

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting of North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on Thursday 9th November 2023 at 7:30pm in the Turner Hall, Church Road, North Leigh

Councillors Present: Andy Clements (Chair), Councillors Kevin Swann (KS), Carol Frost (CF), Julie Minch (JM), Fran Jeffes (FJ) and Sarah Veasey (SV) and County Councillor Liam Walker (County Councillor)

In attendance: Allison Leigh, Clerk, PCSO Helen Murray

119/23. Apologies for absence: Councillors Susie Cusick (SC), Robert Gunn (RG), Malcolm Shead (MS) and District Councillor Harry St John

120/23. Declarations of interest: None

121/23. Minutes of the following meetings: This agenda item was moved to later in the meeting.

122/23. Public Forum: The Chairman read out the rules of engagement for public participation from the NLPC's Standing Orders.

17 members of the public were in attendance to raise objections to a land parcel that has been put forward under the draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan (WOLP 2041), on land west of Common Lane, for 88 new houses. Points made included the following:

- The parish has had significant recent development, nearly a 40% increase in housing.
- Local infrastructure and amenities are already stretched, e.g. sewerage, drainage, clean water, sewage treatment capacity, parking, etc.
- The village is beginning to merge with New Yatt and starting to grow towards Witney. With each housing development the character of the village becomes less rural and more suburban.
- Access into the site is narrow – there will be traffic issues.
- The traffic out of the proposed access road will create a dangerous staggered junction with Windmill Road.
- There is concern that developers are tending not to finish what they've started, i.e. the state of the children's play area on the Bellway site and the dead trees on the same site.
- The Chairman noted that the Parish Council has started the process of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and encouraged people to join the NP Committee as well as help in other areas. There is a meeting on Thursday 16th November at Memorial Hall, Youth Centre, 6pm.

SV noted that this proposed land parcel put forward is part of an early stage of the Local Plan. Sites are firstly put forward, then the sites are narrowed down depending on the individual merits of each site and the overall need for housing. The shortlisted sites are then allocated at a later stage. In their initial response, NLPC will comment that there has been a disproportionate increase in housing in the village. SV noted the Parish Council's comments will be on the parish website once submitted. SV also noted that residents and the Parish Council need to address each site put forward on its own merits.

SV noted that the first step is for NLPC to write to West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) regarding the 8 options put forward under WOLP 2041. The next step will be for NLPC to comment in the New Year on the specific sites in the village that have been put forward and then in the Spring the residents will have the opportunity to comment once a short list of sites has been allocated.

It was noted that the map shown on the District Council's website doesn't at this stage include all of the new sites put forward.

123/23: PCSO Report:

The PCSO reported the following:

- She indicated she is happy for her email address and phone number to be sent to members of the public
- She noted the easiest way is to report crime on website.
- There have been some issues at Masons Grove the police are aware of.
- She is aware of the issue of parking outside of the school/shop. She tries to come out at school time when she can and will be doing some work with the school with regards to awareness.
- The issue of parking by the Gospel Hall was raised as well.

CF noted that people with mobility scooters and wheelchairs are having issues with people parking on pavement. Helen noted she has leaflets that she can put on and is happy to engage with anyone parking dangerously. With regards to ticketing, there would have to be an illegal obstruction.

Members of public noted congregating individuals/substance abuse on Cuckamus Green.

Playgrounds:

- Adventure Playground: FJ noted that there have been a few issues mentioned at the Adventure Playground. JM reported that there is new equipment that might help to divert some of this behaviour, but that a visit by the PCSO will be useful.
- Children's Playground: JM reported there has been some broken glass.

The PCSO asked people to keep her in touch of trends. The PCSO will provide crime analysis to the PC.

124/23. Reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor:

WODC

The District Councillor sent a report. See Attachment 1.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

The County Councillor reported the following:

- Estelle Manor has changed road signs prior to obtaining permission. There are still objections to some of the signs. This will go to a Cabinet member.
- The County Council has an upcoming meeting on the missing link to the cycle path on the A4095.
- OCC is pushing for link road which is part of the condition for the 1250 homes in Witney. There is a petition on this. The County Councillor will send this to the Clerk to put on the website.
- OCC will be using money to reduce single bus fares further in the run up to Christmas to promote bus travel

125/23. Action items and Clerk's Report:

The Council reviewed the action items for councillors and Clerk's Report:

- The Staffing Committee will arrange a meeting.
- KS agreed to act as NLPC's liaison with North Leigh Youth Project.
- The deadline for content for the newsletter is due to KS by 30th November.

