

I do so hope that you have all managed to read the heartfelt and researched objections to this application in the detail that they deserve.

This proposal really will cause devastation to the local community whose only way of trying to get through to the committee is by letter. It will add to traffic congestion and also remove a much used open field destroying important ecology in the process. Apparently, 30 local children couldn't access the **recently expanded** primary school this year. New families will add to the traffic by travelling out.

There is a widespread feeling that more attention is being given to the applicant – the officer report quotes their supposed expert assertions but fails to reference the damning reports from experts opposing the plan.

The developer was allowed to attend the site visit – we and our agents were told not to interfere! It is not about rules – it is perception!

Without the NPPF and SHMA this application - being against current policy - should fall and the reasons against it have not changed. WODC is still able to refuse as the Local Plan is still the controlling document. The committee should not be intimidated by those claiming otherwise.

The SHMA highlights that West Oxon has delivered better than other districts and I would contend that Woodstock (and in particular the Hensington area) has already contributed to that delivery.

We have had a 27% increase in the number of dwelling in this small sector since 2006 – on a single arterial road. This application makes 40%. Where else in the District has there been this percentage?

The committee has not first hand seen traffic anywhere near its worst.

All objections have been freely made. The Woodstock electorate has had **ENOUGH!**

Appendix B

Good afternoon Counsellors and members of the public.

I have here 200 more objections from members of the Woodstock electorate that were received too late to be recorded in Mr Shaw's report.

However, we have recorded more than one thousand two hundred (1,200) objections to this planning application. Only 16 people have written in support.

This equates to 50% (1/2) of the two thousand four hundred (2,400) registered voters in Woodstock.

So, I leave you with this thought ... If this application is allowed to go forward, then I fear that local democracy will have died in this room today.

Thank you

Dr Bob McGurrin
Chairman
Woodstock Action Group (WAG)

Appendix C

Mr Ashton indicated that the scheme was much improved on the one previously submitted. It was advised that officers had given careful consideration to the proposals and it was acknowledged that the original scheme had too many units.

Mr Ashton highlighted that the design and site layout provided a sense of arrival with views in all directions. Mr Ashton suggested the design was sympathetic to its surroundings, provided access to footpaths, access for other residents and to the town centre and local schools. Overall the site was considered to be sustainable.

Mr Ashton referred to the member site visit and that it had demonstrated the quality of the urban design that was possible.

Mr Ashton Reminded the sub-committee that there were no objections from statutory consultees and approval would assist the council in meeting its five year land supply, provide affordable housing and generate a significant New Homes Bonus. Mr Ashton indicated that if the application was refused and permission granted at appeal then some of the controls that could accrue from giving permission could be lost.

Mr Ashton indicated that his clients wished to work with members and officers to deliver a quality development.

My name is Richard Holmes and I act for the Midcounties Co-operative. I have four main points I would like to make.

Appendix D

Firstly, impact.

It is accepted by all parties that this is an out of town location.

The National Planning Policy Framework para 27 states that applications should be refused if they fail to satisfy the Sequential Test or would have an adverse impact on the town centre – unless there are other conditions which over-ride this.

Whilst there is no longer a needs test the updated retail study which the Council commissioned in 2012 provides useful evidence in relation to the likely impact. It identified a requirement for 272 sq.mts. of additional convenience retail by 2019. The Aldi proposal is for 1,006 sq.mts. of space, considerably more than is required. This means that trade will inevitably be drawn from the town centre. WODC's own retail specialist calculates this to be a figure of 15% which will create a significant impact on existing businesses and would no doubt lead to job losses which would off-set some of the potential gains created by the Aldi proposal.

There is already healthy competition in the convenience sector in Chipping Norton from both national and local retailers including two private butchers, a baker, delicatessen, fishmonger etc.

Secondly, sequential test.

This seems to have been treated as a hypothetical exercise carried out after the applicants have made a decision and invested heavily on their preferred site.

Thirdly, access.

