

PUBLIC MEETING
RE DEVELOPMENT IN AND AROUND BODICOTE
MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 7.30 P.M. IN BODICOTE CHURCH

Present: 9 Bodicote Parish Councillors
Cty Cllr A Fatemain
Dist Cllr Mrs C Heath
Dist Cllr Miss L Thirzie Smart
Approx. 200-250 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr Mrs J Washburn (previous commitment)

The Chairman, Cllr. Ron Glynn, introduced himself and the Councillors and set out the reasons for this public meeting:-

The Parish Council wished to make people aware of what the District Council had done and was planning to do to the village and its surrounding areas. Bodicote would lose its identity in the next few years. This meeting was called to discuss proposals in the Local Plan, which contained many contradictions. He showed the large document to those present and stated that it would also affect people living on Sycamore Drive. He invited questions throughout the evening.

He read out some of the statements in the Local Plan
Bodicote is a Category A village – as such, only minor development, infill and conversions were permitted, according to the CDC policy.
The Local Plan provided for each Category A village to take a share of 750 houses; as there were 15, that meant that Bodicote's share should be 50 homes, not thousands as were currently planned.
The LP states that CDC will work in partnership with Parish Councils – however, they were not listening to Bodicote PC.

Cllr. Glynn pointed out the allocated sites for Banbury on a large-scale map and stated that half of BAN 17 was in our Parish (the 3 fields nearest to White Post Road), while the whole of BAN 4 and BAN 12 was in our Parish.

Maggie Mepham: Is the proposed new housing at Cotefield in Bodicote?

A: Yes, but it is not in the LP.

Diane Skinner: Who owns the 3 fields?

A: The Oxford Diocese. Gladmans is the only site where a planning application has been submitted, so far.

Madeleine Greening: Do the people who own the land have to sell it?

A: No – but they have probably sold it already.

Derek Wyeth: I have not received any information from the developer about the plans for the Glebe land, although my brother on the St. Anne's estate in Banbury has received their brochure.

A; How many people here have received a brochure? (*Quite a few had, but many in the village had not.*)

RG spoke about the existing problems on White Post Road, which was already congested. The proposed spine road would come through the middle of the development; it was not coming out where the entrance to the cricket club was now, it would be slightly further up towards the roundabout. Wherever it came out, there would be major problems. The developers' response was always that they would mitigate the problems.

Chris Watts: The developers claimed there was very little traffic in the White Post Road area, but the cameras went up during half term.

Cllrs Mrs Steel: *Read out Gladman's Environmental Statement, which stated that there would be no significant impact.*

Keith Bristow: When CDC moved into their offices in Bodicote, I did a traffic survey; there were over 300 vehicular movements in front of the school, this dropped to 100 in holiday time.

Pete Briggs: I had the same experience in a village outside Bath; we objected to everything the Council put forward and they reduced their proposals right down, eventually to none.

Tony Roberts: I am from the Timms Estate. Is anyone here from CDC?

A: There are our 2 District Councillors but not the MP. We didn't invite her because we wanted to see what response we had from the public.

Unknown: Ron Pickles said development should be on brownfield sites and when Tony Baldry was our MP he said he could not understand what was happening. The LP was submitted some time ago and suddenly the Government of the day decided they wanted more houses and threw the LP back to CDC, who had to work out where to put these extra houses. They decided on Bodicote.

Ginny Fox: Are they still planning to build south of Cotefield Farm?

A: Yes. At the back of Molyneux Drive, there is permission for 86 houses. There is now a further application to the south, for 95 houses.

Chris Heath: Unfortunately, this got through despite my working on this for hours. I was not expecting a lot of support, but Adderbury was concerned about possible coalescence, then a lot of other Councillors joined in with their concerns. Unfortunately, towards the end, one of the Planning Officers reminded everyone that these houses were in the 5.1 Housing Land Supply.

RG: But this site is not in the LP.

CH: Apparently it was put in the 5.1 HLS, although it had not been passed. I was not sure about this, so I had to let it go to the vote. It was passed because of the fear of losing the 5.1 figure.

