

### *Black Bourton Environment Committee presentation to Lowlands Sub-Committee Planning Meeting - 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015*

Black Bourton is not against the continued use of the woodyard for the processing of virgin timber, but agree with the official position that no “intensification should be permitted” beyond the 1400 tonnes.

There is one main reason for not allowing “intensification” - it is road safety along Burford Road - already dealt with by Councillor Dearman.

However, other environmental aspects have very recently surfaced.

The EA. and the D.I.O (RAFBrize) are both surprised that they weren't invited as consultees in the first place. Both were made aware of this Planning Application by the BB Parish Council. Their comments were only published on the WODC website last week and both are only advisory at the moment as they have had insufficient time to prepare.

Firstly, ... the EA has clear concerns about site drainage and it's close proximity to the RAF Base and advises the Applicant to contact them to assess the consents that will be required.

Secondly, the DIO, – I QUOTE “woodyard is located immediately to the SW of the airfield and the main issue of concern is a potential increased fire risk at the woodchip plant with the proposed intensification of use.” AND  
“ There is a significant aviation fuel storage facility by the access road to the woodyard and there would be an impact on operations at B. Norton if there was a fire.”

It adds, that the applicant should seek mitigation advice from the Oxford Fire Service and the HSE” - you will have seen the notes in your dossiers about the HSE.

Lastly, the Rights of Way Field Officer is concerned about ensuring “measures to aid public safety” and suggests the rebuild of a dilapidated fence to create a “pedestrian escape strip” along the right of way.

We have always suspected that access, drainage, & fire risks were being given little attention. The DIO & HSE weren't even invited to consult. Why? 24

I take exception to the traffic statement – quote “ there have been no reported accidents in Burford Road for 5 years” - “apart from at the junction of Bampton Road, where there was an accident involving a bus reversing into Burford Road” that is deliberately mis-leading. The truth is the bus reversed into an 8 year old schoolgirl and crushed her against a stone wall. She has since had 23 operations and suffers from day to day. The traffic statement seeks to hide the truth. That is an accusation.

The overwhelming conclusion is that a better site should be found – as per Ms Bradfords quote Oxford Mail “ I am looking for a larger site with better transport links”

Until these 4 environmental issues have been dealt with, no planning permission should be granted and operations should be suspended pending a resolution.

The application is your decision and also your responsibility, to the young and to the old in BB.

Thank you.

**Black Bourton Parish Council 3-minute Presentation –  
Lowlands Sub-Committee Planning Meeting,  
16<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

Good afternoon Councillors,

The Parish Council objects to the proposed annual tonnage of woodchip because this has a direct impact on the number of HGVs on Burford Road, particularly the 44-tonne, 50-ft long bulk-carrier HGVs, **all of which** come from the applicant's business.

Burford Road is a narrow, rural road that runs through the heart of our community. There is no pedestrian pavement. Recently, Mr Arnold, OCC Highways Principal Engineer, wrote this consultation:

'Burford Road is not suitable for use by HGVs due to its width, alignment, and construction and its lack of separate pedestrian provision and lighting. The width varies along Burford Road, and it is too narrow for two vehicles to pass when an HGV or other large vehicle is involved. Pedestrians share the road with motorists, which is risky because they need to mix with large vehicles, especially on unlit parts of the carriageway. Pedestrians generally resort to the verges when confronted by traffic, but for those less mobile - or pushing a wheelchair or pram - this may be impractical given the raised and worn muddy verges. Due to the alignment of the road and location of some residential accesses, visibility between drivers can be restricted, and stopping distances prescribed by 'Manual for Streets' compromised. Additional HGV movements would increase conflict between highway users and have a detrimental impact upon the highway carriageway and verges.'

Burford Road is already busy. HGV traffic and pedestrian conflicts already present a severe risk to highway safety, as you will have seen from the pictures. Therefore **any** additional HGV traffic should be resisted.

The NPPF does not define 'severe' so it is a matter to the LPA and OCC Highways to decide.

Walking in the road whilst a 44-tonne 50-foot bulk carrier travelling at 30 mph passes extremely close to you, especially in poor weather and poor light, *is* severe risk by anyone's standards.

Also, the access road is not safe for pedestrians under current arrangements according to the Environment & Ecology Field Officer consultation.

In 2010, WODC directed that there should be no intensification in the existing use of the site, yet there has been very significant intensification beyond the authorised 1400 tonnes pa.

In summary, the proposal is contrary to paragraph 32 of the NPPF and LTP BE3, because the development proposal has failed to demonstrate:

- a) That the traffic generated by the development could be safely accommodated on Burford Road, having regard to the local environment and existing needs, **and**
- b) That a safe and suitable means of access to the site can be achieved **for all people**, as per LTP BE3.

When taken in combination, the residual cumulative impacts of the failure to provide for the above as part of the proposal are severe, and so the proposal should be refused.