Accessibility to the site is poor, it is located on a hill over 550 metres from the town centre and on the wrong side of the town for the bulk of the population. It is accepted that most shoppers will visit by car. Para 23 of the NPPF requires out of town sites to be "well connected to the town centre". This site obviously isn't.

Fourthly, employment land.

The development of the site would cause the loss of one of the few B Class employment sites in the town. WODC's Business Development Officer states that "there is a critical shortage of B Class development land in the town." Policy E6 of the Local Plan states that "change of use of employment land should only be accepted where substantial planning benefits would be achieved". We fail to see what the substantial planning benefits are.

The Co-op are currently spending in excess of £4m on improving shopping provision in the centre and providing a much larger shopper's car park.

This Committee has consistently supported town centre retail development which has led to significant improvements in the main town centres. It is important for retailers and developers to know that this approach will be continued by WODC to protect and enhance the town centres in their area.

It is for this reason we would ask you to refuse the application.

SPEECH GIVEN TO WODC PLANNING 6TH MAY 2014 BY MIKE TYSOE MAYOR CHIPPING NORTON

I am not expert in retail shopping but I think I do read the population of Chipping Norton quite well - the majority want an Aldi shop on the Banbury Road site and this was confirmed during the canvassing done by all parties at the November 2013 District Council election and it has been backed up by a recent poll taken by our local newspaper Chippy News when over 70% of the poll voted in favour.

It was disappointing to read that even the second PSA report seemed to be negative so I was relieved to read that the WODC Planning Officers have now recommended approving this application with a few subjects.

But there does seem to be an opinion still that this development is a) in the wrong place b) it will affect the current retailers and c) it is not served by public transport.

I would like to comment on these three points and make a few others

a) As far as I can see they (PSA) have made no reference at all to any possible new housing developments in the area - as we know this could be anything between 600 and 1000 new properties in the next years - we will have a real and actual shortfall in shelf space by then

b) They have made some reference to current developments and plans i.e. the new Doctors surgery but not the new vets surgery actually being constructed on the other side of the road and OCC have now applied for extra care homes near the doctors surgery - more facilities/homes in close proximity

c) PSA did suggest other sites which I see have now been accepted by WODC officers as being the wrong sites for Aldi

d) They say it is NOT a 'walk to site' - in several places in the report. In my opinion many of the Chippy residents either shop by car or use the local 'store to door' delivery services - so I think this argument is irrelevant especially as I know a lot of people already drive to Banbury to go to Aldi there

e) Bus services - i think we all agree will have to be rejigged

g) They comment about it being a long way from Cornish Road/Walterbush Road - well it is 13 miles closer than Banbury where the 'low income households' of Chippy seem to go to by car! and I reiterate that this area of Chippy is becoming busier.

h) They state correctly that the town centre seems to be trading quite well with few empty shops - certainly fewer than elsewhere but a lot of people go to Banbury and elsewhere - I don't believe that the centre will suffer in fact I think that some people living outside Chippy might prefer to come to Chippy to shop especially if they can do a combination of Aldi/New Co-op/Sainsburys and all our other independent retailers rather than go to Banbury to get a similar selection

j) They also miss the point that some of the basics are so much cheaper in Aldi in comparison to Sainsburys and the Coop that it will force the bigger stores to be honest on their price

k) They also miss the point that the Aldi site is waste land and very unsightly and no one has bothered with it for years - so let's use it for something the community as a whole really seems to want !!!

and last but not least with the sad demise of the Owner of the site further up the road it is entirely likely that an application will be made for more housing further out towards Banbury i.e. the probable expansion of Chippy will ensure that this site will eventually be surrounded by other buildings and more residences.

Mr Chairman, members of the committee, the majority of residents of Chipping Norton want an Aldi store and the town needs it. I urge you to support the Application. Thank you.

Project: Banbury Road, Chipping Norton

Date: 6 May 2014

Subject: Statement to Committee

Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Dan Templeton and I act as the planning consultant for this development. I have been involved throughout the application process, including attending the public exhibitions and hearing the widespread support that the proposals have; support that is reflected in the public gallery today.

I also attended the committee in January and heard members' comments at that time.

