

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning and Community Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 29 August 2023 at 7:45 pm**

**Present:** *Councillors: B. Soane (Chairman); J. Cheng; R. Horskins; L. Guttridge; C. Jewell; J. Sartortel; P. Singh; J. Taylor;*

**Officers present:** *K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Committee Officer;*

**Also present:** *Cllr K. Baker  
2 members of the public*

52. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bragg and Lewis.

53. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

54. **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2023**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 25 July 2023 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

55. **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

After deliberations regarding the final current planning application, a retrospective application for the development of an outbuilding, Members suggested the Council may wish to put out communications to educate members of the public regarding the need to get planning permission for outbuildings of a certain size / location, and to direct them to the relevant resources to be able to ascertain if planning permission is required or not. The Committee Officer advised that such communications had previously published with regards to this, but that the Council could re-issue this, and schedule to do so at least once a year.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To forward comments to the planning authority as detailed in **Appendix A**.
- ◆ To publicise the need for residents to obtain planning permission for certain types of outbuilding, and to direct them to the relevant resources to get guidance on this.

56. **PLANNING DECISIONS**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note information on decision notices received from the planning authority since the last meeting, as given in the agenda.

57. **PLANNING APPEALS**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the following appeal decision:

Application: 214173  
Location: Land adjacent to Sonning Golf Club, Sonning, Berks RG4 6DJ  
Proposal: Development of a specialist dementia residential care home (Use Class C2), creation of new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access, landscaping, and other associated infrastructure works. (Woodley Town Council had objections to the proposal.)  
Details: Appeal against refusal of planning permission.  
Decision: The appeal was dismissed.

58. **TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**  
**Applications for works to trees**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the following applications for tree works:

Application: 231821  
Location: TPO 3/1951, WOODLAND 3: 54 Hazel Drive, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3SA.  
Proposal: T1, Acacia - Fell.

Application: 231845  
Location: TPO 141/1977, AREA 1: 72 Western Avenue, Woodley, Wokingham RG5 3BH.  
Proposal: G1, Oak and 2 x Ash - Prune back the lower canopy of the Ash from the pathway and driveway by 1m.  
T1, Oak – Crown lift to approx. 6m on property and garage side, providing approx. 1.5m clearance to the property and 2m to the garage, removing secondary growth only where possible.  
T2, Oak – Crown reduction of lower and mid-canopy growing towards property and 1 no. branch growing towards the garage by 1.5m to provide 1.5m clearance to property.

Application: 231908  
Location: TPO 3/1951, WOODLAND 3: 54 Hazel Drive, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3SA.  
Proposal: T1, Sweet Chestnut – Crown reduction by 1-2m back to suitable pruning points; remove deadwood.

Application: 231951  
Location: TPO 1204/2007, AREA 1: 16 Glendevon Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4PJ.  
Proposal: T1, Oak – Crown lift to a maximum height of 5m and selectively prune lateral branches overhanging no. 15 St Johns Close by a maximum of 1.5m and to a maximum height of 10m; remove 3 no. branches on the south side of the tree (see photographs); remove deadwood.

Application: 232022  
Location: TPO 1849/2022, WOODLAND 3: Land adjacent to 35 Constable Close, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4US.  
Proposal: T10, Field Maple – Fell.

59. **RAIL STATION TICKET OFFICE CONSULTATION (SWR/GWR)**

Members considered the consultation by South Western Railway and Great Western Railway regarding proposed changes to the operation of railway ticket offices, including ticket office closures.

Members considered a proposed response, drafted by Councillor Taylor, on behalf of the Town Council (**Appendix B**). The Chairman thanked Councillor Taylor for her efforts in considering the consultations and drafting a response. It was also noted that Cllr Guttridge had submitted some comments to the Committee Officer regarding disabled access issues (**Appendix C**).

Members requested that Cllr Guttridge's comments be added to Cllr Taylor's proposed response, and that this be submitted in response to the consultations on behalf of the Town Council. It was also requested that this response letter be circulated to all Members, and published on the Council's website.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To provide a Town Council response to both the South Western Railway and Great Western Railway consultations, using the proposed response drafted by Cllr Taylor, with the inclusion of the disabled access issues provided by Cllr Guttridge.