126/23: Finance:

- **Budget 24/25:** The Council will review the budget and provide any comments to the Clerk by 23rd November. This will be on the December agenda.

- **Finance report:**

Payments authorised:

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
30/10/2023	Paper	Appleton Community Shop	9.10
30/10/2023	Council mobile phone	Lebara	6.95
30/10/2023	Lloyds monthly fee	Lloyds Bank	3.00
30/10/2023	Pension contribution	NEST	54.71
30/10/2023	Loan payment	PWLB	2,310.00
09/11/2023	Tree Survey	Boward Tree Surgery Ltd	720.00
09/11/2023	SLCC membership	Society of Local Council Clerks	68.40
09/11/2023	OALC Training	OALC	72.00
09/11/2023	OALC Training	OALC	66.00
09/11/2023	Clerk mileage and home allowance	Allison Leigh	62.00
09/11/2023	Parking	Allison Leigh	8.20
09/11/2023	Web hosting and WordPress updates	Dark White Digital	30.00
30/11/2023	Clerk salary	Allison Leigh	1,450.91
09/11/2023	.gov.uk training	Dark White Digital	26.25
09/11/2023	Neighbourhood Plan Consultant	rCOH Ltd	660.00
09/11/2023	Neighbourhood Plan Consultant	rCOH Ltd	120.00
09/11/2023	Cemetery bin management	Grundon	64.39
09/11/2023	Adventure Playground refurbishment	Proludic Ltd	5,950.76
09/11/2023	Speed Signs	Morelock Signs Ltd	10,373.84
Total			22,056.51

There were no receipts since the last meeting.

- **Training:** The Council resolved to approve the training courses suggested. See Attachment 2.
- **Internal Controls report:** SV reported she had conducted a quarterly audit of the accounts. She was satisfied with the findings and signed the internal controls checklist.
- **Donations Policy:** The Council resolved to adopt the Donation/Grant policy and checklist. It was noted that FJ will provide the Gardening Society with these documents should they wish to pursue a request for funds.

127/23: Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – Application for Funding Support form

Locality: KS reported that the NP Committee is in the process of applying for grant from Locality. The NP Committee will provide the Clerk with a draft budget figure and a draft grant figure from Locality for the 24/25 budget.

128/23: Committees:

- The following reports were received from the Committees:
 - NP Committee: The NP Committee submitted a report. See Attachment 3.
- Staffing Committee: There was no report.
- Planning committee
 - For the responses to the planning applications and appeals made since the October meeting see Attachment 4.
 - For comments submitted on the North Witney Consortium consultation. see Attachment 5.

129/23: Planning Applications:

<u>Planning number</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Comments from NLPC</u>
23/02562/HHD	24 Common Road North Leigh	Erection of single storey rear extension together with decking area. (Retrospective)	NLPC has no comments on this planning application.
23/02785/S73	Eynsham Hall North Leigh	Variation of condition 5 of Listed Building Consent 20/01757/LBC to allow retrospective approval for a schedule of materials (including samples) used in the elevations of the development.	NLPC has no comments on this planning application.
23/02812/S73	Eynsham Hall North Leigh	Variation of condition 20 (to allow retrospective approval of full design details at an appropriate scale in respect of windows, full height glazing, sliding screens, terraces, balconies and external stairs external doors and chimneys/flues) and condition 22 (to allow retrospective approval of a sample panel and specification for the materials used in the construction of the external surfaces of that part of the	NLPC has no comments on this planning application.

		scheme) both in relation to planning permission 20/01756/FUL	
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Planning Decisions

<u>Planning number</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>WODC Decision</u>
23/02229/OUT	Land Parcel At Junction Of Boddington Lane And Church Road Boddington Lane North Leigh	Outline application (with all matters reserved) for a self-build detached dwelling with garage, residential curtilage and ground mounted solar panels	Permission refused
23/02180/HHD	32 Windmill Road North Leigh	Erection of a self-contained annexe	Permission granted
23/02122/S73	North Leigh Church Of England School Park Road North Leigh Witney Oxfordshire OX29 6SS	Variation of condition 3 of planning permission 23/00742/FUL to allow a further 5 year extension of temporary classroom.	Permission granted