RG: So can people still build if it is not in the LP?

Cllr Mrs Christer: Is the 5.1 figure a rolling one?

CH: It must stand each year.

Rob Beesley: Who voted for it? Was it a Party vote?

CH: It was a free vote.

RG pointed to a map of BAN 4. This was for 600 houses, still in Bodicote.

He pointed to a map of BAN 12. This was the site for Banbury Football Club, but was only one field away from Twyford.

RG reminded everyone of the Spitfire development, also in Bodicote – another 21 houses which were not in the LP.

He spoke about problems associated with the Longford Park development and the effect on neighbours.

RG: What has the Parish Council been doing about all this development? You may believe that we just have to object. Well, we do object, through the proper channels, but in the 15 years I have been on the Parish Council I cannot recall a time when CDC has taken any notice of what we say regarding these developments.

David Meikle: On what grounds would the Planning Committee reject these developments?

RG: They will only consider policies.

DM: Our argument should be that they should pay for somebody to represent us who can do a professional assessment and argue on our behalf.

GF: There is a lot of money going between other people. Will we get anything from any of this?

A: Not if it is considered to be in Banbury. There is a s.106 agreement which people get from such developments, which should go back to the village to be used for facilities in the village, but Banbury Town Council will get this money.

Claire Otmore: There is no mention by Gladmans of additional schools.

A: Longford Park is building another primary school, starting next year. A secondary school is also planned, off the Oxford Road.

Ian Scott: They want a link road from the Oxford Road to the Bloxham Road.

A: Yes, they do.

William Dunkley: Gladmans leaflet was full of propaganda. They think all the services are there and available. We know there are problems with schools, roads, etc., - they must address all the services.

Harry Dickens: Who is the developer for Salt Way?

A: Gladmans.

HD: They claim that 300 houses will have a negligible effect on traffic. Can the Parish Council insist that a byelaw is passed stating that no houses are to be sold to car owners? (*Laughter*)

RG explained that the Parish Council and the Cherwell Heights Housing Action Group (CHHAG) had carried out their own traffic survey, but CDC did not take any notice of this.

Paul Weston: The effect on White Post Road will not be negligible if the spine road joins up with the Bloxham Road. People will also want to use this road instead of using Wykham Lane. One of the planning consultants is ferocious (Gallaghers) – they work on a no win, no fee, basis.

Cty Cllr Arash Fatemian: I am the Oxfordshire County Council representative. OCC, as the highway authority, has to be consulted on all planning applications. They are objecting on 4 grounds to the Gladmans proposal:-

- The absence of any Masterplan for BAN 17;
- The site is dependent on a spine road and there must be a detailed plan which all parties have signed up to;
- There has been no assessment of the impact on any of the junctions;
- No mitigation measures are shown in the transport assessment.

He stated that education was also an OCC responsibility. Currently the local school was not only filled by children from Bodicote, but from a wider area, so children from the new development would be given priority.

RG: Before the LP was approved, it had to go through the Inspector's Inquiry. The Clerk spent 2 days giving our side of the story very well, but this made no difference to the LP.

We consider that CDC has been perverse in the way it has dealt with Bodicote and the surrounding area. Over the years, CDC moved into Bodicote, then the Rugby Club moved in, then Banbury Cricket Club and soon the Banbury Football Club will be moving in.

Well before the LP was submitted for the Examination in Public, we visited CDC's offices for a meeting with Adrian Colwell, Senior Planning Officer. He gave us some advice on how to object to proposals in the LP and promised there would be a "green barrier" south of Sycamore Drive and Salt Way. This was in place in the original LP, but the Inspector threw the LP back to CDC and when it was re-submitted the "green barrier" had disappeared - lots of houses were now planned south of Salt Way.

Dave Hirons: Re the school: This year 7 families were refused entry; the catchment area is not just Bodicote but also on the Timms Estate. The school is already over-subscribed, if we build another 300 houses there will not be a place for them. Are they planning to build a school, Doctors' surgery, local shops, etc.?

