

Present: David Cornish (chair) Graham Jukes Roland Cundy  
Andrew Pearce Allan Gibson Pauline Grainger

**APOLOGIES**

R Marshallsay

**AGENDA**

To discuss publication of WBC LPU, specifically the inclusion of Rooks Nest Farm /24 Barkham Ride as a proposed development site for 270 homes.

**DISCUSSION**

The discussion had three threads

1. How the WBC LPU affected the FNDP in respect of
  - a) the Rooks nest Farm /24 Barkham Ride site
  - b) a reduction in number of green spaces previously agreed with WBC
2. How to communicate the teams thoughts to the Parish residents
3. A two page spread in Wokingham Today announcing the detail of the WBC LPU

1. AG started the discussion as he had attended the first of the consultation evening at St Crispin's school last night; he had spoken to Lawrence Heath who lead the Barkham NDP; he had picked up an article in Wokingham Today which was factually incorrect.

The WBC event had no formal presentations; it was more the opportunity to speak to individual representatives of WBC. He spoke to:

- SOLVE - Save Our Loddon Valley Environment – who are campaigning on behalf of the proposed development of Hall Farm
- James McCabe - he mentioned specifically the proposed development of Rook's Nest Farm; the article in Wokingham Today and the reduction in number of the local green spaces in our plan which in discussions he had agreed to in return for the FNDP including sites for approx. 200 homes in our revised plan. JM told him he had known about the Rook's Nest Farm site for about a year and had mentioned it in discussions with the FNDP team although he agreed he had not put a number to it. AG told him if they had been more transparent about this it would have enabled us to communicate with the residents in some way in the plan which would have been helpful
- Judy Kelly - re transport repercussions. AG wondered if she understood the impact of this sizeable development (together with the proposed 70 homes at 31-33 Barkham Ride ) on this "country" lane. As the area is surrounded by green spaces there is no alternative for traffic other than via Barkham Ride. She said they worked on the statistic that in rush-hour 0.58 cars per house moved and this equated to 200 vehicles. This would need to be part of any planning process.

RC commented that in his experience WBC always reduced traffic movements to suit their case.

- David Allen – re communications. AG advised that having this proposed development crop up during our Reg 14 consultation was not at all helpful, and that, together with the inaccurate reporting in Wokingham Today (ie the site is in Finchampstead when it is actually in Barkham) will distort people's perception of the FNDP. AG wanted to know what he would do to help. DA agreed to contact the local newspaper and put the facts straight.; he said this was a junior journalist who had got it wrong and not done their research properly.

PLG stated this was incorrect as the WBC LPU itself stated this site was in Finchampstead - Reference page 43 WBC LPU, point 6.15 Table 4 clearly says Rooks Nest Farm and 24 Barkham Ride are in Finchampstead.

- Ben Davis – re Green Spaces. AG pointed out they had included only 8 of the 14 green spaces the FNDP team had put forward and in the preparation of the FNDP "topic paper" these had been verbally agreed by the

WBC members we had had discussions with. AG advised that the standard of criteria for the WBC LPU was more onerous than that of the FNDP but as our revised topic paper was more robust it should provide us with the required evidence. BD agreed that if there was an evidenced based reason for inclusion WBC would be amenable to change.

GJ pointed out that he had looked carefully at the LPU over the weekend and he believed WBC were adhering very strictly to a conservative interpretation of “their” rules and there was scope to challenge when compared with national rules.

Green spaces excluded:

\*Sand Martins/ land opposite

Ridges

Allotments

Moor Green lakes

\*Area within Gorse re-development

\*DC felt these areas were omitted as they are currently the subject of planning applications and GJ agreed this would be the case.

GJ shared a map of the proposed Rook’s Nest Farm development area in relation to the Aborfield Garrison development and Finchampstead and it showed a complete urban sprawl joining Aborfield to Barkham and Finchampstead. This was contrary to WBC objectives policy as it was effectively an enhanced urbanization of a green borough. The FNDP was adding small developments close to settlements whereas this is creating an SDL

DC said the focus of the meeting was to find ways of safeguarding the FNDP which had served us well to date and any individual campaigning had to be kept well away from the FNDP. He also said most residents would be unaware of the exact parish boundary and would assume the site is in Finchampstead but we should not act as an “apology” group. He also felt it was important we did not imply because the site was in Barkham it doesn’t affect our parish because clearly it does. We have to get the message across that it was not included in our plan solely because it is not in the “zone” of the FNDP. AG said it was vitally important that the FNDP group did not become a “campaign” group. Communication to the residents of the parish was a priority.

**2/3.** The SG group all agreed communication was vital and at speed.

All felt the PMG should be kept fully informed. JA had already picked up the article in the paper and AG has spoken to him.

An article should go on the FNDP webpage today about Rook’s Nest Farm - DC agreed to draft and circulate

A letter should go to WBC/Wokingham Today on parish location of Rook’s nest Farm – ie Barkham not Finchampstead. AG agreed to draft and circulate

#### Other general comments:

AP: Look at Barkham NDP in respect of proposed site and contact Pam Stubbs Barkham Parish Council Chairman

DC: The FNDP included a housing number of approx. 200 in their revised plan, following agreement with WBC after lengthy discussions, and to now have 470 foisted on us is morally unacceptable. It doesn’t meet our objectives and we are entitled to express dismay. He has reached out to C Dexter (Barkham Parish) and S Weeks (Finchampstead Parish) for thoughts and comments. Also he understands Simon Weeks is trying to engage with Barkham councillors and links are being made at various other levels.

RC: We were too open and honest with WBC, trusted in them and have been let down. No different from other dealings with them over the last 20 years.

AG: Moral arguments won’t get us anywhere and we have to be careful and concentrate on evidence. The project has always been evidence based and should continue to be so. Discussion must take place with Barkham and the

most powerful opposition to the site is the impact of the number of dwellings on the road. In the light of the proposed Rook's Farm development he wonders if the FNDP group should re-consider supporting proposed development at 31-33 Barkham Ride and feels this should be discussed at the next PMG meeting. He also feels we should challenge the Borough councillors over when they knew about the site and why they didn't share.

Meeting closed 10.30am

**Dates of next meetings:** 30<sup>th</sup> November 4.00pm (with PMG)  
14<sup>th</sup> December 9.30am

Signed as a true record of the meeting: .....

Date:.....

**Actions**

- 1 DC prepare article for FNDP website
- 2 AG prepare letter for WBC/ newspaper
- 3 Discuss 31-33 Barkham Ride at next PMG meeting