

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF URCHFONTS PARISH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 09 March 2016 at 6:30pm in the Conference Room of Urchfont Village Hall.

Present: Lead of Planning Cllr: Holt, UPC Chair Cllr: Mottram, Cllrs: Baker, Day, Donald, Gibb, Hill, Mitchell, Stephens, Thomas & Planning Administrator Sandra Johnston.

Also present: 5e) Applicant; 5g) 2 representatives from Princeton Homes (Urchfont) Ltd; also Parish Clerk B Lunn; Wiltshire Cllr. Philip Whitehead & 28 members of the public.

Cllr: Mottram welcomed all present and opened the Planning meeting;

1. Apologies for absence received: None

2. Declarations of Interest: 5b) Cllr.Holt: Pecuniary interest. 5f) Cllr.Holt: Non-pecuniary conflict of interest. 5f) Cllr.Mottram: Non-pecuniary conflict of interest. 5f) Cllr.Stephens: Pecuniary interest. 5g) Cllr.Holt: Non-pecuniary conflict of interest. 5g) Cllr.Thomas: Pecuniary conflict of interest.

3. Minutes of a meeting held on 10 February 2016 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Day, Seconded by Cllr Hill; agreed unanimously.

4. Matters arising from those Minutes: None

5. Plans for discussion

Cllr: Mottram reminded Committee Members that they should consider planning applications within the context of the 6 criteria laid down in the current Planning Policy Document. **Namely:** Scale of development; Visual impact upon the surrounding area; Relationship to adjoining properties; Design - bulk, height and general appearance; Environmental /Highway impact; Car parking.

NB: The meeting was adjourned at the beginning of each Planning Application to enable members of the Public to express their views on that particular application.

5a) 16/00730/TCA – Works to trees in a Conservation Area to include Reduction of Leylandii Hedging by 50% in height; Crown reduction of Sycamore by 40%; Crown reduction of Sycamore by 30%; Crown reduction of Elm by 30%, all at 16 Manor Farmyard, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4BA for Mr Pirie.

*To date, no letters of objection to this application had been received by UPC and/or WC Planning Office.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

- Near neighbours contacted by Planning Administrator - No objections raised.
- Cllrs viewed the site independently and noted that hedging & trees were in need of management.

16/00730/TCA – Cllr: Holt proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Hill; motion passed unanimously.

5b) 16/01373/TCA - Works to trees in a Conservation Area to include; Felling of 1 Cherry Plum tree; Crown reduction of 3 Cherry trees by approx 30%; Reduction of 1 small Poplar tree by approx 30%; Felling of 7 Cypress trees, all at 'Moonacre' (formerly Swanborough), High Street, Urchfont Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4RP for Mrs Maria Kemp.

*To date, no letters of objection to this application had been received by UPC and/or WC Planning Office.

Site meeting held on 27/02/16 at which 4 Parish Cllrs., S Johnston and Mr & Mrs Kemp were present

The Planning Committee found as follows:

- No objections have been made by neighbours.
- Due to interference with overhead electricity cables, almost half of the original 'hedge' of Cypress trees had already been felled by the Electrical Company.
- All other trees were either elderly or in need of management.

16/01373/TCA – Cllr: Day proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Thomas; motion passed unanimously.

5c) 16/01845/TCA - Works to trees in a Conservation Area to include Reduction of 1 x Weeping Willow by 50%; Reduction of 1 x Holly Tree by 25% and Felling of 1 x Crab Apple; all at Rowan House, The Green, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4QU, for Mr & Mrs Mark Wood.

*To date, no letters of objection to this application had been received by UPC and/or WC Planning Office.

Site meeting held on 27/02/16 at which 4 Parish Cllrs., S Johnston and Mr & Mrs Wood were present.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

- No objections have been made by near neighbours.

- Willow had grown rapidly since previous crowning.
 - Crab Apple has untreatable Honey Fungus which, being infectious, could affect adjacent Cherry.
- 16/01845/TCA** – Cllr: Holt proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Hill; motion passed unanimously.

5d) 16/01402/FUL - Full Planning Application for erection of single storey Extension, at The Old Chapel, The Cartway, Wedhampton, Wilts., SN10 3QD, for Mr & Mr G Willis. (New application following a lapsed app')

*To date, no letters of objection to this application had been received by UPC and/or WC Planning Office.

A site meeting was held on 05/03/16 at which 7 Parish Cllrs & Mrs Willis were present.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

- No objections have been made by near neighbours.
- The size of the proposed extension is similar to that of a garage.
- An existing hedge will remain in place, resulting in the proposed extension being barely visible.

16/01402/FUL - Cllr: Donald proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Holt; motion passed unanimously.

5e) 16/01480/FUL - Full Planning Application for erection of a single storey Extension; Demolishing of existing Pool House & Garages and erection of new Pool House and Garage; all at 'The Glebe', Church Lane, Urchfont, Wilts., SN10 4QT, for Mr & Mrs P Bancroft.

