

REMENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held in the Parish Hall on 9th Oct 2018 starting at 8:04pm
and finishing at 9:55pm (circulated 11th Oct 2018)

PRESENT: Cllrs John Halsall (JH; Chair)

Franky Cookson
(FC)
Chris Leeming
(CL)
John Merkel (JM)
Darrel Poulos (DP)
Bill Ronald (BR)
Clerk: Paul Sermon

In attendance (taken from those signing an
attendance sheet) included:

Linda Ashwell
Sue Burford
Jennifer Gillett
Gerald Gillett
Peter Grace
Nigel Gray
Tina Hudson
Andy Hudson
Andy Meader (AM)
David Morgan
Bob Nancarrow (BN)
Mark Phillips
Felicity Rutland
Pat Sly
David Spragg (DS)
Sarah Tait
Anthony West
Alex Wilks
Nigel Williams

099/18: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

100/18: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

101/18: MINUTES OF THE MEETING

It was AGREED that the Chairman be authorized to sign the minutes of the
meeting held on 11th Sept 2018 as a true record of that meeting.

102/18: REPORT OF THE PASSING OF SCOTT MACGREGOR

The Chairman reported that RPC had received the sad news regarding
the death of Scott MacGregor. He said that Scott had contributed
significantly to RPC's work over many years.

103/18: MATTERS ARISING

JH updated the meeting on recent progress and The Clerk said that
the website statements on the Transparency Code and Data Protection
had been updated. All other matters arising were considered under
other Agenda items.

104/18: PLANNING

On Thamesbridge House, after some discussion on flood-plain disturbance, The
Chairman suggested that this should be de-listed. This was AGREED.

Signed..... Chairman

David Spragg (DS) was invited by The Chairman to introduce two planning applications: 182524 Park Place and 182327 Malmesbury. Comments from residents attending were wide-ranging and forthright. JH answered a question from BN on RPC listing of applications. He said that there had been a small extension on the deadline for comments. Most residents then left the meeting. RPC considered the two applications and AGREED that RPC wished to object to both. Andy Meader (AM) of Pegasus was introduced. It was AGREED that AM would be asked to help prepare a detailed case for RPC and that JH would list both applications. Subsequently, the Pegasus submission on behalf of RPC was AGREED (see Appendix).

105/18: WEBSITE

FC gave details of the website Sept use. Aerial photographs of Remenham from 1923-1952 were available on the website. There was a brief discussion about the possible value of an up-to-date aerial photographic record of Remenham in 2018; it was subsequently AGREED that the Clerk should explore the cost of this. The Clerk said that on the day of the meeting he had waited for the BT Wi-Fi installation at the Parish Hall, but that this had not happened. He said he would chase this up.

106/18: LICENSING

The Chairman said that a ChinaWhite licence application would be considered by WBC shortly.

107/18: FOOTPATHS

JH suggested that RPC should pay for a stile/dog entrance for the footpath through Wilminster Park, subject to the landowner meeting the installation cost. This was AGREED and a cheque was signed under 109/118.

108/18: TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS

The Chairman said he had discussed speed limits on the lanes and the A4130 with Bracknell/Wokingham constabulary.

109/18: FINANCE

The Chairman reported that JH/JM/The Clerk had attended NatWest in Henley to facilitate e-banking and updating signatories for cheques. BR said he had also visited NatWest. Six cheques were signed:

000691	OCS (waste bin emptying)	£115.20
000692	External audit (PFK-Littlejohn)	£240.00
000693	The Clerk (Wi-Fi camera for Parish Hall)	£ 27.06
000694	The Chairman (printing)	£ 70.36
000695	E.Crockett (stile/gate)	£336.00
000696	L.Newman (noticeboard re-varnishing)	£145.00

The Clerk reminded the meeting that he had been questioned by the auditors about the size of RPC reserves in relation to the precept; he suggested that RPC should soon consider expenditure on its priorities.

110/18: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13th Nov 2018 at 8pm in the Parish Hall

ACTIONS:

The Chairman to

*delist Thamesbridge House
list 182524 (Park Place) & 182327 (Malmesbury), liaise with AM
(Pegasus) to generate an RPC response, circulate this to
councillors and by the deadlines and submit to WBC Planning*

The Clerk will

*send off cheques
chase up BT Openreach on Wi-Fi*

Signed.....Chairman

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Appendix

Ref P18-2371/HH

23rd October 2018

Mr O Sharif
Planning Department
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

Dear Mr Sharif,

Objection to proposals at the Malmesbury Estate
- Application ref. 182327 and 182524

I submit this letter on behalf of Remenham Parish Council, objecting to the two proposed planning applications, ref. 182327 and 182524 at the Malmesbury Estate, Remenham Hill, Henley.

