assured through public consultation throughout the life of the UWLNP'.

The statement was totally incorrect as the Examiner's questions and answers had been received during or before July 2016 but had not been seen by the Parish Council or made public as required by the Examiner!

This is an important issue. The original plan indicated 'Keep Wildman's Garage for employment use', which

was based on the results of a public consultation. Following the answer above the examiner asked for references to Wildman's Garage to be removed from Section 7. In her report on page 27 she states: 'Therefore I have queried this with the Parish Council and I am informed that it is unlikely that Wildman's Garage has a long-term future as a garage and the hope is that the business will relocate elsewhere in the Parish'.

In fact the Parish Council knew nothing about the questions and answers.

I attended the March 2017 Parish Council meeting and asked several questions relating to the Examiner's questions and answers. These included asking why the questions were not made public and who had answered the questions. Who answered the questions was an issue because I had been told there had been no meeting of the steering group since March 2016, which is confirmed in the 17th September 2016

UPC minutes. No sensible answers regarding the questions were given and minutes of UWLNP meetings (which may have answered the questions) were promised to be given to the Clerk but were never received

and I have since been told they have been destroyed!

At the March 2017 Parish Council meeting and despite an appeal from myself (as a member of the public)

to ensure careful scrutiny of the final version of the Plan before approving it, the Parish Council, despite concerns, voted to proceed to Referendum with the document 'warts and all' due to 'time constraints'. There had been little opportunity for either the public or indeed Parish Councillors to thoroughly check the document and discuss its content. It should be noted that in the Parish Council minutes around this time there is constant referral to 'lack of openness and transparency by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group'.

It is a sad reflection on those UWLNP members concerned that importantly the Parish Council and the Urchfont Community were denied the opportunity to discuss the important Examiner's questions and provide the answer based on the Community's views.

The changes to the plan were not the result of public consultation, were not the result of discussion within

the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and were not the result of a Parish Council decision which would

also have involved the community. They appear to be the result of 1 or 2 individuals' personal decisions! I feel it is highly unlikely that those members of the community voting in the referendum would have been

aware of these changes or of the impact they would have, particularly regarding the Wilman's Garage site,

even if they had noticed them.

A recent public consultation meeting regarding a new Neighbourhood Plan also generated a view to keeping the site for business and employment use. The Urchfont Motors site is an important 'Business' asset to the village and even if not used as a garage would potentially offer a suitable site for small scale

office/commercial workshops particularly in today's work from home environment and without the need to travel to Lydney as suggested. The proposal that a small business such as Urchfont Motors could move

to a new site is financially ridiculous and beggars' belief that anyone could suggest it. Moving a garage consists of moving more than a desk, filing cabinet and computer!

This important local business site must be protected from housing development as once lost it is gone forever.

I trust that Wiltshire Council Officers and Councillors believe in democracy and would ask that due to the

undemocratic actions described above this application is refused so that the site can be discussed during

the making of our new Neighbourhood Plan and a democratic community decision made on its future.

David & Barbara Myers

We wish to object to this application.

The closure of this business will mean the loss of a vital and well-used vehicle maintenance service for many in and around the Village and redundancy for those employed there. The demise of this facility would be a blow to the community.

This alone should be sufficient grounds for Wiltshire Council to reject the plan to redevelop the site but, if not, the following needs to be taken into consideration:

The proposed exit from the site is dangerous.

We carried-out the manoeuvre to see how far out a vehicle exiting onto the B3098 would need to be for the driver to have sufficient sight-line to the left and found it to be half-way across the carriageway. The exit is very close to the junction with High Street, (see photos 1 and 2) so someone coming from there could be confronted with a vehicle pulling-out (see photo 3).





To complete a left turn, one must go completely onto the wrong side of the road, possibly head-on with oncoming traffic.

The Design and Access Statement itself indicates the closeness of the entrance/exit to High Street and the bend on the B3098.



Because of the curve in the B3098, those entering from the east will not see the exit from the site until quite close (see photo 4), and could be met by a vehicle turning left, which, as previously mentioned, may need to be on the wrong side of the road to achieve this.