(This application follows on from a previously approved application that was not built out)

*To date, no letters of objection to this application had been received by UPC and/or WC Planning Office.

A site meeting was held on 05/03/16 at which 8 Parish Cllrs & Mr Paul Bancroft were present.

The Planning Committee found as follows:

- No objections have been made by near neighbours.
- The side of the proposed extension may be visible from a first floor window in 'Greystones'.

16/01480/FUL - Cllr: Donald proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application: Seconded by Cllr Holt; motion passed unanimously.

5f) 16/01099/FUL – Full Planning Application for the Demolition of existing dwelling and Erection of Two three bedroom and Two four bedroom houses, with garages and associated works (re-submission of application 15/11645/FUL), all at 'The Beeches', Blackboard Lane, Urchfont, Devizes, Wilts., SN10 4RD, for Qdos Homes Ltd.

*To date, 8 letters of objection to this application had been received by UPC and/or WC Planning Office.

A site meeting was held on 05/03/16 at which 8 Parish Cllrs., Mr S Harbour & Mr P Newman (Qdos Ltd) were present.

** Having declared a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in this agenda item, Cllr Mottram, following guidelines issued by WC and UPC Clerk Bob Lunn, would take part in any discussion of this application but would not be voting.

Cllr Mottram then ceded the Chair to Cllr Donald:-

Councillor Donald:- He was aware that there has been a great deal of discussion within the village regarding this development and, therefore, was expecting many views to be raised that night.

Concerning the Beeches development, Cllr Donald wished to remind councillors that during Neighbourhood Plan consultations, this site was strongly supported by nearly 200 members of the public.

He also wished to make it clear that, rightly or wrongly, the Neighbourhood Plan never set out to be totally prescriptive about the types of development on each site. The Plan must be looked at as a whole.

*** Cllr. Donald then adjourned the planning meeting for public participation:

Statement given by Mr Richard Hawkins: Resident of Urchfont –

- Mr Hawkins wished to point out that Wiltshire SHLAA proposed 6 houses for this site, our Neighbourhood Plan proposed 5 and the current application submitted by Qdos Ltd now proposes 4.
- He felt that no notice has been taken of the village requirements for smaller 2/3 bedroom houses for younger families and the elderly and that the views of the local community, concerning house sizes, have been totally ignored.
- It is Mr Hawkins opinion that, if the developer had complied with the UWLNP (stating 5 houses), then the site would have required an 'affordable element' to comply with the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the N. Plan.

***Re Wiltshire Core Strategy requirements, W.Cllr Whitehead clarified that a net gain of 4 is allowable before any social/affordable housing is required. In the case of Peppercombe: 5 are being proposed, less 1 (original dwelling), therefore net gain of 4.

Mr Hawkins continued;

- This site could easily accommodate 1 large and 3 - 4 smaller houses which would be more in keeping with the local surroundings.

Mr Derek Milner: Resident of Urchfont –

It was evident from public consultation there was a need for smaller, less expensive houses for younger people to purchase but older people also required these. More 2/3 bed houses available to 'down-sizers' would free up larger homes. Current houses are being built with studies, offices, boot rooms etc., which pushes up their value. Local properties built in the last few years are all large 4+ bedroom homes. A prime example being that the majority of the houses built on Manor Farmyard were priced between 500K & 750K, which did not accommodate the average local resident looking to downsize.

Mr Peter Cook: resident of Urchfont –

The houses proposed in this application and at Peppercombe are not descriptive of the Neighbourhood Plan. They are not 2/3 bedroom properties, which a great many of the community showed a preference for. The developer has shown no consideration for the UWLNP with their 1st or 2nd application. We seem to have little control over what sized house a builder will build.

Statement given by Nicky Hammond: resident of Urchfont –

- Experience has shown that however many pertinent objections are raised by the local populace; these can be overruled by the Planning Dept, the Area Planning Committee and the Inspectorate. If we do not adhere to the principals outlined in our Neighbourhood Plan, all it will have achieved is to highlight to developers all available plots of land in Urchfont Parish.
- Little has been made of the overdevelopment of previous and current sites and the urbanising effect of erecting fences rather than hedging which is surely the more predominant form of boundary in Urchfont Village?
- Constant damage is being done to the infrastructure of the village: to our highways, pavements, verges and ditches by the increase in home deliveries and from building vehicles daily traversing our streets until each new development is completed.
- There are unquantifiable consequences of any building development, large or small, but if we are to protect our environment then surely awareness and foresight should be UPC's key focus?