The two proposals under consideration by the Council are for the following developments:

- 182327 - Full planning application for the proposed erection of grooms accommodation with a players gym following the demolition of existing outbuilding.
- 182524 - Full planning permission for the erection of a stable (consisting of 24 boxes, tack room, feed room and storage) with outdoor arena.

It should be noted that the Council's description of development for application 182524 is incorrect. The proposal is for an arena not an area. This gives rise to concerns that the Council are not appropriately considering the full impact of the proposal and furthermore, have not advertised the details of the proposals correctly contrary to their statutory duty as determining Authority.

Both proposals are contrary to Green Belt policy. Green Belt policy is set out in the NPPF and applies to all designated Green Belts in the Country. Inappropriate development within the Green Belt is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF sets out a number of exceptions where new buildings may be permissible. These include a) buildings for agriculture and forestry, b) for the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, recreation, cemeteries, and allotments, c) the extension or alteration of a building, d) the

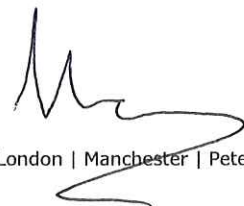
Pegasus Group

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replacement of a building, e) limited infilling in villages, f) limited affordable housing for local community needs or g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land. Each of these exceptions have further limitations attached to them. The current application warrants consideration against three of the exceptions, these being b, d and g.

Firstly, exception 'b' states that the provision of "appropriate" facilities in connection with the existing use of land for outdoor sport is deemed to be acceptable.

The question over whether there is a requirement for 10 grooms to live onsite needs to be fully considered by the Council. It cannot be appropriate that all staff who assist in the running of the facility must reside on site. It is clearly not necessary for the existing use of the site, given that the facility has operated without grooms accommodation to date. Whilst recognising that there would be a connection between the groom and the location ie it's their place of work, this should not imply that there is any requirement to live on site. If such a connection was considered to justify adherence with criterion (b) as an appropriate facility for sport, then every groundsman with a pitch, park or cemetery in the Green Belt will be able to justify a new home next to it, and everyone who works on an allotment could build an adjoining house too! Quite clearly this cannot be the intention of national guidance on the matter, given the underlying intention of Green Belt policy and guidance.

If the requirement is for the welfare and security of the horses, then accommodation for one groom to stay overnight may be considered to be appropriate. However, if that really is the requirement then the accommodation should be located adjacent to where the horses are, and not over 600 metres away as currently proposed. Appropriate facilities for outdoor sport within the Green Belt should relate to facilities that are necessary to ensure the functionality of the facility in order to allow the sport to take place.

Similarly, the suggestion that a gym is an appropriate facility on site, simply because it is something that might be used by some of the Polo players, is not accepted. It is quite clearly not necessary to enable Polo to be played. Players of many sports would typically use gyms that are in a different location to where they actually play their outdoor sport. Quite often such a gym would be within an urban area.

Neither the grooms accommodation or the gym, in this instance, can be reasonably considered as appropriate facilities to satisfy criterion (b) of paragraph 145.

Whilst the proposed stables might on initial consideration appear to be an appropriate facility for the outdoor sport of polo, consideration needs to be given to the fact that paragraph 145 refers to it relating to the existing use of land or a change of use. In this instance, no application has been made for a change of use, albeit for reasons explained later, such an application is considered necessary. On the basis that the current application is therefore providing stables for the existing use, the question needs to be asked; how many stables are appropriate for the existing use? For reasons explained later in this submission, the current proposals are combining to result in a use that is different to that previously granted by the Council, which related to use by the residents and guests of Park Place only, and not to be used as a private club. It is understood the proposed additional stables would result in a total of 74 stables on site. Such a scale of provision is not considered to be appropriate for the existing/authorised use of the land and is akin to a fully commercial operation in terms of activity and impact.