- **West Oxfordshire Local Plan:** SV will write a comment based on the comments received during the public participation section of this meeting. SV noted that the views of the Parish put forward on the WOLP 2041 will need to be mirrored in due course in NLPC's Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Allocation of land:** It was noted that there will be consultation with the residents on how the Council responds to individual sites put forward once the list of sites in North Leigh has been announced. One of these sites is the land west of Common Road in North Leigh and another is a site proposed by Blenheim Estates in East End.

130/23: Adventure Playground

- The Council considered two quotes for the removal of skate park equipment and resolved to proceed with Broadleaf. The Council would like to ensure that the cost to make good the tarmac is no more than £300 for tarmac and that the timeframe of work is quite soon.
- The Council discussed next steps for the refurbishment of the Adventure Playground and asked the Clerk to follow up with WODC as to the status

of the lease. The Council asked the Clerk to investigate the ownership of the garages near the Adventure Playground.

131/23: Traffic:

- **Speed Indication Devices (SIDS):** The Council resolved to proceed with the order of 6 signs and 6 posts. These will be stored in KS's home. The Chairman noted that 6 sites have been determined. The Council will seek quotes for the installation of poles.
- **Speedwatch:** The Chairman reported the speedwatch sessions are working well in East End, but North Leigh is struggling for volunteers. There won't be any speedwatch sessions throughout the winter.

132/23: Tree Surveys: It was noted that the tree survey done and some remedial action has been recommended. The Clerk has received one quote, but will bring 2 more to the December meeting.

It was noted another survey may need to be done of the Churchyard.

133/23: Land near the Windmill: The Council asked the Clerk to contact the solicitor of the owner of the land near the Windmill regarding the putting together of the NP and working to allocate sites.

134/23: Bench: The Clerk reported she is in dialogue with 3 contractors about custom commemorative benches. The Clerk will put this on the January agenda.

135/23: Planters: The Clerk reported she has learned of a company which provides self-watering planters. These could be an option at entrances to the village. The Clerk will put this on the January agenda.

136/23: Cemetery Noticeboard: The Council considered 3 quotes for a new cemetery noticeboard and resolved to proceed with Greenbarnes. The Clerk will work with them and the Council as to the colour, backing and installation.

137/23: Parish Path Wardens: The Council resolved to advertise to new Parish Path Wardens in the next newsletter.

138/23: Correspondence:

- The Council acknowledged the correspondence since the last meeting.
 - The Council acknowledged the Oxfordshire County Council Lane Rental Scheme Proposal Consultation.
 - The Council acknowledged the Oxfordshire Council's Charter Survey.

121/23. Minutes of the following meetings: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 12th October 2023 were approved and signed with one minor edit.

139/23: Matters for report:

- JM asked the Clerk to speak to the artist who worked on the mural at the Children's Playground as it needs a touch up.
- SV asked for the Garden Society donation to be on the December agenda if the application is received.
- JM noted she had met with Proludic at the Children's Playground regarding the inspection report and it was noted that the playground is in order.

140/23: Confidential item: The Council resolved to exclude the public from agenda item 141/23.

141/23: Staff Salary: The Council resolved to accept, adopt and pay the NALC revised cost of living salary scale for the Clerk for 2023/2024 together with the amount backdated from April 2023.

The date and time of next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 14th December 2023 at 7.30pm, Turner Hall.

The meeting closed at 9:30pm.

Report from District Councillor Harry St John

The proposal to develop the land to the west of Common Road is NOT an official proposal being proposed by WODC - it has been put forward by the landowner or a connected party. It follows an invitation by WODC Local Plan team to landowners to put forward sites - no doubt this has been done by many landowners in or around almost every settlement in West Oxon! Over the next 18 months such sites will be sifted through by the planners and some may be chosen and included in the next iteration of the draft Local Plan.

There was another accident on the A4095 at Osney Hill Farm (car overturned - police attended)- probably caused by surface water running across the road there- I have reported it to FIXmy Street. Likewise a cyclist was injured after coming off his bike in the New Yatt Road as a result of poor road surface just beyond Masons Grove entrance and the speed bumps.