**THE WOODYARD, BLACK BOURTON**  
**PLANNING COMMITTEE PRESENTATION NOVEMBER 2015**  
**ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT, COTSWOLD WOODFUELS LTD**

1. At the request of the committee I have provided further information to clarify the traffic movements associated with the processing of up to 4,000 tonnes of virgin wood and the position on sales to the public.

**Sale to the public**

2. Firstly, to clarify, there is no direct or retail sale to the public from the site. The woodchip is supplied/collected in bulk by customers - 90% of which goes to local schools, universities and farmers.
3. The website referred to by objectors to inferring sales to the public and referred to by objectors is an old company website for Goodwood Tree Care which is not associated with Cotswold Woodfuels or the Woodyard.
4. I note your officers now propose a condition restricting sales to the public in any event.

**HGV Movements**

5. With regard HGV movements additional information was submitted demonstrating the movements associated with processing the proposed 4000 tonnes of virgin wood.
6. The submitted traffic information as presented by your officers identifies clearly how up to 4,000 tonnes of virgin wood can be processed whilst still being within the proposed condition of 20 HGV movements per week.
7. Your officers have noted in their report at paragraph 5.7 onwards the different types of HGVs and their specific carrying capacities. Also noted is the seasonal variation with up to 20 HGV movements per week in the Winter and 18 in the Summer.

8. I would also like to highlight that as part of the application submission a traffic survey was undertaken along the Burford Road which identified 1400 HGV movements over a two week period, equivalent to 700 HGV movements per week. The HGV movements associated with the woodyard are a tiny proportion of this – less than 3%.
9. If the woodyard was operating at its maximum capacity of 4000 tonnes per annum with up to 20 HGV movements per week, this would represent less than 3% of the HGV movements along the road and less than 1% of total movements when cars are taken into account.
10. The updated traffic information has been reviewed by OCC Highways and they continue to have no objection subject to the imposition for the 20 HGV movement per week condition. Other conditions provide for the effective monitoring of this.
11. There are no other technical noise, fire, ecology or other objections.
12. This is an existing business which provides a valuable low carbon and renewable energy source to local farms, schools and other institutions. These customers are dependent on the woodchip supply from Cotswold Woodfuels. They installed their biomass boilers on the back of the assured local supply which has been built up over the last 12 years. It is because of this supply that there is a local demand for biomass as a renewable energy source which is contributing towards the Council's renewable energy strategy.
13. It is hoped now that members have sufficient information to approve the application as recommended by officers. Approving this application with the associated conditions will bring the operation within an appropriate level of planning control and monitoring and will allow the take up of biomass as a green energy source to continue.

Good afternoon, my name is Charles Bull and I own and partly occupy the units at Northmoor Park.

Even with rents as low as £4.50 per square foot, we have been marketing these premises for nearly 25 years and it has never once been fully occupied. My business currently occupies over half the floor space, but we have now outgrown it and will have to move within the next 6 months. The existing higher occupation level is therefore very recent and will be very short lived. The premises have in the meantime continued to be marketed, including on the vacant property register at West Oxfordshire, with no interest.

In essence Northmoor Park is, and has been for many years, unviable to the point that we can no longer afford even to insure the buildings, let alone improve them or redevelop for commercial use which we have also looked at.

When permission was granted at appeal for employment some 3 decades ago the world of work was very different. With the advent of super fast internet and service industries rather than manufacturing for example, more and more people can and do choose to work from home. More work is now done on the computer than at the work bench and quite frankly that is what has hit Northmoor Park as a business. Our scheme understands and integrates this evolution in to our proposal. The officer is obviously cynical with regard to the provision for this, but actually what we have done, is to offer him the perfect opportunity to ensure that our proposal is carried out by condition and those buying as part of a self-build scheme will have the opportunity to ensure their business needs are met.

The officer mentions that it will be an added strain on local amenities, however the traffic generation will be considerably less particularly for HGV's and the proposal will provide it's own drainage scheme. Local rural amenities are actually something that need to be supported to ensure they do not become redundant. If people had not previously left our village, then maybe we would still have another pub, a post office and even a school. We would be providing the modern household with a way of living, working and supporting the local community.

Furthermore our proposal has received robust support from local residents including our immediate neighbors as well as the Parish Council. This is in contrast to other developments within the village considered recently.

Without a suitable alternative use this site will fall in to disrepair and become derelict. This is exactly the sort of brown field site that the government are suggesting should be developed for housing to make use of a redundant resource. This is an architect designed scheme and all technical issues with regard to flooding and ecology have in our view been satisfactorily addressed.

This scheme provides for employment, it is offering self build (as per the desires of Government), it has massive local support and it encourages the involvement and support of the local community. This is what rural communities need. I have been a resident of Northmoor for 25 years and I want to stay here and that is why we have proposed a scheme that supports and enhances the village in a sustainable way.

Thank you.