60. **DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT AND NATIONAL HIGHWAYS CONSULTATIONS**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the circulation to Members of Wokingham Borough Council's Individual Executive Member Decision report and appendices, relating to the DfT's Transport and National Highways consultations, on 24 July 2023.
- ◆ To note that, as comments were required by 26 July 2023, Members views were sought prior to this meeting and the following comments were submitted to Wokingham Borough Council:
  - The Council shares WBC's concern regarding the M4 Smart Motorway, in terms of the proven danger of the loss of a hard shoulder on the M4 and other motorways;
  - The Council believes more attention should be paid to net zero environmental targets;
  - The Council is against road charging as a solution to reducing car use; this should be avoided in view of the pressure it would likely put on local roads - Woodley has (or is connected to) two access points to the M4 along the A329(M) and, as such, would suffer greatly from traffic finding alternative routes;
  - Verges and central reservations on motorways must be kept cut at all times; long grass on verges and central reservations provide a danger to motorists by reducing visibility.

61. **LOCAL GREEN SPACE NOMINATIONS**

Members considered the request from Wokingham Borough Council for any additional comments regarding two areas of land, for which the Town Council is the landowner, being proposed for inclusion as local green spaces in the local plan update; those being Woodford Park / the Memorial Ground, and Malone Park.

The Committee Officer advised members that, in relation to the map showing the extent of Woodford Park and the Memorial Ground nominated for inclusion as provided in the agenda, he had notified Wokingham Borough Council that a small area to the north of Coronation Hall had been omitted. Wokingham Borough Council had advised that this would be noted and taken into account.

Councillor Jewell advised Members that she had reviewed a map showing all areas in Woodley being proposed for inclusion as Local Green Spaces, not just those areas owned by the Town Council, and was concerned that a number of areas were not being proposed as local green spaces. Members noted the areas Councillor Jewell was concerned about were:

- Land between Lysander Close and Hartigan Place
- Wheble Park
- Loddon Mead
- Land at the junction of Arundel Road and Wingate Road

Members had no additional comments to submit to Wokingham Borough Council in relation to the proposals to designate Woodford Park / the Memorial Ground and Malone Park as local green spaces. It was agreed that the Council should write to Wokingham Borough Council to request that the other spaces, raised by Councillor Jewell, be nominated as local green spaces.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To submit no comments to Wokingham Borough Council in relation to the proposal to designate Woodford Park / the Memorial Ground and Malone Park as local green spaces in the local plan update.
- ◆ To write to Wokingham Borough Council to request that the following areas are considered for nomination as local green spaces in the local plan update:
  - Land between Lysander Close and Hartigan Place
  - Wheble Park
  - Loddon Mead
  - Land at the junction of Arundel Road and Wingate Road

*[C.O. Note: Following the meeting it was confirmed that the Town Council originally submitted suggestions of areas for local green space designation in April 2020, and the areas raised by Councillor Jewell at this meeting were not included in the original list]*

62. **TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER UPDATE**

Members noted the section of Colemansmoor Road, to the north of Rivermead Road, along which Wokingham Borough Council is proposing the introduction of double yellow lines in the next Traffic Regulation Order update. Members felt the proposals could've gone further, with the double yellow lines running all the way to the junction with Loddon Bridge Road.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To respond to Wokingham Borough Council to state that, whilst the support the introduction of double yellow lines on this stretch of Colemansmoor Road, the Committee felt these should extend to the junction with Loddon Bridge Road.

63. **TWYFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note that Wokingham Borough Council formally adopted the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan on 20 July 2023.

64. **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

Councillor Taylor advised Members that she had now taken part in the Bulmershe & Whitegates Community Speedwatch group and better understood how the scheme worked. She advised that the next step for the Woodley group would be to identify locations for Speedwatch activities, and to get these authorised by the Thames Valley Police. Once this has happened, volunteers could be recruited.

Members noted there were still issues with the Council's Speedwatch equipment and that, following efforts from the Committee Officer and Councillor Bragg, it was still not possible to download the data and images required. It was suggested that, if this cannot be resolved, the Council may wish to pay for an IT specialist to help fix the issue.

65. **COMMUNITY ISSUES**

There were no community issues raised by Members.

66. **HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

Councillor Horskins raised a concern about the use of eScooters in the area. The Committee Officer advised that the Thames Valley Police had attended a Planning & Community Committee meeting in 2022 to discuss this matter and had advised that, whilst the riding of eScooters on public land was illegal, there was currently little enforcement they could do as eScooters did not official fall into a category of motorised or pedal powered vehicle. They stated that their powers would be limited until the matter had been legislated against.