In response to these comments, the applicant has worked hard, both with Officers and your appointed consultants to address the comments. We have provided significant extra information and clarification to enable your Officers to be confident in their recommendation that permission should be granted.

Officers have confirmed that the application proposals will not have a significant adverse impact on the town centre, that there are no alternative sites better located to accommodate the proposals and that the proposed discount foodstore use is capable of being controlled through planning conditions. The objections from other retailers are not accepted or supported by your own consultant's advice - and Co-op continues to invest in the town centre.

Stakeholders have also recognised that this proposal will bring something different to the town, providing quality and value for money, but also attracting new shoppers from elsewhere and retaining those that currently travel away from the town to undertake their food shopping. A discount foodstore is a different form of retailing from that currently found in the town – stores provide a limited number of product lines: less than one quarter of those provided in an equivalent size Tesco – and discount foodstores compete with other main foodstores rather than independent retailers and specialist shops. Improvements in quality and choice that a discount foodstore brings to market towns such as Chipping Norton have been recognised elsewhere.

Following Members' earlier comments, the design and landscaping of the proposed building has been revisited and changed to provide a stronger design feature at one of the main entrances to the town. It is concluded by Officers that this will result in an improvement to what is currently a derelict piece of land.

This land has been vacant for a long time and it does not provide any contribution to the town, either visually or economically. This application therefore represents an opportunity to provide something new and beneficial. Unlike other proposals for retail development in Chipping Norton, this proposal will help the town to maintain its role providing high-quality shopping facilities for the local area. It is also accepted that future employment needs can be balanced through protecting other sites for employment use.

I urge you to recognise the opportunity that this brings and to agree, not only with your Officers, but also with the hundreds of local voices that wish to see the application approved. Thank you.

Notes for the Uplands committee meeting on 6th May 2014.

Good Afternoon, I am Derek Hambridge from Bladon parish council.

We read the reasons given for refusal with a sense of disbelief.

The complete absence of any ability to understand the bigger picture by WODC planners is rather sad. We expected a more enlightened and forward thinking response to the planning application.

We spent many hours looking at the drawings and reading the various texts that accompanied it.

It is without doubt the best presented set off drawings and documentation that we have seen in the last ten years. All the drawings are well done and the documentation is both detailed and clear.

The mix of new housing and the redevelopment of the original farm buildings are thoughtful and sympathetic to its surrounds.

Bladon is becoming dormitory village. This is not what the parish council want. We do not want to become South Woodstock or East Long Hanborough.

The school is thriving thanks to the new school hall and classrooms and the excellent teaching staff.

mainly by couples with children and not sunset homes for pensioners.

If this planning application is refused and the applicant goes to an appeal, the parish council will not support the WODC case at an appeal.

We can see the future development of the village in this application and want this committee to share our vision of Bladon.

Thank you.

- The National Planning Policy Framework states that – “our historic environment can better be cherished if the spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.”
- This proposal is a sustainable development in a sustainable location. It will help Bladon to thrive. It’s in line with national and local planning policy. Its innovative cross-subsidy approach will result in new jobs; a sensitively designed range of private and rented homes and a large New Homes Bonus Payment. The appellant agrees with all of the Section 106 costs - another £200,000 of direct investment.
- The supporting evidence demonstrates that the proposed infilling reflects Bladon’s historic pattern of development. Large ugly sheds are replaced with revitalised historic buildings, providing for jobs, and attractive Cotswold stone homes in a landscaped setting. Built development is reduced across the site, improving openness. Absence of harm to the Green Belt is demonstrated using tangible measurements.
- The proposal results in benefits. Any harm would be hugely outweighed by the significant benefits.
- All technical and environmental issues are resolved in line with policy. Car parking spaces are dictated by the Council’s own policies. Cycle parking and refuse treatment have been designed-in and can also be conditioned.
- Protecting and enhancing heritage is fundamental to the applicant, as it is to English Heritage. All heritage policy requirements are met. Historic buildings, the World Heritage Site and the Conservation Area are fully preserved. English Heritage has written in support of the proposal.
- The National Framework and Localism Act seek to allow people and communities back into planning. The local community overwhelmingly supports this proposal. Its representatives include a County Councillor and a Local Councillor who live in the village and the Parish Council, who are today speaking in favour of it.
- A vote against this proposal is a vote against national and local planning policy. It is a vote against the local community. Subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement on the agreed terms set out by the County Council, Members are asked to approve this sustainable development.