Statement given by Linda Clow: Neighbour of The Beeches -

- Ms Clow has no objection to development of the Beeches site as long as it is proportionate; the site needs sorting out and the village needs housing – but it has to be the right sort of housing.
- She wished to raise the issue of principal. Sure everyone would agree those involved in the UWLNP had worked very hard & consulted widely to come up with a plan that has, generally, a high level of support.
- Therefore disappointing to read, in the Planning Statement prepared by Impact Planning Services, the following:
"3.26 The proposal accords with the emerging Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan (2015 – 2026) in a manner explained in detail above. However it should be noted that as the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is at an early stage of development it is therefore only accorded very little if any material weight. Despite this the proposal has, where possible, been designed to take into account relevant policies from the Neighbourhood Plan".
- By implying the Neighbourhood Plan has little relevance did, in her opinion, undermine it.
- The relevant statement about developments in the UWLNP is also instanced in the Planning Report:
"3.34 Policy H2 (Form of Housing Development) indicates the composition of the housing that is considered acceptable in terms of the emerging NP. Ten criterion are set out; "Policy H2 Form of housing development Support will be given to development proposals which: a) make efficient use of land b) show a predominance of 2 & 3 bedroomed houses and /or include small scale housing units for older people c) incorporate sustainable foul drainage, sewage and water disposal systems d) incorporate energy efficiency measures and use renewable energy resources where appropriate Ref: QHL/008/RG - The Beeches, Blackboard Lane, Urchfont, SN10 4RD Page | 11 e) meet the highest possible standards of construction, level 4 (in full), of the Code for Sustainable Homes f) protect existing hedges, trees and other natural features of the site g)

enhance existing green infrastructure h) protect and enhance the landscape settings of the villages i) have no adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents in the locality.”

- In Ms Clow's opinion, as it currently stands the proposed development does not meet those aspirations.
- She suggested to UPC Planning Committee that anything, other than refusing to support this application, now potentially undermines the N.Plan, risks it falling at the first hurdle and sets a very dangerous precedent for any others developing in the village who may feel they also can disregard the N.Plan.
- If UPC Planning Committee support their Neighbourhood Plan and the work that went into it and believe that the outcome is the right one for Urchfont village, then she, personally, would find it difficult to understand why any member of that Committee could support this proposed development.
- She would ask that the Planning request for The Beeches is rejected on the grounds that it does not meet the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Statement given by Mrs Kate Waters: Neighbour of The Beeches -

- Plots 2 & 3 will overlook childrens bedrooms, family room/kitchen & back garden of her house, Rosings.
- Mr & Mrs Waters have no problem with development of the site but the large homes proposed will be overwhelming in an area of bungalows, chalet bungalows and moderately sized family homes.
- They will be too expensive to buy for her age group, who want a family home, and for her parents' generation who would like a smaller home now their family had flown the nest.

Statement given by Mr Declan Lyttle: Neighbour of The Beeches

- Mr & Mrs Lyttle were disappointed there had been had no dialogue, of any kind, with the developer.
- Their objections to the initial (withdrawn) application were one of two such objections which are omitted from the new submission.
- Their specific objections to the proposal are based on:-
 1. Design, appearance and layout:- In summary, properties are too large with gardens that are too small.
 2. Loss of privacy and overlooking:- In summary, current scheme only works by impinging on the privacy of neighbouring properties.
 3. Highways safety:- Surprising that there are no Highways issues for the peak school dropping off and picking up periods? That very day Mr Lyttle had watched two lorries, both of which could only make their way down Blackboard Lane by driving into his hedge.

A presentation put together by Mr Steve Arnott (4 Manor Close) was then projected onto the hall screen. Producing 3D model sketches by using Sketch-Up Pro software, Mr Arnott had shown the overlooking and shadowing he believed would occur; should the proposed dwelling be built on plot no 3. (Mr Arnott stated that the developer's shadow analysis agreed with and therefore confirmed his own calculations).

****As Mr Arnott could not be present, the UPC Planning Administrator read out a summary of Mr Arnott's Objections to this planning application.**

In brief:

Planning application 16/1099/FUL conflicts with the Wiltshire Core Policy 57 for the following reasons:-

- 1.** The positioning of plot 3 house means it will cast a shadow onto properties in Manor Close, rear gardens and windows for a significant part of the day and remove the only sunlight available to the rear gardens in winter months. This will severely degrade the amenity and well being of the occupants.
- 2.** The dormer rear windows of plot 3 house look into 4 Manor Close rear garden, ground floor bedroom and summer house, resulting in a loss of privacy. Again, this degrades the well being of those residents.
- 3.** There is insufficient parking within the development which will result in overflow vehicles parking in Manor Close and Blackboard Lane.
- 4.** The proposed site entrance onto Manor Close is dangerous, being too close to the bend in the road. Vehicles regularly park along this part of the Close and vehicles, motorbikes and cyclists heading towards Blackboard Lane are subsequently forced to the wrong side of the road. It is unlikely that a vehicle emerging from the new development would be aware of possible convergence until it was too late for the oncoming traffic to take evasive action.

N.B. Mr Arnott's statement and 3D sketches can be viewed on WC Planning Website.