David Meikle: Does the OCC have a right to veto?

AF: No, it is a statutory consultee.

RG: I am going to be frank now: over the years, back in 1999, Bodicote-Bankside came up and the Conservatives were against it, Labour was for it. Then the Conservatives got in and from May to August they changed their minds, stating that they were not fully aware of all the information. In the early years, we did not have any representation on the District Council, because one Councillor was a landowner and the second one was "gagged" and frogmarched out of the Council Chamber because she lived near the development site.

Our current Councillor on the Planning Committee, Christine Heath, supports our Parish's plight wholeheartedly, but she is limited as she has been promoted to Vice Chairman of the whole District Council. On the very day that the LP was approved, Christine was standing in for the Chairman, so she could not speak on our behalf. I would like the Clerk to read out the objections we submitted. (*This was done and was met with applause.*) However, Dist. Cllr. Lynda Thirzie Smart did not read this out and I would like to ask her why not.

Lynda Thirzie Smart: Because the Inspector said there would be no provision for "green barriers". There are 54 Councillors and the LP was going to go through. Everyone voted except for 7 abstentions. This would not have made any difference. (*Cries of dismay from the audience.*)

RG: Are you not our voice?

LTS: But it has gone through many processes before it goes to full Council. Your voice is relevant but the Inspector has come back and made his decision on the LP. It would have made no difference at this stage.

Cllrs Mrs Steel: But could you not have read it out?

LTS: It would not have made any difference.

Ginny Fox: You have not represented us, you should have read this out on behalf of the village. *(Clapping and cheering)*

RG: Have any of you watched the webcam and seen a District Council Planning meeting? I watched the one where they approved the LP. I cannot believe how many of these Councillors got up and said they had concerns. One Councillor mentioned Bodicote, another stated he did not understand the LP and all the jargon, so he could not see coalescence. But everyone who had concerns said they would support the LP; the vote was unanimous. What is the point of having a vote if the Councillors have to support the LP? There is no local democracy if we are told how many houses we have to have. If we object to one application, then these houses have to be built elsewhere. CDC is impotent.

If CDC reject an application, the developer goes to Appeal and it is allowed. Barry Wood (Leader of the Council) said that only 40% of Councils have got a LP in place, so 60% have not. Are they suffering from ad hoc housing development?

David Meikle: Would lobbying our MP be a good idea?

Catherine Brown: We want to stop developments but, despite the emotion in this room, the money that changes hands is what speaks loudest. We need a sound legal argument. We need to get someone who understands law, etc. and engage with communities where people have managed to remove a proposed development. There must be a practical step which residents can take.

RG: We have tried to object on the grounds of policies, but this is still ignored. I have said to the Parish Council that we must be more aggressive. I wanted to know what support we have in this village for some sort of action.

Unknown: Could we have a legal challenge?

RG: Does anyone know a Barrister?

Phil Cordingley: This evening has been like déjà vu – I was a member of CHHAG, we went in every single direction, every question was asked then, we and the Parish Council did all these things. We got over 50,000 objections to the first LP, they ignored these objections. There is something you can do – write to your Councillor, tell them you represent us, if you do not vote against this Plan at the next election we won't vote for you. The next round of local elections is in May.

We presented the County Council with the road reports, they said they were wrong. The town cannot cope with all the extra traffic.

Unknown: How long have we got?

RG: There is only one application in at the moment. We are waiting, this is what is planned for the next 16 years, so the other applications will be coming in.

I want you to look at this as a whole. We are surrounded by development – what will CDC do in the future? There are people living in Longford Park who think they are living in Bodicote, but from April next year the boundaries will change and they will be living in Banbury.

Ginny Fox: Is the Football Club a done deal?

A: No.

Cllr Mrs Steel: Kirtlington vetoed 95 houses from Gladmans and their appeal was dismissed.

RG: Tysoe in Warwickshire also won against a plan for 75 houses. But these houses are in Bodicote and they are being regarded by CDC as Banbury.

