

PLANNING REPORT FROM CLLR JACKY JEFFREYS MAY 2021

This strange year has meant many residents looking to make improvements in their homes and gardens because they have been forced to spend so much time there and indeed, many will continue to do so now that more home working seems to be the order of the day for the future. Therefore, we have had many individual planning applications over the past year, mainly single storey extensions, some two storey ones, mostly at rear of homes, but a few affecting the frontage of properties. Generally speaking, provided neighbours are not significantly affected, the Town Council raises no objections, but where the street scene is significantly impacted, we do comment on the applications.

A worrying trend is the increase in requests to fell to ground level many mature trees. Much of Woburn Sands is within our Conservation Area and a key feature of that status is the wooded nature of the settlement. If you look at the view as you approach Woburn Sands from the north on the Newport Road, you will see a scene dominated by trees, not dwellings. Of course, some trees require remedial treatment because of disease and we always ask the tree officer from Milton Keynes to look at "tree" applications and are generally guided by them. Sadly, builders and developers, eg of the Asplands Close block of flats, do not always adhere exactly to Milton Keynes instructions to protect the tree root zones, and mature trees are then threatened and may die.

Of course, the major aspects of planning, as the Mayor has already written in his report, has been dealing with the 3000 houses proposed under SEMK and more recently the planned expansion of our railway as part of EWR. Both of these, as you are hopefully all fully aware, have serious impacts upon Woburn Sands, and the coming year will be vital in how these pan out. In the meantime, this council will work hard to protect the character and environment of Woburn Sands to the best of our ability and crucially with the support of our residents. Your responses to SEMK and EWR are vital.