

Planning & Highways

Well what a strange year. The first 4 P&H meetings, at the beginning of lockdown last year, were included as part of the full council meetings as we settled into a different way of working.

As part of the policy of making our town even more attractive we offered a bursary of £150 towards house improvement.

We have also installed more benches and plant stands in the Market Square that have proved to be very popular.

We have objected to the proposal to build 95 houses on the old Rogers Concrete site as it is designated employment land and we are reluctant to lose any more of it to residential use. Our Neighbourhood Plan is about trying to preserve jobs within the town to prevent it becoming a dormitory town.

We have objected to the building of another 125 houses on the land to the left of the farm track to Steeds Farm. The original application was for houses on both sides of the track and to include allotments, a playing field, a shop and a pub. The developers have also asked to be charged a very reduced S106 payment and to reduce the number of affordable housing.

The District Council also turned down this application and the developers are now appealing this decision. I was hoping to have the result of this appeal but the application has been delayed. Thank you to our mayor Councillor Mike Wise and our District Councillor David Grant for fighting Faringdon's corner on this.

We have recently ratified our policy on naming new streets. The policy is to name them after people on the War Memorial unless there are special circumstances. This doesn't mean we can't honour other people as we have properties that we can name. For instance, we already have the Mike Ilott Suite and the June Rennie Room.

When Stickley Court was built we lost one side of our Welcome walls on Park Road. The builders have misplaced it somewhere but are obligated to reinstall it. As there is no suitable place to rebuild it on that side of the road we are considering putting welcome signs, fences or gates on those roads into our town that currently don't have them. The other one has recently been taken down and is to be re-sited closer to the roundabout.

At the same time we are looking to put a Cycle Path along Park Road as part of the County Councils Active Travel Scheme.

It has long been a discussion amongst the residents of this town that we have a number of empty commercial properties around the area of the Market Square. The toy shop has applied for change of use to a Greek restaurant, Deacons to a wine bar, Portwell Angel a bistro and cellar bar, Budgens residential flats, coffee shop and a small retail outlet. The Volunteer Inn has permission for flats with part of the ground floor retained as commercial.

Together with OCC we are surveying the town for a 20mph restriction. This is an ongoing project.

FTC are currently investigating a Solar Street Scheme. This is where several neighbours can get together to install solar panels and reduce the outlay by installing them all at the same time.

We have objected to a plan for 14 houses on the old Tectronics site on Lechlade Road. Not because we object to the houses, but the plans are for a gated development and we feel that this will cause problems on a busy junction particularly when the bin lorries need to gain entrance, Thames Water have insufficient capacity for foul water, weak sustainable development and lack of reference to our Neighbourhood Plan.

The new development on Sandhill has now started. A part of this is a new school which is sorely needed. Whilst we are glad that this long-awaited development has now started, we have some reservations. The estate is another cul-de-sac development which is against our Neighbourhood Plan and will cause severe problems at school times but also the developers are installing gas boilers in the school which will be obsolete in the near future and will incur the expense of retrofitting a more eco-friendly system. This does not comply with the climate emergency ethos that Faringdon is trying to adhere to.

Later this year it is proposed that we will have Civil Parking Enforcement. Most of the UK already has this and this will bring us in line with the rest of the country. Currently, parking outside of the car parks should be enforced by the police, but they don't have the time nor the manpower to do this. We have major problems with parking on the streets radiating out from the Market Square, specifically Church St, Marlborough St, London St, Gloucester St and Coxwell St. Whilst the developers of the new estates aver that they are within walking distance of this area, realistically, if you have children, bags, shopping etc. you are more likely to hop in the car. We have insufficient spaces in our car parks so many of these cars will be parked on our streets. Civil Enforcement will displace a lot of resident's cars especially those with no other place to go. We will rid ourselves of one problem only to incur another.

Coming up soon:

Town Centre Parking
Steeds Farm Planning Appeal.