Appendix I

Remarks by Sharone Parnes of Woodstock, at public participation session of WODC Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee 6th May 2014.

Not necessarily verbatim

RE: Planning Application 14/0151/P/FP – Local Authority –owned land & adjacent private dwelling

Thank you Mr Chairman.

Good afternoon.

I'm Sharone Parnes and I'm from Woodstock, where I am also a Member of the Town Council. But I'm here today as an individual resident, and *not* formally on behalf of Woodstock Town Council.

I hope Sub-Committee Members received a copy of my additional representations document, which provides ^{more} context than can be provided in the 3 minutes available.

I am concerned and surprised there is no indication of the consent granted last month - on this application - in the Report of Delegated Decisions, nor is there any indication of 'Withdrawn Decision' on the online planning portal. I hope you are aware of what happened and why granted consent was withdrawn - and if you don't know then I encourage you to interrogate me or your planning officers, as invalid procedure is a serious matter.

With respect I'll draw your attention to 4 problems with the Officers' Recommendations:

Firstly, regarding "**EMPLOYMENT SITES**" – the recommendations are unsubstantiated.

Para 6.3 on page 64 states: "It is noted that the existing Local Authority depot (garage) building, could be a potential employment use. It is considered that the building cannot be reasonably capable of being redeveloped for employment purposes and that there would be substantial planning benefits should this be changed into residential use."

Policy E6 (Change of Use of Existing Employment Sites) states: *The change of use of existing premises and sites with an established employment use to non-employment uses will not be allowed unless*

- a. it can be demonstrated that the site or premises are not reasonably capable of being used or redeveloped for employment purposes; ...

It has not been “demonstrated” ; and no evidence was disclosed to support any contention of being “unsuitable”.

The fact that WODC itself may curtail *its* employee use of the garage does *not* indicate the unavailability of other commercial/employment users.

Secondly, RE TRAFFIC CONGESTION OF UNION STREET

Recommendations Report Paragraph 6.4 (p64) does draws inaccurate conclusion of Highways officers’ response and does not correlate with the OCC Highways statement excerpted at 2.2 ~~states~~.

A potential for increased traffic from existing use does not mean residential use will result in a decrease of vehicle movements, and therefore the recommendation seems misleading.

Moreover, the District Council’s former depot garage’s rear side is a giant hinged gate-like doorway (at the moment boarded up) opening onto the District Council’s carpark area with obvious provision for potential alteration to facilitate reduced congestion on Union Street. I submitted photos.

Additionally, on the front page of May’s Woodstock & Bladon News (as per the copy submitted) the Chairman of the Woodstock Town Partnership reveals “moves are afoot to shortly apply for planning consent ...” and goes on to reveal “As well as a possible new health centre, the development site will support a replacement Police facility and a modest number of new homes...” **The development site surrounds the WODC carpark to the rear of the former depot garage and will inevitably produce exponentially more traffic for Union Street than any retained commercial use could generate.**

Thirdly: POLICY BE3 - Parking

The proposed studio accommodation and proposed extension vastly increase potential occupancy of the proposed expanded residential site, whilst not increasing the number of parking spaces, and in fact the garage would be smaller. **The proposed development therefore foreseeably produces a net drain – rather than any gain - on parking, especially in terms of comparative ratios of parking:non-parking areas of the site currently versus as proposed.**

Finally, POLICY H2 – General residential development standards.

Policy H2 states: Proposals for additional dwellings (including the conversion of existing buildings), replacement dwellings and extensions or alterations to existing dwellings should not “c. eliminate existing useful community facilities;” and “i. set an undesirable precedent for other sites where in equity development would be difficult to resist...”