Even if Officers disagree on the above and conclude that the proposed facilities are appropriate for outdoor sport, criterion (b) of paragraph 145 still requires such facilities to



preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not to conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Taking the latter point first, there are five purposes of including land within the Green Belt, as set out in the NPPF; a) to check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, b) to prevent towns merging into one another, c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns and e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. In this case the proposed scheme, through the introduction of substantial additional buildings, some of which could reasonably be accommodated within urban land, would be in conflict with purposes (c) and (e).

With regards potential impact upon openness, the proposed American barn stable block does not preserve the openness of the Green Belt as it is a new building on a previously undeveloped piece of land. No justification has been provided to show that the building will preserve the openness of the Green Belt and by virtue that considerable built development is proposed where none is currently present, the openness is clearly not preserved. Whether or not the stable block is screened from public views, the openness is harmed. Furthermore, re-siting the arena to the west of its current position will allow for development to encroach further on the Countryside, thereby not complying with that Green Belt purpose.

With regards criterion (b) of paragraph 145 it is therefore considered that there is no justification to consider the proposed grooms accommodation, gym and stables as an appropriate facility for outdoor sport, and that even if considered appropriate, the proposed developments will detract from the openness, and not adhere with the purposes of the Green Belt.

Turning to criterion 'd' of paragraph 145, this states that replacement buildings may be acceptable, however they must be within the same use class and the replacement building cannot be materially larger than the one that it replaces. In this instance, the proposed groom's accommodation and gym has sought to be justified by demolishing an existing building on site. However, the building would not be within the same use as the one that it would be replacing which is a pre-requisite of the policy. Furthermore, according to the volumetric calculations included on the Council's website, the proposed replacement building would be 31% larger than the one that it replaces; 31% is a material size increase. Therefore, the replacement building argument does not comply with the requirements of part d of paragraph 145 of the NPPF 2018.

Turning to criterion 'g' of paragraph 145, this allows for *"limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*

- *Not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
- *Not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority."*

As the proposals do not include any affordable housing provision, it is the first part of this policy that may apply. The policy allows for limited infilling on previously developed land in continuing use provided that the development would not result in any greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. It cannot be argued that the proposals would not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt where both proposals include the provision of new development. One building is proposed



for demolition, however, as discussed previously, the proposed replacement is materially larger and therefore would have a greater impact upon openness. Therefore, the proposals both also fail when assessed against this criterion of paragraph 145.

Wokingham Borough Council have regularly adopted the stance of suggesting comparatively small scale residential extensions, and other minor development would detract from the openness of the Green Belt. It would be entirely inconsistent to conclude that development of the scale proposed in the current applications does not detract from the openness of this part of the Green Belt. It therefore follows that the applications cannot adhere with the requirements of any of the 'exception' criteria for new buildings set out in paragraph 145 of the NPPF. Subsequently in accordance with national and local planning guidance, in order to be granted planning permission, very special circumstances need to be demonstrated.

No very special circumstances have even been submitted for consideration in these applications to warrant allowing inappropriate harmful development within the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposals should be refused for being in conflict with Green Belt policy at national and local level.

In addition to the impact upon the Green Belt, and hence conflict with policy, both proposals raise further concerns as follows;

The site is part of the grade II* listed Park and Garden of Park Place and as such due regard should be paid to the sensitive historic nature of the site. There does not however, appear to be any supporting documentation accompanying either planning application submissions to consider the impact of the proposals on this heritage asset. Reading through the documentation and Officer's report for the original planning application for the polo facility, it is apparent that the area where the stables are now proposed was considered to be a sensitive area of the site. As such, the stables proposed under the previous application were sunken into the landscape to ensure that they did not interrupt important view points. This is not proposed with the new stable building, and therefore there is concern that they would have a harmful impact upon the grade II* listed Park and Garden. The fact the matter hasn't even been addressed in the application submission indicates that no consideration has been given to it, or that harm is likely and hence the Applicants have chosen not to highlight it. Either way, more details are necessary on the matter before consideration can be given to it.

The original application for the polo facility was approved subject to a number of conditions in 2016. One of the conditions of note is number 17 which is set out as follows:

*"The development hereby permitted shall be used only as a **private** facility by the **occupiers and guests of Park Place** only. There shall be **no public access** and it shall **not be used as a private club**. No public events associated with the development hereby permitted shall take place at any time." [my emphasis]*

Interestingly this condition cites the relevant residence as Park Place, and not the Park Place estate or indeed the Malmesbury Estate. What is unclear in the submitted details for both applications, is where the other members of the Park Place Polo Team reside. In reference to the condition, they would have to occupy the main dwelling in order to use the polo facilities, or if they were guests then they would need to visit the site rather than stay permanently. Therefore if they do not live there, it would be more appropriate to be proposing temporary stabling for their horses during the polo season, rather than permanent stabling creating a permanent blight on the Green Belt. If the horses are only then on site for the season, the grooms accommodation should too be of a temporary



nature, albeit earlier comments have explained why even this would not be appropriate on the scale proposed.