*****Councillor Donald closed public participation and re-opened the planning meeting:**

(There having been an earlier reference to the unwelcome appearance of the thatched dwelling on Plot 1, Manor Farmyard, Cllr Donald assured the floor that the Parish Council endeavour to ensure that building works comply fully with WC consents and conditions but can only do so much. In the case of the thatched house on plot 1, UPC had objected strongly, resulting in enforcement action being considered by WC).

16/01099/FUL - The Planning Committee debated as follows;

****Cllr Holt** (also a member of the UWLNP Steering Group) stated as follows:

*The UWLNP is now undergoing its final Consultation at Wiltshire Council. It is therefore further into the Plan process than was the Devizes Plan, when no lesser person than the Housing Minister relied upon it when he rejected his Planning Inspector's advice and refused consent for a site.

*The sites in our Plan have been the subject of the most detailed review which UPC has ever undertaken. This has included a Sustainability Appraisal, a 3 part Site Assessment Matrix and these sites have been voted on by a group of Parishioners which was 18 times larger than the Councillors gathered here tonight. I feel the UWLNP is seeking a predominance of smaller houses in total and not on each and every site individually. In my opinion, the proposed amount and type of dwellings on the Beeches site does provide 50% of 3 bed houses and also 1 Home for Life; being an adaptable dwelling.

- This site is the 2nd most popular site of 15 considered in the Plan.
- It is within both the current and proposed development boundary and not in the Conservation Area.
- Plots 2, 4 and 1 are 8.2, 8.2 & 8.7 metres tall. Plot 3 was originally going to be 7.7 metres but has now been reduced to just 6 metres which is the same height as its closest neighbours in Manor Close. The land level where Plot 3 will be sited is less than 1" higher than Manor Close. The windows have also been altered in the amended plans and the skylights will, I feel, give a view of the sky.
- Overlooking of gardens from windows is not a consideration for Wiltshire Council planners.
- Overlooking of houses from windows, as Councillors may remember from an application in Wedhampton, is calculated from a vista of 45 degrees in each direction and not 180 degrees from a window.
- In answer to a question, the 20m rule is for the distance between buildings and not between a new house and its neighbours garden. In any event the Case Officer has mentioned that it is not, in his opinion, a hard and fast rule.
- I believe the number of letters of Representation has halved since the Plans have been amended.
- Many people completing the Wiltshire SHLAA housing needs survey required affordable homes, of which Manor Farmyard (being a larger site) has 5. At that time, the Neighbourhood Plan was in its infancy and, having no weight with WC, the Planning Officers had no definitions to refer to.

Cllr Hill believed that now the Neighbourhood Plan had gone to WC to 'be made', it will hold considerable weight with WC Planning Dept. Having looked at and compared the 9 development sites and their Site Briefs identified within the NP, there appears to be very little room for maneuver open to the UPC Planning Committee to achieve the communities wish for a predominance of 2/3 bedroom houses. Most Site Briefs are very prescriptive and the only two that are unspecified are Wildmans Garage and The Beeches. It is therefore important to ensure that the Beeches site delivers the size and type of houses that reflects the NP Policies.

Cllr Hill believed the proposed development at The Beeches did not comply with Policy H1 of the UWLNP, in that it does not meet the site specification of the number of homes to be built as 5 and only 4 are proposed. Also does not meet Policy H2, as it does not provide a predominance of 2 & 3 bedroom houses or small scale housing units for older people. Reference style; Policy D1 requires that, in appropriate scale, layout and form, house design should reflect the rural locality and, in his opinion, these houses did not. He therefore proposed that UPC Planning Committee Object to this planning application.

Cllr Day concurred, adding that his fellow Cllrs should remember their brief (given at the top of every Agenda) to consider all planning applications within the context of the 6 criteria laid down in the current UPC Planning Policies & Procedures Document. Namely: *Scale of development; Visual impact upon the surrounding area; Relationship to adjoining properties; Design - bulk, height and general appearance; Environmental /Highway impact; Car parking.*

- The houses proposed at the Beeches are too large and too few. Being close to the School, smaller, more affordable houses for families were needed here.
 - WC's rule within the Core Strategy is flawed because, to avoid having to provide 'affordables', no developer will propose building more than 5 houses on smaller sites.
 - Cllr Day therefore agreed with Cllr Holt that UPC Planning Committee Object to this planning application.
- **Cllr Mitchell** opined it was unfortunate that this application and Peppercombe were being considered before the UWLNP had been 'signed off' and voiced a concern that, although the Beeches proposal did not meet the N.Plan criteria in amount or correct size of houses, development of the site did and should be supported.

*Objecting to this application might result in damaging the progress of the N.Plan.

*She did not dislike the style of the proposed houses and liked the possibility of the 'home for life' design of plot 4. She also felt the thatched house on plot 1 fitted into the street scene on Blackboard Lane.