No advertisement or other verifiable exploration has been conducted to confirm if there are no interested parties in using the building for direct community use - or other use beneficial use to the community. The potential for community use of the garage exists but the recommendation chooses to prematurely rule it out any prospects. The Town Council, for example, is in need of a location to store salt and grit supplies for its winter weather preparations, and there are likely to be other community uses.

Paragraph 6.8 of the Recommendations Report (on page 64) also states “There are no immediate neighbours to the west or rear of the main property”; however, there is a building neighbouring immediately to the West which is also owned by the local authority and is used by youth including Brownies, Girl Guides and Cadet groups.

Additionally, grant of this application for change of use would create a precedent of the first private dwelling residential use bordering the periphery of the Hensington Road car park and therefore this application should be refused or suspended pending much more detailed exploration to include a site visit by Planning Sub-Committee members.

I urge this Sub-Committee to call for a named vote to enable members to visibly distance themselves from this application which is so closely associated with a controversial process of disposal of Local Authority –owned land without public advertisement or auction.

Thank you for listening!

Alan Wilson 6/5/14

Thank you for this opportunity to summarise the most important objections to these plans. You may be aware that I live more or less opposite the proposed site, and that obviously means that it would have personal impacts on my wife and me. However, I'm not here to discuss personal impacts, which I understand are of limited significance from a planning perspective, but to try to represent a wide range of objectors. There are clearly strong feelings about this plan, since other objectors have contacted me since I registered to speak, to ensure I was aware of their own perspective. These objections include ruining the character of walks in the area – which is also likely to have an economic impact by reducing the number of visitors – and major concerns about the impact on bees. Indeed, I understand a local beekeeper has recently written to you summarising the growing evidence that bees are affected by the electromagnetic radiation from solar farms.

I am aware that there is support as well as opposition in the local community, and I think the applicants should be applauded for the way in which they have informed local residents about their plans and tried to take account of some of the comments made. However, I think much of that support reflects people's feeling that renewable energy sources are needed, rather than support for this scheme in particular. I also think that considerably fewer people might support the plan if they realised that the promised annual "contribution to the community" is not intended to be available to pay for a new roof for the scout hut, or whatever, but rather to fund energy-related projects of interest to the planning applicants themselves.

Ultimately, I think it is important to bear in mind that the question you need to decide is not whether building a solar farm would be a worthwhile "green" project, but specifically whether the proposed site is suitable for such a scheme. On this question, local planning policies give very clear guidance. Amongst other policies, policy NE12 states that proposals within the AONB will only be acceptable where they are small in scale, can be shown to be in the public or national interest, and no alternative sites exist.

This proposal is a huge industrial installation, with the site more than half a mile long and covering an area equivalent to 20 football pitches. The careful efforts made to screen the visual impact will not be enough to prevent an eyesore, particularly since they won't even mature until well into the life of the solar farm. The Chairman of DECC's solar strategy board claims that "if we put solar farms on flat fields, low-grade land, away from houses and roads and get the screening right, no-one knows they are there". The screening may be the best that can be achieved here, but none of the other aspects match his ideas. And there has been no attempt to demonstrate that alternative sites do not exist – perhaps wisely, since WODC has indeed already demonstrated that alternative sites do exist even within the district by granting planning permission for large-scale solar farms outside the AONB, for example near Burford and at Barnard Gate.

It is therefore entirely unnecessary to overturn planning policy so completely to allow this scheme within the AONB, and I urge you to confirm your planning officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission.

**Statement delivered by Valou Pakenham-Walsh
at the Upland Planning Committee on Tuesday 6 May 2014 on behalf of the Charlbury Town Council
in support of the following application: 14/0217 Construct Solar energy farm and associated equipment
fencing and security cameras land south of B4022 between Charlbury and Fawler.**

I am here today to represent the view of the Charlbury Town Council. In the absence of its Chairman, Nick Potter, I have been asked, as the vice-chair, to address the members of the Upland Planning Committee. I would like to reaffirm today the support expressed by the Charlbury Town Council for this application, by reiterating and clarifying each of the four points it has made in its reply to this application.