It was suggested that the Council might put out some communications regarding this issue in order to educate people. The Committee Officer advised that this did happen last year, but that further communications could be issued.

Members recommended writing to the local MPs to raise the concern, and to ask that legislation be considered for introduction as soon as possible to help resolve the matter.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To write to Theresa May MP and Matt Rodda MP to raise concerns over the use of eScooters in the area and request that legislation be introduced as soon as possible to aid police in enforcing the matter.

*[C.O. Note: Sergeant Simon Botham and PCSO Claire Towse attended the P&C Committee meeting held on 12 July 2022]*

67. **PUBLICATIONS/INFORMATION**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note receipt of the following:
  - Me2 Club Newsletter – July 2023
  - Connecting Communities in Berkshire Newsletter – August 2023
  - The Wokingham Volunteer Centre E-Newsletter – Summer 2023

68. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items raised by Members.

69. **PUBLICITY/WEBSITE**

There were no further publicity and website items raised by Members, other than those already raised under previous items.

70. **ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the information on enforcement issues received from the planning authority, as given in the agenda.

The meeting closed at 9:36 pm



Woodley Town Council

**Observations on the following Planning Applications made at the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 29 August 2023**

<b>Application No. &amp; Address</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
<b>231625</b> 12 Mannock Way, Woodley, RG5 4XW	Householder application for the proposed conversion of existing loft to create habitable accommodation to include 1no. dormer plus changes to fenestration.
<b>Observations:</b> The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application and wish to object to the proposal to create additional habitable accommodation due to lack of on-site / off street parking available at the property; the plans indicate only one available parking space.	
<b>231655</b> 22 Lindberg Way, Woodley, RG5 4XE	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension plus first floor side extension.
<b>Observations:</b> The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application and have no objections, but request that the neighbour's comments are taken into account.	
<b>231713</b> Sandford Farm, Mohawk Way, Woodley, RG5 4TE	Full application for the proposed erection of a 2 storey dwelling with single storey entrance link walkway. Single storey detached office and a second single storey detached unit for bin/bicycle storage garden store.
<b>Observations:</b> The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application and had concerns regarding access. This stretch of Perimeter Road is not currently used by motor vehicles; there are no driveways, with the road currently used by walkers and cyclists. The development would lead to conflict between vehicles and pedestrians / cyclists who currently use this route without the need to be aware of vehicles. Were the plans to be approved, appropriate signage would need to be installed to ensure those using the path were aware that vehicles could be using the road.	
<b>231769</b> 56 Butts Hill Road, Woodley, RG5 4NH	Householder application for the proposed dropped curb.
<b>Observations:</b> No objections.	
<b>231786</b> 25 Cypress Road, Woodley, RG5 4BD	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension following demolition of the existing conservatory.
<b>Observations:</b> No objections.	
<b>231798</b> 14 Wingate Road, Woodley, RG5 4JU	Householder application for the proposed erection of a two storey front and side extension and a single storey rear extension following demolition of the existing garage and shed, plus the addition of a front canopy roof.
<b>Observations:</b> No objections.	