The provision of the requirement for on-site grooms and stabling for the whole team rather suggests that the facility is no longer used solely for the enjoyment of the occupier of Park Place and their guests, but rather it is becoming a commercial facility with a large number of employees. A commercial facility of this scale should be assessed for impacts upon local amenity, highways and transport network amongst other things.

The proposed arena will replace the existing arena (which does not currently benefit from planning consent and should have been removed 3 years ago) and will be for show jumping horses rather than polo horses. Furthermore, a proportion of the proposed stables will also be solely for show jumping horses rather than polo horses. It is not clear who will be partaking in the show jumping, however, it is clearly a different sport to polo and does not therefore comply with the original polo consent. A separate formal change of use application should be submitted to cover the use of these proposed premises so that the full impact and appropriateness of the use can be assessed.

It is unclear why grooms accommodation is suddenly now required, when the original planning application was only submitted in 2016, particularly at a scale of 10 grooms. Very little information has been provided as to why the grooms need to be located on site. If it really is for the welfare of the horses, as the Agent suggested when presenting to the Parish Council on 9th October 2018, then what is the arrangement currently? Are 10 grooms really required 24 hours a day 7 days a week? As explained earlier, the fact the proposed grooms accommodation is located over 600 metres away from the nearest stables, would indicate that animal welfare is not the overriding requirement for such accommodation. Surely it would be more practical to locate them within the immediate vicinity of the horses in order to be 'on call' for any medical emergencies and for site security.

The Applicant's Agent's presentation and response to questions at the recent Parish Council Meeting, highlighted that the Polo Team associated with the site will be playing at the elite national level. This in itself suggests quite a different operation to that which would have been envisaged by the Council when granting consent previously.

At the above Parish Council meeting, the Agent did provide information on expected generation of vehicle movements, type of vehicles entering and leaving the site (including artic lorries to transport the horses, rather than horse boxes as might be assumed), the considerable number of spectators expected to be in attendance, and horses required (7 per player), whenever a match takes place. The Parish Council would be happy to provide such information to the Borough Council, which clearly illustrates that to all intents and purposes the site will operate as a private polo club, with the associated activity and impact on the local environment that results from such an operation.

The two applications that relate to the same general facilities on the same site have been submitted under two different applicants; neither of which are addressed as Park Place. This does not support their case that the facility is a private one for the occupiers of Park Place only and indeed suggests a more commercial nature to the venture. It further questions whether the proposed, and even current, operation of the site is in adherence with the requirements of the previous planning consent.

In summary, the current applications do not comply with Green Belt policy by virtue of being inappropriate development that would harm the openness of the Green Belt. No very



special circumstances have been put forward to justify such inappropriate development in this instance, and the applications should be refused accordingly.

With regards development plan policy, the Council's Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Document refer to Green Belt requirements at policies CP12 and TB01 respectively. Whilst reference is made to earlier versions of national Green Belt guidance in the policies in question, the underlying requirement to preserve the openness of the Green Belt by preventing inappropriate development, and not conflicting with the purposes of the Green Belt is very clear. As a result, for reasons explained within this letter, the current applications are in conflict with relevant development plan policy on the issue, and the applications should be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the primary material consideration is that of the NPPF and its commentary on Green Belt matters, which clearly further supports the refusal of the current planning applications.

In addition, the facilities previously introduced, plus those now proposed on site appear to be resulting in a much larger, more commercial venture than just a private facility, as required by the existing consent. Officers should therefore give careful consideration to whether a change of use is now proposed, or has taken place already, which would require associated planning applications to consider wider planning matters, including the impact upon local amenity, highways and the local transport network.

In addition to the refusal of the current applications, it is therefore also considered that additional change of use applications are needed at the site, plus the consideration of such proposals upon the Listed Building on site. We trust the above will be taken into account by Officers when considering the planning applications, and should Officers wish to discuss any aspects of the content with the Parish Council, they would be willing to do so.

ly,

Henny Handley BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI
Principal Planner

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Enc.



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