Although the route into and out of the current premises is in line with that proposed for this development, the current apron affords a much wider area from which to

join the B3098. In addition, being a commercial facility, there are members of staff to see customers out onto that road.

Speed of traffic also needs to be taken into account.

The speed-limit on the B3098 here is 30mph, but many travel well in excess of this, whether coming into Urchfont from the east, or rounding the bend from the west, after which, they accelerate hard.

When Community Speed Watch was operating, many speeders coming from the east were recorded at well over 40mph, and as high as 62mph. With the restricted sight-line, someone turning out of the close could see the road being clear and seconds later could have a speeder approaching.

A further concern is parking, or the lack thereof.

Many householders have two vehicles these days. Looking at the Proposed Site Plan, plots 1 and 4 just have a single garage each, and we cannot see any parking for plots 2 and 3. Plot 5 appears to be the only one with space for two cars.

Simon Holt

I wish to make the following points regarding this application:

1. It is listed in the current and made Urchfont, Wedhampton & Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan (UWLNP) having received a positive vote in the public voting sessions for the UWLNP.
2. The Site assessment Matrix in the UWLNP looked at approximately 65 matters and the site passed that assessment.
3. It provides a mix of house types including 2x 2 bedroom semi-detached houses.
4. It is listed by Wiltshire Council (WC) as a brownfield site. Such sites are seen as a priority for development in the existing WC Core Strategy.

I therefore hope UPC will support this application support this application and trust, as is recommended by Government, that this application is approved by Mr David Millinship under delegated powers. I would also recommend that Urchfont Parish Council do all in their powers to facilitate a relocation of the business to alternative premises in the Parish. There are premises potentially available in the Parish for a relocation

The following Policies support this application:

- UWLNP Policy H1 & H2
- National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (Para 17, Section 6, paras 47–55
- Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) Policy 1, Settlement strategy; Policy 2, Delivery Strategy; Policy 3, Infrastructure requirements; Policy 12, Spatial Strategy: Devizes Community Area; Policy 41, Sustainable construction and low carbon energy; Policy 45, Meeting Wiltshire's housing needs.

Elaine Bancroft

What makes a village thrive and become a community? It's not just friendly people but also good amenities so that people enjoy living there.

We have such a lovely village with a special community. We have a shop, village hall, church, pub, school, play park and a garage.....all very important in their own way for all ages.

Urchfont garage is a very important amenity and is always busy. Many a time my car wouldn't start at home and Jason has sent someone to help me. Older people need a garage near their home so that it isn't far to walk home when their car is in for a service or MOT. Losing our garage would be a catastrophe for many people in our village. It has been there for us for over 70 years.

Building just 5 new homes in the village, when a number of other potential building sites exist, surely does not justify the loss of much needed and highly desirable village amenity. People who want to move to the village will need a garage included in all the facilities which make Urchfont a wonderful place to live.

Please don't let them ruin our wonderful community. Please allow our garage to stay open.

Paul Bancroft

I understand that Urchfont Parish Council will, on Wednesday 14 August, be considering your position concerning the proposed redevelopment of the Wildman's garage site in the High Street. I believe that the proposal is to change the planning status of that site from commercial to domestic use to allow several homes to be built there and thus to cause the closure of the village garage and MOT centre, and other small, potential commercial sites.

As a long-term resident of Urchfont, senior citizen and double car owning family, I urge our Parish Council not to support the domestic planning application for that site in the strongest possible terms.

Whilst one is only too aware of the national need for additional housing to be built and that there exists a real and present drive to achieve recently announced government housing targets, it is axiomatic that any new housing should reasonably only be built together with supporting infrastructure. Therefore, to be considering decreasing our parish supporting infrastructure for the sake of a few residential homes defies any logical, community managerial belief.

Personally, as a senior citizen and car owner, I consider Wildman's Garage to be an absolute godsend. Within walking distance of almost all homes in Urchfont, one's car can be left there without recourse to arranging lifts or day car hire. The so called important "Green" advantages are obvious when compared with having to leave one's car miles away, arranging lifts or spending hours unnecessarily away from home. An additional, and possibly highly understated, advantage of our current village garage proprietors is that they will turn out at little or no cost to deal with local vehicle difficulties. If lost, that wonderful aspect of community help, support and assistance will be lost forever and would never be replicated.

