

## **PLANNING REPORT 2020**

**Cllr. Jeffreys**

The continued slow down in the housing market has meant many people are looking to make alterations and extensions to their existing properties. As a consequence, each month the Town Council looks on average at and comments on three or four planning applications. To many of these, we raise no objection, but some require amendments to make them acceptable and a few need an outright objection. To give examples: there have been several applications this year for loft extensions and single storey rear extension to properties in The Leys. The long terrace of cottages in The Leys have very long gardens and these alterations to the rear have no impact on the street scene and we do not raise any objection. On the other hand, there have been a couple of applications in Newport Road to demolish an existing building and replace it with two sizeable new properties. Not only does this impact on the traffic levels in Newport Road, but it also affects properties either side and to the rear. In these cases the Town Council has sought amendments to make them more acceptable, or in one case objected altogether. The Town Council's comments are taken into consideration by Milton Keynes Council but it is the latter which has the final say, not us.

We have commented on a number of applications for change of use in the High Street/Town centre of Woburn Sands, and of change of opening hours applications. These have all been to do with restaurant facilities and we would like to correct the impression given in some social media sources about our comments. Our view is that empty premises in the High Street/Town Centre are far worse than agreeing to a new restaurant facility, so we have not objected to such applications. What we have tried to do is to limit the opening hours two or three evenings a week so that the residents living in flats above or houses in the very near vicinity are not disturbed every evening by noise from people leaving restaurants, particularly where alcohol has also been served. You will be aware that there have been several instances of totally unacceptable behaviour in the High Street due to over indulgence in alcohol consumption and to this end we have now installed a very good CCTV system. Whilst the restaurants are sadly all closed at this time, the new system did pick up a couple of incidents of theft and aggressive behaviour at Tesco Express and the police are looking into these.

You will have noticed that work has begun on a couple of sites locally which we have been closely involved in: the erection of 13 flats off Asplands Close instead of the large bungalows previously planned. The flats occupy less land than the bungalows, allow the retention of a lot of the surrounding trees, and cause less upset to the badger setts than the bungalows would have done. Set in the middle of the site on the lowest piece of land, their height should not be a dominant feature, and certainly not more than huge chalet bungalows spread all over the site. A footpath will link the site and hence Asplands Medical Centre to the junction of the High Street and Station Road.

Work has also started on clearing the land formerly Frosts Landscape Construction business at Wain Close and we await a detailed application. We had previously objected strongly at the planning enquiry along with Wavendon Parish Council in whose parish this site lies. A detailed application should follow shortly. We await, yet again, the Inspector's decision on the 201 properties by Wavendon Properties, also mainly in Wavendon parish, and occupying land from

Deethe Farm through to just beyond the Woburn Sands Emporium garden centre on Newport Road. Cllrs Jacky Jeffreys and David Hopkins spoke again at the inquiry against this application. We are also awaiting a decision on the outline application for a 95-bed nursing home on the same site as Woburn Sands Emporium and although we accept the increasing need for such facilities, this is just too large a development for the site.

As always with planning applications, our guiding principle is to endeavour to maintain the character, viability and vitality of our local community as a small town in the rural outskirts of Milton Keynes, in keeping with the planning statements set out in our Neighbourhood Plan.