**W. Councillor Philip Whitehead informed all present that UPC was debating the planning application, not the site and however the Planning Committee voted, it would not affect the progress of the UWLNP.

Cllr Baker would be surprised if 'affordable' housing was ever built in Urchfont because we live in a desirable area that commands high house prices. Something being affordable is all relative to its price versus income.

*When questioned by Cllr Day as to what is an 'affordable Home', Cllr Holt explained that they come in 2 forms; 1. Being shared equity homes where purchasers can buy a percentage of the house and may be able to increase this percentage as time goes by; or 2. They can rent at an affordable rent which Cllr Holt believes has recently been raised from about 65% to 80% of market rental levels.

Councillors deliberated as follows;

BD – The debate is always difficult when the planning committee does not fully embrace a planning application it is considering. Is there a proposal on the table? Do we Support with conditions or Object?

SH – If an Objection by UPC results in its Neighbourhood Plan being compromised, then developers watching & waiting 'in the wings' will be applying to build on sites that should have been protected by the UWLNP. If this developer is refused permission, another may take on the site and UPC will have no control over what is then built.

TH – Councillor Whitehead has already assured us that the UWL Neighbourhood Plan is now so far down the line that WC has to take its criteria into effect. Objecting to this particular application will surely not result in opening the proverbial door to random and uncontrollable development of our area. Our N.Plan states that this site has been agreed for development and the number of houses to be built but this planning application clearly does not meet the policies of the Plan.

GD – Therefore rejecting this application because the developed site would have too few houses built on it?

DM – UPC, UWLNP & public all agree this site should be developed but, the amount of dwellings proposed not supporting NP criteria, should the Planning Committee now 'Support subject to Conditions' or 'Object'?

RT – Agreed that plot 3 house is too close for well-being of neighbouring residents in Manor Close. Felt the planning committee should support the application but include any conditions that Cllrs may think advisable.

W.Cllr PW – Reiterated UPC were considering the application and not the site. He advised it was acceptable to 'Support with Conditions' when there were only minor amendments to take into consideration but there was a significant difference if a Parish Council were not happy with the size and shape of proposed builds.

DM – Referencing highway problems; only change will be 3 new houses sharing an access road onto Manor Close, as plot 1 residence would use the original driveway onto Blackboard Lane. Whether a property has 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms, on an average, most residences have only 2 cars.

SH – Parking requirements in the N.Plan conform to those of Planning Policy H4, which decrees 3 parking spaces for 3-4 bedroom houses.

*** Cllr Donald adjourned the planning meeting and resumed public participation:

Mr Richard Hawkins – Reiterated his belief that 2–3 bedroom homes, affordable to young families, would be in the minority as sites were developed. The Beeches is a prime example of how a 3 bedroom house can actually end up as being a quite large, 2 garaged, executive home which, as a starter home, is unaffordable to most people. The early points raised in Appendix A of the NP appeared to Mr Hawkins to argue the question of whether 2–3 bed homes might or might not be feasible or required.

Ms Linda Clow – Has a degree of concern that some members of the N.Plan steering group and UPC still do not seem to grasp what residents are trying to tell them about anomalies in the UWLNP. Issues such as amenities, overlooking & privacy are seemingly being 'pushed into the long grass' by developers and planners but these factors can greatly affect neighbours of sites chosen for development.

Mr Declan Lyttle - The reason that WC had so far received a lower number of objections on the current Beeches proposal, versus the previous application, was because of this UPC Planning Meeting being held on 09 March and the WC public consultation expiry date on the application not being until 17 March.

*Mr Lyttle had noted the comments in the resubmission on the changes to the plot 3 dwelling. However, he still has specific concerns that have not been addressed, regarding the thatched property on plot 1.

*In response to a comment over the high prices of the smaller properties on Manor Farmyard development, Mr Lyttle pointed out that new property premiums are surprisingly large but will revert to the mean in the long term.

***Councillor Donald closed public participation and re-opened the planning meeting:

Cllr: Holt stated that, as planning applications came forward, over the time period of development of the UWLNP's 9 designated sites (summary shown on the current site grid, tabled at the end of Appendix A – site briefs) the size of houses would obviously change. The number and size of houses on each development would be monitored, thus giving UPC the ability to deliver by 2026 its N.Plan target of 37 houses with a predominance of 2-3 bedroom homes. There will be 18 x 2-3 bedroom houses, 13 x over 3 bedroom and x 6 houses, size currently unspecified.

16/01099/FUL :-

Councillor Hill proposed that the Planning Committee of Urchfont Parish Council object to this application on the following grounds;

(The Policy references detailed below are those Policies contained within the Urchfont, Wedhampton and Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan (UWLNP) which has recently been approved by Urchfont Parish Council and sent to Wiltshire Council.)