1. *Can the comments of the neighbours (Mr Wilson) be given careful consideration.*

The statement acknowledges the concerns raised by Mr Wilson but does not reflect the views of the Town Council with regard to the comments made by him..

2. *We support the proposal but would ask that this go to committee as it is likely to be a sensitive issue locally*

Through this statement, the Town Council affirms its unanimous support for the application. It also acknowledges the scale of the scheme, and the sensitive nature of the application, by requesting that it is examined by the Upland Planning Committee in order to apply optimal scrutiny.

3. *This is a comprehensive and well documented application showing that careful consideration has been given to a range of issues*

This statement underlines the basis on which it formed its view to support the project. The Town Council was in particular impressed by four aspects of this project:

- First, the fact that this project is community-oriented and driven by a desire to address the issue of climate change while also bringing benefits to the local communities;
- Second, the level and extent of the public consultation, and the level of commitment of the applicants to inform the whole community through regular public meetings, and through addressing the Town Council to explain the scheme in detail;
- Third, the level of commitment and professionalism of the team who has put this project together;
- Fourth, the extent to which the project applicants have taken into account issues of appearance and visibility of the solar farm from public footpaths and roads.

4. *Can the District Council ensure that adequate screening is put in place and that CCTV associated control cabinets are discreetly located*

This statement acknowledges that the Town Council is aware of possible issues of visibility and appearance, but is confident that the applicants, in consultation with the District Council, will be able to put in place efficient ways to mitigate this issue.

I would like to conclude by saying that the presence of the Charlbury Town Council today should leave the members of the Upland Planning Committee in no doubt of the strength of support which its members hold for this application.

Sustainable Charlbury: Public Speaking at the Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee for the community solar energy project application ref 14/0217/P/FP

1) Introduction

Sustainable Charlbury is a community group that has been helping residents reduce their carbon emissions for over 7 years.

Southill Solar is a community renewable energy scheme. It will be owned and run by the community to deliver significant community benefits and save 2,300t CO2 each year of the project's lifecycle, contributing to government targets for carbon emissions.

In January the government published its Community Energy Strategy. Its main ambition is:

"..that every community that wants to take forward an energy project should be able to do so, regardless of background or location. We will back those who choose to pursue community energy, working to dismantle barriers and unlock the potential of the sector."

2) Site location

If Charlbury, Finstock and Fawler are to have community energy, we cannot avoid being inside the AONB. There is only one brownfield site and that is an SSSI. There is insufficient industrial or commercial roof space and a solar farm seemed to be significantly less intrusive than wind turbines or fracking.

WODC told us that being in an AONB could not be a reason for refusal as there is a precedent nearby, but that mitigation of visual impact would be key to this project gaining approval.

Our site was selected with clearly defined criteria, minimising visual impact as our top priority. The site design is unique for a solar farm, focusing on community need rather than developer profit. Only 60% of the available site area would be given over to solar panels; the remaining 40% will be used to create a variety of wildlife habitats. In your officers opinion *"every effort has been made to reduce the impact of the development"*.

3) Historic environment impact

The site will not cause harm to the unique historic characteristics, special interest of listed buildings, or character and appearance of the conservation areas.

English Heritage agrees and as statutory consultees they concluded that:

"...the proposals are not considered to have a major adverse impact on the significance or setting of highly graded landscapes and listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments or conservation areas (and) we raise no objection to them".

4) Environmental and landscape impact

Natural England and the Council ecologist agreed there would be a net benefit to biodiversity resulting from the proposed land management whilst contributing to local and national biodiversity targets. After 20yrs the site will be cleared from all operational features and restored in a rested condition back to agriculture.

5) Impact upon the local economy

The surpluses of this scheme would generate £80,000 each year, injecting a significant £1.5m into the local economy. This is a principal driver of the project. We held two public meetings and

gathered over 90% support at each. 76% of respondents to a community-wide questionnaire supported Southill Solar.