So, the planning proposal boils down to a contest between maintaining the parish's wonderfully broad and currently highly regarded support infrastructure (hence the village's continual success in the Best Kept Village Campaign) or more housing. Village housing has relatively recently expanded in accordance with the national demand and other sites remain viable. However, I would ask our Parish Council to very seriously consider whether the better interests of those it represents would be better served by a few more houses or by a site that provides an essential benefit to the more vulnerable of its community? I assume that the answer is obvious!!

Transport Queries Raised by Cllr John Rotherford (distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting)

Visibility splay:

- The safety requirements are laid out in **Manual for Streets (MfS)** for planning considerations – if the requirements are not met, the junction should be deemed unsafe.
- In the Transport Document provided in the planning application, junction visibility is addressed in Clauses 3.7 to 3.14
- In Clause 3.12, it is acknowledged that the Visibility Splay line of sight relied upon to create a safe junction crosses private land and lays out the conditions for doing so:

“PFA Drawing G328/07 Rev A (Appendix D) shows the requisite visibility splays. It can be seen that visibility to the left on exit passes over land outside of the extents of the public highway due to the boundary wall of Hillsborough. Whilst the full extents of the visibility splay should typically be accommodated within the confines of the site or that of the highway boundary, it is not uncommon for sightlines to encroach land outside of this. In such instances, it is important to consider two things. Firstly, whether the sight line is achievable and secondly whether there is a reasonable prospect that the sight line will remain clear of obstruction **in perpetuity**.”

It then goes on to make the assumption that:

...Hillsborough have no reason to increase the height of their low wall.

I believe this assumption is fundamentally unreasonable:

a) Subject to planning or within permitted development, Hillsborough can make changes to the low wall as they see fit.

b) In fact, once Tracey has no reason to maintain sight of the garage, it is entirely reasonable to assume she **would** want to make changes, either by erecting a fence or gate to protect her privacy, and to help secure access to her land from people using it as a cut-through to the footpath as no immediate footpath provision is made for people turning left in the planning application.

The impact of this is shown on the following page and shows a **greatly reduced visibility of cars approaching the junction from the left**.

Evidence supporting a breach of MfS (Manual for Streets) guidance for safe Visibility Splays

A secondary visibility splay should be shown taking into account traffic approaching from the village. As this is a 'give way' junction, speed of approaching vehicles is maintained and cars are not visible until shown:

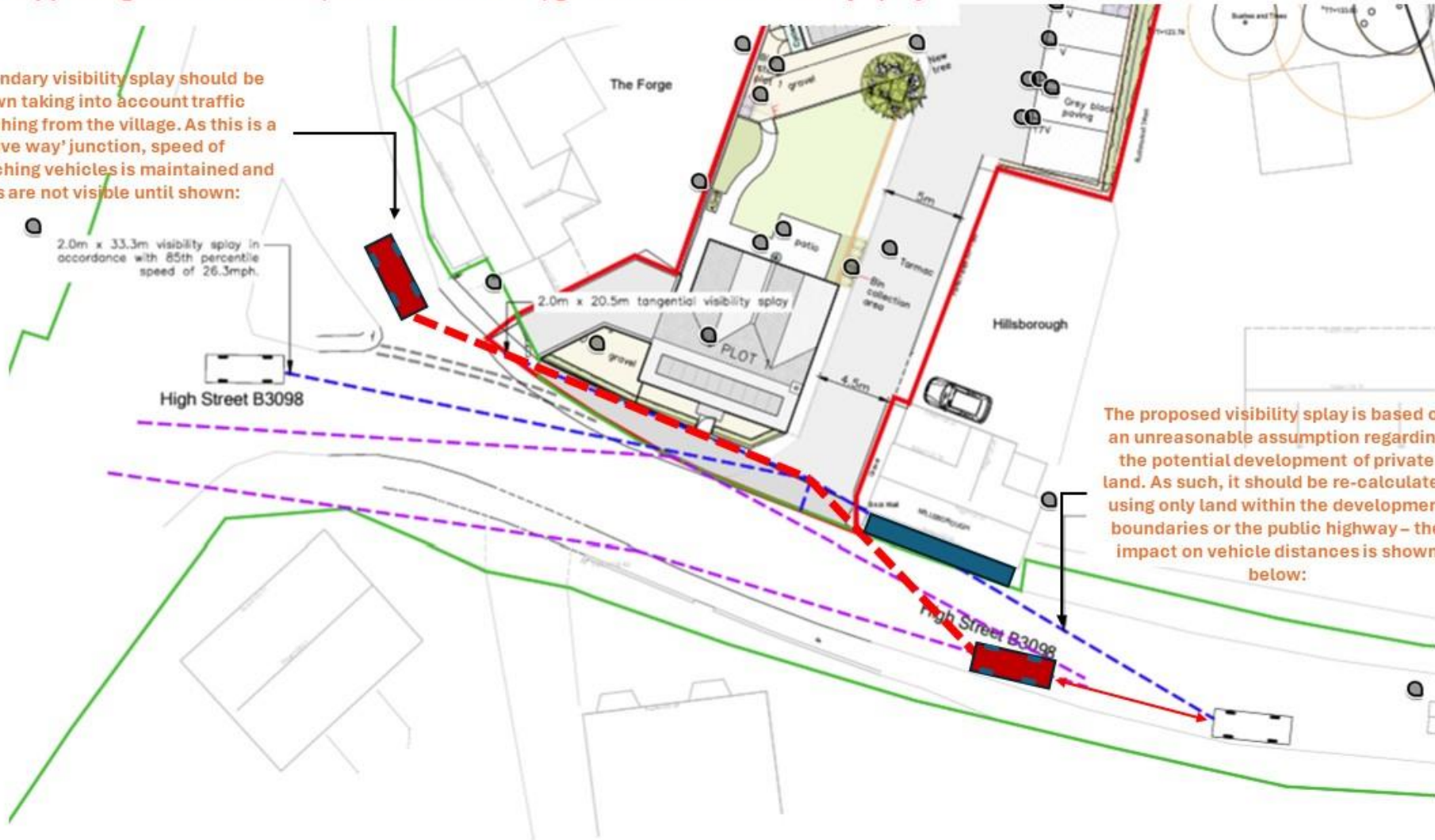
2.0m x 33.3m visibility splay in accordance with 85th percentile speed of 26.3mph.

2.0m x 20.5m tangential visibility splay

High Street B3098

High Street B3098

The proposed visibility splay is based on an unreasonable assumption regarding the potential development of private land. As such, it should be re-calculated using only land within the development boundaries or the public highway – the impact on vehicle distances is shown below:



Further points to consider/query:

- Even before the above is taken into account, the proposed visibility splay starting point is reduced from 2.4m to 2.0m based on a perceived reduction in the volume of traffic. However, the volume of traffic that affects the junction is based on the volume of vehicles that travel through Urchfont for ANY reason, not just garage activity.
- Traffic into the development is calculated on owned cars – nothing seems to have been included around likely increases in proxy traffic e.g. Amazon, Tesco etc. using the junction once residences are there that currently do not.
- There is also no significant consideration of the feeder junction to the right – these vehicles can be observed not slowing for the junction as they can see approaching traffic from the right in advance. This creates a further hazard for cars pulling out of the junction – also shown above.
- Whilst the Transport Study relies on the fact that the bend reduces traffic speed which then reduces the required visibility splay distances to suit the application, it does not acknowledge that this also means cars are not visible at all until the very last moment.
- No footpath provision is made for people wanting to travel left out of the junction – a pedestrian must cross the road to access amenities in this direction. As the development is likely to bring families with children – something the garage does not do – this crossing requirement poses a significant risk.
- I believe Tracey maintains a 30 day rolling video of the junction as is – near-misses are regular and can be evidenced.