- Policy H1 Housing Site Allocation:- The proposed development only provides 4 houses and not 5 as specified within this Policy.
- Policy H2 Form of Housing Development:- Having regard to the type and size of houses expected to be delivered throughout the area covered by the UWLNP and as specified within policy H2, the proposed development does not provide an overall predominance of 2 & 3 bedroom houses, or small scale housing units for older people.
- Policy D1 Design – Section 2 (a):- The proposed development does not show a design of appropriate scale, layout and form which reflects local distinctiveness as required by this policy.

Proposal Seconded by Councillor Gibb: the vote was as follows – 3 votes in favour of the proposal; 3 against; motion carried by casting vote of the Chair (Cllr: Donald).

Urchfont Parish Council **OBJECT** to this application

5g) 16/01152/FUL - Full Planning Application for the Demolition of existing dwelling and Erection of five new dwellings and associated domestic garages and access improvements, all at 'Peppercombe', Peppercombe Lane, Urchfont Wilts., SN10 4QR for Mr A Turner, Princeton Homes (Urchfont) Ltd. A site meeting was held on 05/03/16 at which 8 Parish Cllrs & Mr A Turner (Princeton Homes) were present.

** Councillor Mottram reassumed the Chair:

Cllr Thomas requested permission to retire from that evening's Planning Meeting and left the hall.

Cllr Holt declared a Non-pecuniary Conflict of interest. He would be joining in debate but would not vote.

**Point of Order – UPC Parish Clerk, Bob Lunn, informed the floor that, Royston Thomas being a Parish Councillor, all remaining members of the Planning Committee would declare a Non-pecuniary Interest in this planning application. This Conflict of Interest did not create a bias and all Councillors were free to debate and vote on the application.

*** Cllr. Mottram adjourned the planning meeting for public participation:

Statement given by Mrs Emma Chapman:- Resident of Urchfont and Director of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. *Representation made in the capacity of Director of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has 37 Nature Reserves across Wiltshire and one of those Reserves is Peppercombe Wood in Urchfont. This reserve is fully open and free for Urchfont residents and the general public to access and enjoy the wonderfully rich flora, fauna and wildlife, allowing them to be connected with nature on a daily basis. 'A Daily Dose of Nature'.
- The proposed development is in close proximity to Peppercombe Wood.
- The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust are concerned that during the development phase there will be an indirect negative impact on Peppercombe Wood relating to noise, dust and general disturbance. It is also noted that, with the increase in the number of houses proposed, there will be a longer term increase in footfall through the Reserve, bringing greater pressure to the existing pathway running through Peppercombe Wood.
- The Trust appreciates that the developers have stated they would be happy to talk to the Trust before construction starts but the Trust would like the following conditions to mitigate the effects of the development already noted above:-

1. Enhance the existing pathway which runs through the Wood.
 2. Pot of funds for future upkeep and repairs and renewals to the path
 3. Request that Wiltshire Council place these conditions on the developer as mitigation to the Trust if the development is supported.
- Wiltshire Wildlife Trust would like the developer to meet with the Trust at the Reserve to discuss this further if the planning proposal is supported.

Statement given by Mr Paul Bancroft: Neighbour of Peppercombe –

Whilst Mr Bancroft and his wife completely understand the need for more homes to be constructed in Urchfont, they are not convinced of the environmental suitability and appropriate scale of the proposed Peppercombe housing estate and, at all public meetings, have objected to this site being included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- The village development area has only recently been extended to include this particular salient, which not only adjoins and includes a slice of the conservation area but also constitutes a significant bulging encroachment bordering towards an area of ancient woodland; this harbouring considerable natural habitat for fauna and flora. This woodland also provides a unique area of public access to observe and enjoy nature.
- The preliminary ecological assessment of August 2015 states that this building development could impact detrimentally on Peppercombe Copse, which is designated as a Local Wildlife Site.
- To the W, adjacently lies Peppercombe Wood, managed by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, to the N a stream tributary of the Bristol Avon and to the E an equestrian grass paddock.
- Mr Bancroft opined that the proposed development would inevitably invite the presence of domestic animals, unfavourably affecting the habitat and survivability of birds & wild animals in the locality.
- A 'housing estate' of such significant height, bulk, scale & population, as proposed, encroaching on what is a cherished, valued and publicly accessible broadleaf woodland, does not sit well with him.
- The scale of the proposed building development appears to be 5 large houses plus attached or enclosed-accessed garages, with offices above, which effectively makes a total of 10 two-storey buildings on this site.
- From what Mr Bancroft had understood from the points raised throughout the meeting, this goes against much of the basic thrust of the UWLNP.
- The development has the potential to attract regular vehicular movement of 10+ resident vehicles, including any domestic caravans/ trailers and all delivery vehicles. Of necessity, these vehicles would utilize the approach road from Back Street that constricts to one lane down a part of its length.
- Accordingly, the additional traffic and congestion on Peppercombe Lane would be unwelcome, particularly as it serves a popularly used Village Hall as well as other existing residential areas.
- Mr Bancroft noted from the plans that provision is made for permanent fencing between properties and temporary Herras perimeter fencing during construction to protect tree roots. However, there appears to be no screening or fence delineation along the Eastern side of the site, along the line of the public right of way that abuts Plots 1 and 2. If this were the case, it would be unacceptable if future garden and other waste were deposited from those plots onto the footpath and its margins.
- We therefore request that a condition of any planning approval should include the construction and maintenance of a suitable barrier fence down the east side of the site, possibly a 2 metre high boarded fence.