<p><b>231828</b> 24 Rothwell Gardens, Woodley, RG5 4TJ</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension with a canopy roof and a first floor side and two storey rear extension with 1 no. Juliet balcony following demolition of the existing rear conservatory, plus conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation and changes to fenestration.</p>
<p><b>Observations:</b> The Planning &amp; Community Committee have considered this application and wish to object to the proposals on two grounds. First, as mentioned in a neighbour's comment, the plans appear to reflect that the distance between the property and 7 Tippings Lane will be reduced to below the minimum 22m distance specific in the Borough's Design Guide. Secondly, the Committee believe the proposal to include a Juliet balcony would cause overlooking and would be unneighbourly.</p>	
<p><b>231846</b> 44 Coppice Road, Woodley, RG5 3RA</p>	<p>Full application for the proposed subdivision of the site and erection of a two storey side extension to form 1 no. terraced dwelling with associated parking.</p>
<p><b>Observations:</b> The Planning &amp; Community Committee have considered this application and wish to object to the proposal on two grounds. First, the Committee believed that the proposals would lead to a terracing effect; no other properties in this area are terraced, and this proposal would be out of keeping with the street scene. Secondly, they believe provision of parking to the rear of the property was not suitable and contrary to Core Strategy Policy CP2, with regards to the requirement for new developments to address the requirements of an ageing population. The Committee noted a recent decision report relating to the introduction of parking to the front of 44 Coppice Road (ref 214009), which gave substantial weight in the determination to the fact that the existing parking to the rear of 44 Coppice Drive was located on an incline and 30m from the front entrance. This is the parking which is now being proposed for the new development, whose front entrance will not significantly closer than that of the current property at 44 Coppice Drive.</p>	
<p><b>231860</b> 8 Phillips Close, Woodley, RG5 4XD</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation and alterations to the rear fenestration.</p>
<p><b>Observations:</b> No objections</p>	
<p><b>231870</b> 23 Telford Crescent, Woodley, RG5 4QT</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed extension of the existing front dormer.</p>
<p><b>Observations:</b> No objections.</p>	
<p><b>231871</b> Former Travis Perkins Site, Woodley Green, Woodley, RG5 4QP</p>	<p>Full application for the proposed erection of a building to form a residential care home (Use Class C2) with access, parking, landscaping and associated works, following demolition of all existing buildings on the site.</p>
<p><b>Observations:</b> The Planning and Community Committee have considered this application and fully support the proposed use of the site for the building of a residential care home.</p>	
<p><b>231909</b> 16 Fawcett Crescent, Woodley, RG5 3HU</p>	<p>Householder application for the proposed erection of single storey side and rear extension, with fenestration to match existing, following the demolition of existing rear extension and existing outbuilding.</p>
<p><b>Observations:</b> No objections.</p>	



<b>231927</b> 21 Bodmin Road, Woodley, RG5 3RZ	Householder application for the proposed erection of single storey rear extension, plus 2no. roof lights and formation of ground floor side window, following the demolition of existing conservatory.
<b>Observations:</b> No objections.	
<b>231953</b> 7 Delamere Road, Earley, RG6 1AP	Householder application for the proposed erection of part two storey side part single storey rear extension, including fenestration to match existing, and alteration of hipped roof to form gable.
<b>Observations:</b> No comments.	
<b>231961</b> 12 Martinet Road, Woodley, RG5 4TQ	Householder application for the proposed conversion of garage to form habitable space, plus alteration to fenestration to match existing.
<b>Observations:</b> No objections.	
<b>232023</b> 83 Bruce Road, Woodley, RG5 3DY	Householder application for the proposed single-storey, detached outbuilding in rear garden (Retrospective).
<b>Observations:</b> The Planning & Community Committee have considered this proposal and wish to object on the grounds that the outbuilding is too close to the boundary with neighbouring properties, and is too high, meaning it is overbearing and unneighbourly.	

**Woodley Town Council** welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the rail operators' consultation on proposals to close most station ticket offices.

The Council supports promotion of rail transport as a key part of the UK's climate change policy and as an enabler of economic and social well-being. As our residents contribute to the public subsidy of railways, we are also keen to ensure that the service provides value for money for people locally and is on a sound financial footing.

With these points in mind, we note that the operators' objectives in proposing the closure of ticket offices are to provide better service to customers and to ensure that the railway is 'more financially sustainable'. These objectives are admirable – but it is currently unclear exactly how they will be achieved and indeed whether they are mutually compatible. We are also concerned about the effects of the changes on our national and local obligations in respect of equality of access for all and ensuring staff and customer safety.

Therefore, can you please give us reassurance on the following points:

### ***Better service to customers***

We note that several local councils and disability rights groups have flagged concerns regarding access to ticketing and the danger of marginalising some rail users. We will not reiterate all these issues but refer you to the response provided by our primary local authority 'Wokingham Borough Council'. However, we would like to raise the following specific points:

We welcome the initiative to provide hands-on help for users to learn how to use Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs). However, GWR reports that around 25% of tickets sold at two of our local stations (Reading and Twyford) are bought from the Ticket Offices. Is there any evidence that the only barrier to replacing these transactions with a TVM is lack of user training?

Three of our local stations (Reading, Winnersh Triangle and Reading) will have significantly reduced staffing times under the new proposals i.e. a smaller window for those who need to talk to someone about their requirements. There is a danger of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy here e.g. we don't need to staff Earley station on a Saturday as hardly anybody needing ticketing assistance uses it then - which means that subsequently *nobody* needing ticketing assistance can use the station on that day.