6) Conclusion

Central to the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; the Community Energy Strategy goes on to say that:

“...local planning authorities should recognize the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources, and support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy projects.”

I urge the committee to seize the moment and support this innovative community initiative that follows government policy, reduces carbon emissions and delivers significant community benefits.

Thank you for listening to me.

Mr Hallam indicated that he was speaking for himself and other local residents. He advised that all wanted to see the site redeveloped as it was an eyesore. However, he noted that the site was at the heart of the village and suggested that, if the current application was approved, it would be irrevocably damaged. The scale was disproportionate and the increased parking would damage village life at evenings and weekends.

At present, heavy vehicles were having to make U–turns as they were unable to use the High Street presenting a danger to pedestrians and young children in particular. Access was restricted and would lead to an increase in on-street parking; it was unlikely that customers would arrive by public transport as the last bus left at 6:30 in the evening.

On street parking had already caused difficulties in the area and action had been taken by the appropriate authorities to address inappropriate parking on what was a blind bend.

Mr Hallam suggested that the current application was more about personal gain than securing the viability of the public house and indicated that a more appropriate, proportionate scheme could be devised. He invited the Sub-Committee to reject or revise the current proposals in favour of one of a more appropriate size and style.

In conclusion, Mr Hallam noted that the ground level of the car park was higher than that of the public house and indicated that the applications before Members should be viewed and determined independently, not as alternatives.

Ms Jubb made reference to the request for deferral as set out in the report of additional representations. She indicated that the application had been progressed in consultation with the Council's Officers and only one issue remained outstanding. She explained that a prospective purchaser had been identified and efforts were being made to finalise terms. However, it had not been possible to exchange contracts and a deferral would give time to allow this to take place.

Turning to the merits of the application, Ms Jubb indicated that the design and layout of the proposed development was acceptable and would not give rise to any unacceptable impact upon residential amenity. The interest shown in the acquisition of the public house suggested that the development would not have an adverse impact upon the viability of the business.

Ms Jubb asked Members to defer the application to give the scheme a chance of success as it was capable of delivering what the village wanted whilst providing a viable solution for the public house.

Mrs Kimp indicated that she was speaking for herself and her neighbours and urged Members to refuse the application.

She indicated that the business had been viable in its current form in the past being able to accommodate 100 customers within the premises and 20 outside. Mrs Kimp contended that the viability of the business would not be prejudiced if the applications were refused, nor would it close.

The site was within a conservation area and the AONB and, given that the majority of customers arrived by car, an increase in the capacity of the premises would result in parking in Church Road with a consequent negative impact on the street scene.

Further, approval of the application would cause harm to residential amenity. There had already been problems of noise and disturbance associated with the premises occurring until midnight. Customers already sat on the low wall of the property and problems would be exacerbated by an increase in the outdoor seating area and the provision of lighting.

The County Council had confirmed that part of the application site was designated as public highway and that a stopping up order would be required before any consent could be implemented.

In conclusion, Mrs Kimp invited Members to undertake a site visit in order to fully understand the impact of the proposals.

Thank you Mr Chairman

My Parish Council strongly objects to this proposal which would allow for up to 50 additional drinkers and diners in a completely exposed part of the present car park in very close proximity to surrounding houses.

Your Committee should be under no illusion that if you allow this proposal, the consequent increase in intensity of use will destroy the amenity of those living nearby whose lives will be made intolerable. Your report claims on the basis of unspecified case law and Development Control Guidance that you cannot reject the scheme on grounds of noise and disturbance. Pubs it is argued can do what they like within their own curtilage. So the owner of the Chequers could apparently cover the entire car park with a beer garden with impunity. I do not know what weight you should give to what is described as guidance. As a former professional planner and consultant Planning Inspector, the advice to me has always been that loss of amenity due to noise and disturbance created by public house customers and their vehicles are valid planning considerations. The residents of Churchill would be incredulous were that not the case.

In any event, your report fails to make it clear that noise and disturbance already spreads far beyond the site. Creating a large external eating and drinking area will greatly increase parking demand made worse by reducing the existing car park.