Statement from Mr Richard Hawkins: Near neighbour in Peppercombe Close –

- Agreed with all comments made by Mr Bancroft and reiterated the site is in an important part of the village bordering woodlands and a nature reserve.
- The Wiltshire SHLAA designated 3 houses for this site, the neighbourhood plan 4 and this planning application now proposes 5 large houses with 4 (potentially 5) bedrooms.
- No notice appears to have been taken of the village requirements for smaller 2/3 bedroom houses for younger families and the elderly.
- The proposed houses are totally out of character with the widely spaced and varied size properties in the near locality.
- The access, particularly from Peppercombe Close at the junction, is extremely dangerous. The new access is not visible without edging out into the road. If permission is granted access arrangements need to be carefully considered.

Mrs C Jones - Peppercombe Close –

Mrs Jones concerned about adding another road to this already dangerous junction. Already congestion at the

junction of Peppercombe Lane, Peppercombe Close and Church Lane. Village Hall is in continual use with access/egress also onto the junction. Large & small Waterworks vehicles, driving to & from the sewage works, have right of way here.

Statement given by Mr Paul Melhuish: Resident of Urchfont –

- Mr Melhuish expressed his concerns regarding the specific Site Brief for Peppercombe and its impact on this planning application. On approximately 23 Nov 2015, a draft of the UWLNP was circulated to Urchfont Parish for a final 7 week consultation period. The Site Brief for Peppercombe specified a capacity for 4 homes & a desired development of 2/3 bedroom houses.
- Mr Melhuish believed that no objections/comments had been received from members of the public contesting this requirement, or requesting any changes. However, following the final acceptance by the public of this draft, the version of the Neighbourhood Plan subsequently submitted to WC for consultation appeared to have been amended, in that the Site Brief for Peppercombe now contained the wording '4 x over 3 bedrooms': i.e. houses with 4 or more bedrooms.
- Mr Melhuish queried why the Plan had been altered after the Community had had a last opportunity to comment?
***Cllr Mottram (Chairman of Urchfont PC and also a member of UWLNP Steering Group) suspended public participation to confirm that he had, after the 7 week consultation period, altered the wording of Peppercombe site brief to bring it into line with detail available during the initial public presentations.
** Cllr Mottram resumed public participation:
Mr Melhuish continued;
- He opined that the local community endorsement of the previous version of the UWLNP appeared to have been ignored. He felt that, notwithstanding whether house sizes were illustrated in the early stages of the UWLNP drafting process, the fact remained the Community had democratically endorsed a Neighbourhood Plan which called for 2/3 bedroom houses on the Peppercombe Site, whereas WC were now in receipt of a copy of the Plan which specifies houses with more than 3 bedrooms.
- Once this application is in its final stage of consideration by WC Planning Office, should the Case Officer refer to the copy of the UWLNP that WC currently holds, surely WC would be assessing and deciding upon this application using incorrect information?
- Mr Melhuish believes the Urchfont Parish Council is elected to represent the Community and, should it support this application for 5 x 4 bedroom houses on the Peppercombe Site, it could be jeopardising the credibility of a Neighbourhood Plan that UPC owned, had supported and partially funded.
***Councillor Mottram closed public participation and re-opened the planning meeting:

16/01152/FUL – The Planning Committee debated as follows;

- DM- Although this site was one of the most popular when development areas were being considered for the UWLNP, the access road restricts the number of houses that can be built there.
- SH – Site is within proposed development boundary in N. Plan. Only a small part of Peppercombe land is in the Conservation Area. To date only 2 letters of representation have been received by W. Council.
- GD- Q: Should the Committee's view on this application be independent of the Neighbourhood Plan?
- TH- A: UPC Planning Committee are honour bound to apply the policies of the N.Plan. Appendix A – Site Brief states that this site should have 4 x 3+ bedroom houses built. Four new homes with 4/3 beds are proposed, plus a replacement build of the original Peppercombe dwelling. These facts give UPC less room to manoeuvre.

W.Cllr Philip Whitehead stated that any net gain for a N.Plan is in relation to affordable houses. If a NP says a particular site is looking for 4 houses and it ends up with 5, there is a lassitude that will be deemed in line with the Neighbourhood Plan.

David Way, Senior Planning Officer for WC, had assured members of the NP Steering Group that the Parish Council would not be penalised if, by 2016, the final total of new builds in the Parish had not hit 37 but stood at 34, 35 or 36.