What measures are being taken to improve the 'usability' of ticketing software for apps, online portals and TVMs?

For example, ensuring that: software is consistent across operators; there is a facility to compare different fare options (including split-ticketing) before purchasing a ticket; all types of ticket are supported; cash, voucher/warrants and card payments can be made; TVMs accessible from wheelchairs; text-to-speech, ability to change text size and high contrast displays available for the visually impaired.

We also urge that a representative panel of customers be established to effect User Acceptance Testing.

We ask that train staff be given discretion to take account of difficulties in getting a ticket at unstaffed stations when dealing with penalties for possible fare evasion or breaking restrictions on ticket use.

### ***Financial Sustainability***

We assume that the source of 'financial sustainability' arising from closure of ticket offices will be a reduction in staff costs and/or the sale of more tickets. Is this correct? Leaving aside the customer service consideration for the moment, what does your modelling predict in respect of loss of custom (journeys and revenue) owing to the removal of ticket offices?

### ***Safety***

Given the proposed increase in the time many stations will be unstaffed, what additional provision will be in place to support customers needing to re-plan journeys owing to service disruptions?

Similarly, what emergency facilities will be provided for vulnerable people regarding personal safety at unstaffed stations? SWT refer to video-call facilities being made available at Cat 3 stations – will this be available across the network whenever trains are running?

We ask that safety procedures be put in place to protect both lone workers at smaller stations and ticket inspectors on trains.

***Monitoring and Measuring Success***

How will the effects of the change be monitored and measured? Is there an intention to run staff and customer satisfaction surveys? How will any 'lost' customers be identified? How will financial benefits be calculated?

We note appreciatively that GWR has published transaction data, including number of tickets sold at ticket offices, online and via TVMs for journeys from each station. We request that each operator publish this info before the closures are effected and at regular intervals thereafter in order to identify any trends in rail usage following the change.

***Governance***

With the closure of all / most ticket offices, does this mean that Schedule 17 of the Secretary of State's 'Transport Ticketing & Settlement Agreement' is defunct i.e. there will no longer be any statutory regulation of station staffing? If so, how will customers' (and tax payers') interests be represented independently?

Also, SWT has made a number of 'pledges' in their consultation paper, including:

- All colleagues will be treated fairly and their new roles will be more varied and engaging
- Customers will never have to travel out of their way to buy tickets
- Those with accessibility needs\* will always be supported.

How will performance against these pledges be measured and shared with the public. What is the consequence of failing to meet them?

\* Note that SoS 'Transport & Ticketing Settlement Agreement' includes access to ticketing as well as physical access. Section 5.7 refers

Thank you again for the chance to comment on the proposed changes. We hope our constructive observations will be helpful to you and look forward to hearing the outcome of the consultation.

# Re: Rail Ticket Office Closures consultation

From: Linda Guttridge  
To: Matthew Filmore  
Date: 08/08/2023 7:12 PM

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Dear all,

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Can I declare some interest and disgust in British Rails proposal For those of you that don't know I'll give a brief idea of just how difficult it already is to go via British rail from our local stations. Something my friend and I attempt several times a year but due to lack of staff has now become a frightening experience for two women travelling together one in a wheelchair

At Twyford, The guard goes off duty at 7pm The ramps to get wheelchairs off the train are locked up and as we discovered if you are later than that so are the lifts If you've rebooked your journey a week in advance the train would have been diverted to platform one for you if you've gone through disabled assistance on the network but you have to give a weeks notice. I mean come on can we really have disabled people out at all times of the night (sorry joke). If they can't divert the train you're then sent up the line to reading and put on the next train back that stops at Twyford this can add up to an hour to your journey time at that time of night and the driver has to agree to get you off, they don't all so you could spend the rest of the evening going between maidenhead and reading.

In Wokingham it's unmanned anyway after 8pm but at least you're coming in on the flat and can walk around provided the gate hasn't been locked and you've managed to get your wheelchair off the train and blind people travelling alone might have difficulty finding it if they don't know the station

The ticket office staff at both these stations have always helped when the guard went off with just getting you off and helping you on your way either via your own car or taxi which all made for a good end to a night ou

I hope no of you mind me telling you thisbut that's not what I call equalities in travel

Linda Guttridge