There still remains a question mark over whether Thames Water have actually adopted the sewer system off the Bellways sites - I am awaiting an official response from Thames Water who are checking facts again to be sure of latest position.

I have marked the many dead trees on Bellway's and a few on Bewley's sites - which are dead or beyond hope that need replacing this winter and am chasing both companies to comply with the planning conditions to establish healthy trees.

Attachment 2

North Leigh Parish Council **Training Courses 2023 2024**

<u>2023/2024</u>					
<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Provider</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cost</u>	
Allison Leigh	Property Law for Towns and Parish Councils	OALC	18/05/2023	40.00	
Sarah Veasey	Property Law for Towns and Parish Councils	OALC	18/05/2023	40.00	
Fran Jeffes	Roles and Responsibilities	OALC	05/06/2023	80.00	
Andy Clements	Chairmanship	OALC	22/06/2023	110.00	
Susie Cusick	Managing Employee Performance	OALC	18/09/2023	30.00	
Sarah Veasey	Making the planning system work for local councils	NALC	22/11/2023	32.68	
Sarah Veasey	Winning strategies for the funding game	NALC	15/12/2023	32.68	
Malcolm Shead	Roles and Responsibilities	OALC	03/10/2023	80.00	
Allison Leigh	SLCC	SLCC	01/10/2023	156.00	
Allison Leigh	Planning	OALC	13/11/2023	55.00	
Allison Leigh	Developong Effective Action Plans	OALC (note: AWEPC to pay for this)	23/02/2024	0.00	
Allison Leigh	Website accessibility	OALC	22/02/2024	60.00	
Allison Leigh	Managing Projects and Major Work Programmes	OALC (note: AWEPC to pay for this)	26/03/2023	0.00	
Susie Cusick	PLANNING - HOW LOCAL COUNCILS FIT INTO THE PLANNING SYSTEM, EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS	OALC	13/11/2023	55.00	
Allison Leigh	The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of social media in the local council sector	NALC	28/02/2024	30.00	
Total				801.36	
Budget				1000.00	
Difference				198.64	

Attachment 3

North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan Committee Update for Parish Council Meeting of 9th November 2023

Meetings

- Since the last Parish Council met, the North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (NLNP) Committee held an informal committee meeting on 23rd October.
- We have scheduled the next full meeting of the committee for 16th November.
- The committee meeting agendas and minutes are being posted on the North Leigh Parish Council website.

Membership

Robert Gunn, Steve Legg (Secretary), David Painter, Kevin Swann (Vice Chair),
Sherard Veasey (Chair), Judith Wardle.

The committee is anxious to increase its membership, and would particularly welcome new members having a variety of interests and expertise.

A Strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan

The committee met informally to review the comments delivered by Neil Homer of ONeill-Homer on 2nd October.

Neil's comments were reviewed in the light of the WODC consultation on the 2041 Local Plan and other recent local plans for development, including Rectory Homes (Common Road/A4095), Witney Northern Development Plan, the plan submitted in response to the 2041 call for sites off Common Road, and the development at 44 Common Road.

The committee also discussed other Neighbourhood Plans, including those at Appleton, East Hagbourne, Hailey and Deddington.

The committee also discussed the actions required to complete our application to Locality for funding to support the consultancy required.

Planning responses since the October meeting

Planning Applications

23/02382/HHD: Rosehill, Green Lane, North Leigh

Extension and alterations to rear and side including replacement roof to create additional ground and first floor accommodation

NLPC response:

Comment: OBJECTION

Within the last year the applicant has submitted no less than 4 applications for development at this site, 22/03319/HHD on 30th November 2022 and then 23/00609/FUL on 30th March 2023 and 23/00604/HHD on 4th April 2023 which confusingly were submitted in parallel. The latest submission that we are considering here is 23/02382/HHD on 19th September 2023.