- NM- Listened to points raised by WWF and public with regard to wildlife being affected but is inevitable that building works will take place on this site. WWF must liaise with the developer on the issues raised.
- BD- Impressed by amount of garden at the back of each proposed property. Once houses were built, he did not feel that wildlife would suffer unduly on a day to day basis. Through development period maybe.
- GD- Has no objection to site as was in the NP but homogeneity of the proposed houses was a disappointment. Could have wished for a variance of houses to dispel look of a mini estate.

- BD- Surprised by statement from SH that, until May 2019, homeowners have the right to build an extension which covers half of the area of land around their original house.
- SH- Therefore, smaller 2-3 bedroom houses being built on a large site such as Peppercombe could result in their being massively extended with no control from UPC or WC. Personally regret there are not more houses and a wider choice but access road restricts the number of houses that can be built.
- TH- Could UPC put a minor amendment regarding screening in their return to WC?
- TH- UPC would be in a quandary as to how to object to this application due to the details outlined in the Site Brief. Peppercombe is a large self-contained site but its limited vehicle access limits the number of houses that could be built.
- PB- Impressed by all that is proposed to protect the bank but concerned as to lack of adequate fencing between the gardens and the footpath.
- DM- If UPC support this application, a condition regarding provision of proper fencing can be included. If we object, it cannot.

16/01152/FUL - Cllr: Baker proposed that UPC Planning Committee **Support** this application, subject to suitable screening being installed on the Eastern side of the site and that WC Highways Dept. review the priorities of the existing junction: Seconded by Cllr Donald; motion passed with 6 votes in favour and 1 abstention.

** By request, Cllr. Mottram adjourned the planning meeting for public participation:

Nick Mann: Director – Princeton Homes Ltd.

The proposed Plans provide a generous turning circle within the site, as requested by WC, expressly to accommodate refuse lorries and delivery vehicles. Also, Princeton Homes proposes to request Highways for an amendment to the Plans; a minor alteration on sight lines at the entrance/egress of the development. The developers also plan to enforce and enlarge the hedge line along the Eastern boundary, next to the public footpath, with mixed hedging. Herras fencing shown is only temporary; a better solution may be stock fencing. Residents of the development will not want open access on to the footpath.

Howard Waters: Architect – Princeton Homes Ltd.

Should the application be approved, WC would set a condition that all boundary & landscape issues must be addressed. WC would also give a condition regarding undue disturbance to local wildlife from noise, dust etc.

***Councillor Mottram closed public participation and re-opened the planning meeting:

6. Decisions received from Wiltshire Council since 05 February 2016

6a) **16/01386/DDD** – Emergency application on 09/02/16 to remove a storm damaged Silver Birch at 'Green View', The Green, Urchfont, Devizes Wilts., SN10 4QU for Mr A Lloyd.

DD (Dead & Dying) Decision Letter issued by Case Officer David Wyatt on 11/02/2016.

7. Matters for Report

Urchfont, Wedhampton & Lydeaway Neighbourhood Plan –

GD- Q: Was there a discrepancy between the draft of the N.Plan circulated and that shown on the slides at the Public Presentations late 2014 / early 2015. Also, what happened to the document circulated for public consultation and what was the nature of the comments returned by the public? Were these comments taken into account, as the public seem to believe they were not?

DM- A: The final draft of the UWLNP was different, as it changed with reference to the alterations suggested in public comment. Also, what was shown at the 3 public meetings, where 180 people were present, was correct.

TH- The details contained within the Site Briefs have changed. In the case of Peppercombe it went from '4 x 4 & 4+ bedroom houses' in the early public presentations, to 'housing – 2/3 bedroom homes' during the 6 week community consultation period and then to '4 x over 3 bedroom houses' in the final version approved and sent to WC.

PB- Q: Where is the UWLNP now?

SH- A: The Neighbourhood Plan is now under consultation by Wiltshire Council. If the public so wish, they can still send comment to WC Senior Planning Officer, David Way, at david.way@wiltshire.gov.uk before 30 March 2016.

There being no other business, the Planning Meeting closed at 8:50 pm.

The proposed date of the next Planning Meeting is **Wednesday 13 April 2016** at **7:00 pm** in Urchfont Village Hall: at item A on the Full Council agenda.

Planning Administrator Sandra Johnston – 01380 848774 – 07808 124721 – sandra-j@virgin.net

NB Hard copies of all Planning Applications & Plans are with the Planning Administrator and may be inspected, by arrangement, at any time. Planning Applications and their documents should also be visible on www.urchfont-pc.gov.uk or go to www.wiltshire.gov.uk and click on 'Planning Applications' – then 'Planning applications online', then 'Search by planning application number'; type application number into the box, click 'Search' and when the Planning Application Search comes up in blue, click on the underlined case number and the webpage for this planning application should open.

Signed

Date