

Planning and Environment Committee Report

To BATHFORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

16 April 2007

This year we have considered and commented on 33 sets of planning applications. In the great majority of cases we supported those applications. Recently the Planning Officers at B&NES appear to have given noticeably greater emphasis to the protection of the Green Belt and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In 5 cases this year where we had no objection to plans, the applications were refused on the grounds of being unacceptable in, or visually detrimental to, the Green Belt and AONB. Although these decisions may be difficult for the applicants, we are fortunate that the village character of Bathford is so well protected by planning policy.

Changing economic patterns have brought new uses for the countryside around the Parish. Portions of woodland along Warleigh Lane, and fields on the Shockerwick side of the Box Road valley are now in private hands. We have had to think about what new paraphernalia is appropriate in those settings, for the care of forestry and horses. Along the Box Road the former pig farm and fruit farm are looking for new uses for the land.

There has been no new-build housing in the Parish this year. Somer Housing withdrew their application for 3 houses in Mountain Wood, and this has further delayed plans for the refurbishment of the garage area. Applications and an appeal for an interesting modern house between 2 listed buildings at the bottom of the High Street have not yet been successful in persuading either the Parish Council or B&NES of its desirability.

So far Bathford has remained relatively free of telecommunications masts. The mast in the old railway sidings at Shockerwick (just over the Wiltshire border) was successful on appeal and is in the process of being built. T-Mobile are determined to find a site in the Parish, and are in pre-application consultation with B&NES over the suitability of using a pylon in the Crown Field, where a suitable location for the equipment cabinets would be difficult due to flooding. In the climate of government support for mobile phone companies to provide coverage, the search for a suitable site is likely to persist.

In the wider setting, an A36/A46 link road remains a possibility after 2011 in the Joint Local Transport Plan, but there have been no further developments this year. The Park and Ride car park at the Bath Rugby Club training site in Lambridge was approved in May 2005, but has remained in limbo as it is subject to 2 planning conditions which have not yet been approved (Flood Compensation Works – twice considered and rejected, and the relocation of Bath Rugby - not yet considered).

The application for the alternative Park and Ride site on Charmy Down proposed by Batheaston Parish Council was withdrawn in October 2006 after an embargo by the Highways Authority. An improved Planning Application is in preparation. Through a co-opted member of the Planning Committee we continue to liaise with Batheaston and Bathampton on this initiative on a regular basis.

Jan Hooker, Chair