All of these applications are very similar in design and have very similar features. The Parish Council is unable to determine from the latest plans shown any substantial difference in the proposal to the prior 3 proposals which have already been refused by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Therefore our comments that were submitted on the first three (refused) proposals remain and bear repeating here namely that the proposed new designs are of a size and scale that is much bigger than the existing dwelling and are totally out of proportion to the neighbouring houses and others on the same side of Green Lane and the proposed designs would have an impact on the light and views of the immediate neighbours and there are a large number of high level windows which will impact on the privacy of the neighbouring properties and possibly the privacy of properties on the opposite side of Green Lane.

Planning Appeals

APP/D3125/W/23/3315582: Fish Hill Farm, Wilcote Road, North Leigh

Conversion of existing barn on small holding, currently used to raise goats

NLPC response:

This is a lengthy comment but is necessary to reflect the strength of feeling with the parish of North Leigh to oppose this application at appeal due to the devastating impact that the development would have on the tranquility of the rural setting, the neighbouring residents, the church, Turner Hall and cemetery, New Yatt RDA, local wildlife and protected wetlands and local farms and their businesses. North Leigh Parish Council objected to this application 22/01153/FUL on 13th June 2023. It was “refused” by WODC who objected to the application because “the application site is situated in a rural location within the Wychwood Project Area. The proposed development would significantly harm the character of the area, in particular its tranquility, due to the levels of noise which would be generated in the locality. The

proposal is therefore contrary to West Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies OS2, EH2, and paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

Whilst none of these grounds for refusal has changed at all in the interim, a large number of residents of North Leigh have updated us on their concerns and given us new information which makes us even more concerned to object to this application at the appeal stage.

We understand that on 31st July 2023 the applicant was granted a home boarding license by WODC to keep up to 10 dogs in his home. We note that the applicant is already operating the businesses www.witneydoggrooming.co.uk and Four seasons Dog Grooming on Facebook which are already offering grooming, dog walking and a “top-notch home boarding service” at the Fish Hill Farm address. We question why WODC was willing to grant this license when it had found reasons to turn down the kennels for the reasons of noise ? Had the different departments of WODC “joined up the dots” on this issue ?

The Parish Council has been receiving complaints from residents that since the home boarding license was granted for 10 dogs in July, dogs at Fish Hill can be heard to be barking, whining and whimpering. Is it anticipated that this license for home boarding 10 dogs and the grooming and walking services will run in parallel with the outdoor kennels if approved ? The application is for 17 outside kennels which could house up to 3 dogs each. At peak occupancy this could lead to 51 dogs boarding in kennels and together with up to 10 home boarding dogs, and the grooming and walking services, there could be in excess of 60 dogs on site at one time. How much further disturbance would be caused from 60 or more dogs ? Individual dogs can bark at over 100 decibels and dog barks can be heard several miles away. This site has unique topography and in the valley noise echoes and is exaggerated so that residents report hearing clearly conversations being held 150 meters away such as when the “You Can Fitness” obstacle course is run on the site and these voices are not nearly as loud as barking dogs would be.

The Noise Impact Assessment undertaken by Peak Acoustics does not generate a high degree of confidence in its conclusions and admits as such saying that it is “predicting” the effect in the absence of guidance. It was an entirely desk based assessment using acoustic modelling software, based on data from South Holland District Council (Spalding and Kings Lynn are not similar terrain to North Leigh). It was also based on a study of 20 dogs and yet more than 60 are envisaged here.

All dog kennels are places of high volume noise. Even the applicant on their www.witneydoggrooming.co.uk website concedes that “traditional kennels can be a daunting and stressful place”. The fact that a noise protection plan is being imposed at all acknowledges that there is a noise problem with this application. The noise protection plan is unrealistic because this only addresses any dogs that are inside the kennels. It is also unrealistic to say that each dog will be walked separately

during the day. Up to 3 dogs from one kennel being exercised together for 30 minutes a day would take 8.5 hours a day at peak occupancy, not including the exercise of house boarded dogs or dogs using the walking service so it seems unrealistic. It is likely that there will be a lot of dogs outside the kennels using the exercise area at any time and they will be unfamiliar to each other causing more noise. There will be noise at feeding, drop off and collection times.