The amenity of residents along the whole of Church Road and sometimes beyond is already harmed with huge aggravation, particularly during lighter evenings, caused by vehicles blocking driveways, illegally using private parking areas and preventing emergency access to Langston Close in say the event of fire, not to mention of course the noise of car engines revving and doors slamming late at night. What is now proposed is not a small change and will add more noise and congestion to an already stressful situation. Your report questions whether " it is reasonable to refuse

planning permission " on traffic grounds. I cannot see why, given that the scheme represents a major intensification of the present use whilst reducing what is an already inadequate car park. In addition, larger vehicles parked in front of the pub would almost certainly obstruct the pavement.

In claiming to be unable to control noise and disturbance through planning law, your report refers to Licensing and Statutory Nuisance powers as a possible remedy. Your Licencing Officers ,and the Police were indeed called in response to complaints many times last year and the owners were placed on notice by the Licensing Authority that the behaviour of the pubs clientele and the observation of the pub's licencing hours would be kept under watch.I am afraid however that neither my Council nor Churchill residents have any faith that noise and disturbance abatement would be other than temporary as experience has already shown.

Lastly on the issue of principle, your officers say pub retention should be supported. But this is not about retention, it is about expansion. A beer garden is not needed to secure the future of the pub and I would remind you that the previous owners ran a successful and profitable business for 9 years without harm to surrounding amenity. The business here will unquestionably be profitable but at the expense of the community. THAT IS WRONG.

In the applicants supporting statement it says " harm to the quiet enjoyment of the residents would be minimal." This is no more than a self serving assertion on behalf of owners who have no concern for the residential surroundings to the pub nor for the Community of Churchill.

CAR PARK Woodstock Lodge, Blenheim Park

- Mr Chairman, Members of the Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee – thank you very much indeed for the opportunity to address you in respect of this important application for Blenheim Palace
- The National Planning Policy Framework could not be clearer. In establishing that the nation’s heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, it requires local authorities to adopt a positive strategy for their conservation and enjoyment.
- This planning application is entirely in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. It will help to sustain and enhance the significance of Blenheim Palace as a heritage asset in a manner entirely consistent with its conservation.
- There can be little doubt - and evidence supporting the application clearly demonstrates – that ‘no change’ or ‘doing nothing’ is simply not an option. The existing car park – established in this discrete location of the park for many years - would simply continue to deteriorate and this would be significantly harmful to the World Heritage Site and particularly for our visitors. Thus, whilst it is hoped that this proposal will receive unanimous support from Members, I do need to point out that the inevitable consequence of refusal would be harm to the World Heritage Site, creating severe conflict with national policy.
- The proposal comprises a major financial investment – entirely funded by the Blenheim Palace Estate - which will help to preserve the World Heritage Site in the most sensitive manner possible. It reflects an approach which embraces paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework – whereby it is incumbent upon local authorities to look for opportunities which enhance or better reveal the significance of World Heritage Sites. This is a point recognised by the Council in considering this application.
- As with all proposals here at Blenheim Palace, we have engaged extensively with English Heritage. You will note that they support the application and they support this location - and indeed no objections have been received.
- Members will appreciate that the proposed investment will result in an attractive, visitor-friendly car park, more appropriate to year-round use and capable of dealing with the “interesting” British weather that we now seem to be enjoying more frequently. You will have noted, from the application and from the supporting material, that the proposal has been carefully and sensitively designed. We believe that it represents a significant visual improvement on the current situation where we survive through muddy puddles and pot-holes, as well as serving to enhance the visitor experience – not least by not having to tow out any more cars. You will appreciate that only the highest quality of development is acceptable to ourselves and that it is not in our interest to introduce development that would harm the World Heritage Site.
- Members, I know, also fully appreciate the significant benefits of a successful Blenheim Palace for the culture and economy of West Oxfordshire. This proposal is entirely in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and it is work that we simply have to see done.
- I ask Members to vote in favour of it and to help us to sustain the success of this World Heritage Site for the benefit of everyone.