David Foreman: I have experience of developers who use large PR agencies and villagers who have built their own websites. We do not have a communal voice, forums, letters to go the MP. We need to increase the technology.

RG: This is your show, not the Parish Council's. I am pleased to see this great crowd here this evening.

Unknown: People must respond to social media. People start to create a momentum.

The Clerk: We discussed this recently at Council, it is something we would welcome, but we need help from people who understand Facebook, etc. and can set something up.

Dist Cllr Chris Heath: I have done more work this last week than all of you put together. (*She explained how many hours she had put in.*) I certainly do work for Bodicote. I am also the Councillor for Bloxham and we did this 4 years ago. We had fantastic support, they went to every meeting at CDC, etc.. CDC did turn down 2 applications, but they went to Appeal and were allowed. We thought about Town Planners and a Barrister, (who cost £10,500 for advice on one application). I've done this and been there, every Council has to have an LP. Bodicote-Bankside did not have a current LP, there has not been one in place since 1996. We had to have this LP; there was a lot I did not like, but we knew the developers would swamp the area if we did not have it in place. Salt Way was on the edge of Banbury; 145 houses were turned down by CDC, but the application went to Mr. Pickles who said it was OK. Once the "green barrier" had been breached, it left the whole area open for what they did. If this had not happened they were determined to keep Salt Way as the edge of Banbury.

Ginny Fox: I don't think anyone means to "slag you off" personally, but you are a puppet, with a bigger man behind you. We do applaud the amount of work you did,

but my stance is that they did not listen to you either. There is a bigger picture. Mr. Pickles does not live here. Bodicote will not remain a village if they say it is Banbury and keep taking more land from Bodicote. I do not know how, without legal representation, we can change anything.

Dist Cllr Chris Heath: They have done the same thing to the north, in Hanwell.

RG: How are we going to go forward? We can go home and forget about it and they will change the boundaries again. We are unique from all other villages, the problem with Bodicote is that we are too close to Banbury. Longford Park is supposed to be an urban extension of Banbury. I think a lot of you would be interested in being proactive – perhaps some of you would even stand in front of tractors, as Keith Mitchell (*the previous County Councillor*) said he would. I do not understand the planning system – just because a site is allocated in the LP, an application still has to come in from a developer and that goes to the Planning Committee. They could still turn it down, or they could change it.

Bill Parrish: I understood this LP runs to 2031. Huge developments are planned for Bodicote, why can't we say it should be frozen until we see what effect these huge developments have?

RG: They are planning a puffin crossing coming from Longford Park, adjacent to Broad Gap. We met the OCC representative. (*He explained what had happened*). We were told this had been planned 10 years ago and that we were only prolonging the inevitable.

Cty Cllr Fatemian: I represented the Parish Council's views and that decision was delayed pending further consultation on 2 different crossings.

Unknown: Would it be an idea for everyone who feels they could play an active part to form a stand-alone group?

RG: We could set up a Fighting Group – are any of you willing to do that?

David Foreman: I will take this forward.

RG: Next Wednesday is our Parish Council meeting – can you come to that and we will set this up?

DF: Yes.

Unknown: 30 years ago, we had a petition re Salt Way. CDC was amazed that people objected.

Andrew Barnes: Keep in touch with us (*Adderbury*). We set up a Pressure Group.

Jenny Glynn: The Bodicote column in the Banbury Guardian shows the website for Bodicote Parish Council.

The Clerk suggested that all those interested in being part of the Fighting Group should e-mail her. She would then pass the names and e-mail addresses on to David Foreman and the two of them would liaise.

RG: What are we going to achieve? I have been in touch with local Press and National Press. There was not much response from the Nationals, but the local Press have spent some time with me and the TV man who was here earlier is putting something on Channel 8, Freeview, the Oxford Channel. We need to get the community and national newspapers on board. Our local MP (*Victoria Prentis, Conservative*) needs to stand up in Parliament and put our views across.

RG: Than you all for coming out tonight. Let's see if we can get something done and not lose Bodicote's identity.

The meeting closed at approx 9.30 p.m.