It is unrealistic and unenforceable to ensure that someone is on hand to watch a monitor and immediately silence any dog at any hour of the night or day. This takes time and wouldn't be possible at peak occupancy or when short staffed. It is also important to note that these dogs will be more excitable and noisier in this unfamiliar location and with other unfamiliar dogs. They are likely to react noisily to the local wildlife (fallow and roe deer, muntjac, foxes, badger and birds). They are in turn also likely to disturb the wildlife in the area including disruption to the adjacent protected wetlands that is a natural habitat for snipe, redshank, woodcock, barn owls, kestrel and many other protected species and have a negative impact on biodiversity.

Constant noise would impact on the flocks of sheep and horse livery and horse retirement businesses of neighbouring farms. There is also the potential risk of escaped dogs directly harming those animals. Approval of this application for kennels would be enhancing this smallholding's business to the detriment of the businesses of the other surrounding farms.

North Leigh is a quiet rural village situated within the Wychwood Project Area and can be defined as tranquil under the Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE). People have chosen to live here to enjoy the peace, it is clear that this application if approved would have a detrimental effect on local residents. Many residents are retired or work from home and therefore spend much of their time in their homes and gardens and this would be relentless background noise in the daytime. At night the whole area is exceptionally quiet to the point where the calls of owls can be heard clearly. Therefore any increment in noise from barking dogs would be very noticeable and would impact on the quality of residents' sleep, disturbed sleep in turn impacting on health and mental wellbeing. There are many neighbouring houses in the nearby Church Road with the nearest residence only 150 metres away from the existing barn and proposed exercise area. It would cause considerable harm to the residents to endure relentless barking at all hours of the day and night, when they sit in their gardens or have their windows open.

The proposed location is 500 metres from St. Mary's Church, North Leigh. A Grade I listed Norman church and churchyard where regular services are conducted. The Turner Hall nearby is frequently used for events. It would not be appropriate for these services or events to be conducted with a constant backdrop of noise disturbance and barking. There is also a cemetery adjacent to the Turner Hall which is necessarily a place of peace and contemplation and it would be deeply

disrespectful to families of the deceased to have the noise of constant barking as a backdrop.

New Yatt RDA have been situation on Wilcote Road opposite to Fish Hill Farm for the last 30 years. They have stabling and give riding lessons to local people with a physical or learning disability 5 days a week. This includes children with autism, including those from Springfield School. A quiet, calm environment is required for these children, for other riders and also for the horses. Barking dogs may “spook” the horses which could be very dangerous especially in an indoor arena as well as distressing for the riders. For this reason, riding lessons cease if there is a shoot at Wilcote and the yard is a no-fly zone by the RAF. Dog noise would be continuous and could not be worked around.

The increased traffic at this location is also a concern with many RDA volunteers walking or cycling to the site, there would be more congestion on the road and also the need for more parking if there are kennels as well as the existing dog grooming, day care and house boarding facilities.

Finally, the smell of the goats at the location has impacted local residents especially in warm weather and the smell of the dogs would no doubt do the same.

APP/D3125/W/23/3328367 (Original Application Number: 22/02740/FUL), Land North Of A4095 At E437664 N211817 North Leigh

Erection of a single storey dwelling with attached kennel, office and kitchen building along with construction of a kennel block all to be used in association with the existing dog training facility

NLPC response: North Leigh Parish Council has been invited to comment on this application at appeal but as noted in our original comment, this application is in the Parish of Hailey, although close to the boundary with the Parish of North Leigh. We are representing the concerns of the residents of North Leigh who make frequent use of the public footpath and the bridleway in this area. We note that there has been no mitigation to the reasons why the application was turned down by WODC and we object to this application at appeal.

It is clear from the many customers who have written in support of Mr Godfrey that he is a very experienced dog trainer with a longstanding successful dog training business and we are sympathetic to his wish to expand this valuable local business. We do not object to the training of dogs on the existing site. However we have some serious concerns about the construction of a one bedroom residential house and also 13 dog kennels being built at the proposed site as follows:

- This a greenfield site in open countryside and the application would establish in perpetuity a residential site in an area that is currently not residential. In the original refusal it is stated that “it has not been demonstrated....that there are no other locations where the use could operate without harming the character of the area and a Public Right of Way”. There is no special need to locate this application at this site

when there are other more suitable sites for this business/residential dwelling in the area, and moving would not unduly impact the customer base as the majority of them appear to come from outside Oxfordshire such is the excellent reputation of the applicant . This is sporadic and unsustainable development and harmful to the character of the area. It sets a dangerous precedent.

- The current Local Plan does not permit construction of residential buildings on greenfield sites and the WODC reason for refusal of the original application cited “the adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area” and said that the use of greenfield undeveloped land...”significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the provision of a single dwellinghouse to be used in association with the dog training facility”. There is nothing in the appeal to mitigate this original harm.

- The construction of 13 kennels on the site is proposed. It is not clear how many dogs are proposed to occupy each kennel. Dogs can bark at over 100 decibels and are more likely to do this in unfamiliar surroundings and also when close to other unfamiliar dogs or in a rural setting where there may be deer, foxes, badgers etc. This could impact on the residents of the ribbon development of houses and cul de sacs on the west side of Common Road. There may also be smells from the kennels. The prevailing wind is from the west and would increase the impact of noise and smells towards Common Road. There may also be light pollution in this area due to the security lighting from the facility. All of these things would impact on the residential amenity of the residents

- The proposed development will also have an adverse impact on the Public Right of Way. The unmetalled track which is not well lit and gets muddy in winter, leads from the A4095 to the facility, and is known as Occupation Lane. It is a recently restored public footpath and bridleway and used as a cycle path, it is well used and appreciated by local residents including those from North Leigh. With no passing places and the track having a narrow width, this additional traffic will compromise the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders using the track. The construction of kennels will lead to increased traffic including all the commercial and customer vehicles associated with a commercial enterprise and a residential dwelling along an extensive section of the track.

- In terms of parking, only 2 guest parking bays are envisaged in the plan so where would additional customers park ? It is not acceptable that they obstruct the track.

- The site is close to the Madley Brook Stream and the proposed soakaways and septic tank may lead to pollution draining into the stream and into the Windrush which is already badly polluted.

In conclusion, we do not see that any of the harms from the original proposal have been mitigated in any way and therefore we strongly object to this application again at appeal.

North Leigh Parish Council response to 1250 homes

This comment is submitted on behalf of the North Leigh Parish Council.

North Leigh Parish Council has reviewed this proposal. We note that the plans submitted at this stage are not very clear or legible and so it is difficult to do a detailed comparison of the new proposal submitted by the Blenheim-led consortium with the original proposal led by the original consortium. So at this stage we are making some general comments but will be giving a more detailed comment as more information becomes available.

We note that in this latest submission the West End Link Road, which was always an integral part of the original scheme, is being dropped for “private motorised modes”. This is a huge change to the previous plan, removing a key element such as this from an holistic plan undermines the integrity of the remainder of the plan. It is very unlikely that existing road junctions and layouts would cope with the diversion of existing traffic, caused by the imposition of this huge residential site, let alone with the additional pressure of 1 or 2 cars from each of the proposed new 1,250 homes (i.e. could be 2,500 additional cars) generated by the development. Whilst this development is designed with pedestrians and cyclists in mind, the occupants would still own and use vehicles to reach destinations outside of the development, such as people working in Oxford itself. Realistically there is a substantial proportion of the population (elderly, disabled, young families) where walking and cycling are not an option. At a WODC consultation for WOLP 2041 on 18th October 2023, a “straw poll” of councillors from various lowland parishes showed that only about 15% ever cycled in their local area at all. It is also not clear from proposals how this development would be serviced by public transport and notably is a considerable distance from any railway stations.

It appears that the New Yatt Road will be completely shut to traffic in both directions due to buildings being planned over a section of the road in the vicinity of the Kings School. The New Yatt Road is currently a key route between North Leigh/ surrounding villages and Witney and will force additional traffic from North Leigh, New Yatt, surrounding villages, the New Yatt Road and environs to use the A4095 to get to Witney which will add to traffic flow on the A4095. Conversely there is also the risk that the residents of the new 1,250 houses would somehow have access onto the New Yatt Road into North Leigh and therefore use it as a “rat run” to other destinations including a quick route onto the A4095 into Oxford in the morning and evening rush hour.

Given the potential impact of traffic flows on North Leigh, this proposal seems unworkable to us and we are opposed to it based on the current configuration. We also wonder why an exhibition/consultation was not held in North Leigh or New Yatt for residents to clarify and ask questions of the developers too ?