

Welcome to the regular Update on planning issues.

### **Covid-19**

In these difficult times the Neighbourhood Forum Committee has continued to hold meetings by Zoom. It's perhaps not ideal but seems to have worked OK so far.

The Government publishes figures for the number of Covid-19 cases in Hook Heath. The problem is that the definition of Hook Heath used is about three times as large as Hook Heath proper so it provides little guidance as to how we are actually doing. What we can see was that there was a low but constant level of cases until the fortnight in the middle of November when numbers increased significantly. They then reduced to where they had been before but have started rising again since the beginning of December.

Confusingly the Zoe app which generates data analysed by Kings College shows that (as I write this) numbers are falling in Woking as a whole and that the area has a similar incidence of virus cases to surrounding areas.

The link to the WBC webpage that links to the daily and bi-weekly data is

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus/alert-levels-and-local-outbreak-plan/figures-and-statistics/daily-data>

Information about the Zoe app is to be found here

<https://covid.joinzoe.com/>

but some information is only available in the app itself.

And of course the Government website is here

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Whatever is happening I hope all our readers and their families are managing to stay safe.

### **Hedges**

Having commented on hedges obstructing the footpath in the last Update, I see that a number of residents have cut their hedges back. However, there was a post on Facebook a few days ago from a resident with a blind

neighbour asking for a few more to be trimmed, particularly one at the top of Holly Bank Road.

This sort of issue can be reported directly to Surrey County Council here:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks-and-maintenance/report-a-highway-problem/tell-us-about-a-tree,-hedge,-grass-or-weed-issue>

### **Golf Course**

The Secretary of Woking Golf Club has written to say that he is grateful for the numbers of residents who stuck to the footpaths on the golf course during the latest lockdown. The course was in a delicate condition after some wet weather and your actions definitely had a beneficial effect.

### **Daffodils**

We have succeeded in securing Surrey County Council funding for planting some daffodils on two of the open spaces where Holly Bank Road joins Hook Heath Road. I just hope they come up!

### **Site Allocations**

On 18 September Woking Borough Council published a Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications to the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) - a series of changes to the DPD which the Inspector recommends in the interests of soundness. A public consultation on the Schedule of Main Modifications and accompanying documents began on Friday 18 September and finished on Monday 14 December.

Our residual concern was the land adjacent to Hoe Valley School (both north and south) along the Egley Road. This land will be removed from the green belt and allocated for a mixed use development to include residential (including Affordable Housing) and recreational/open space. The target is to build 118 houses.

In the DPD it states that the design, layout and landscaping of the residential development will be required to take into account the desirability of maintaining a sense of visual separation between Mayford and the rest of the urban area; the extent to which this is achieved will be assessed through the development management process.

Also it should inform a design and layout that sensitively handles site topography and incorporates new or improved open space for leisure and recreation, green infrastructure and appropriate landscaping which:

- i. Maintains the sense of visual separation between Mayford and the rest of the urban area, including through a wide landscape frontage along Egley Road and any other measures necessary to achieve this;
- ii. Effectively buffers the development from Egley Road, the railway lines, and from existing residential areas to the north and south of the site.

This provides less than optimum protection and the Mayford Village Society has been running a campaign to get the field north of the school retained in the green belt – which is what the Hook Heath Residents' Association had called for during the original consultation.

### **Woking Football Club**

With the failure of the developer (Goldev) to obtain planning permissions for the Woking Football Club “Cardinals Court” scheme and the companion “David Lloyd” development in Mayford, it will be interesting to see what happens to the area south of the Hoe Valley School.

The developer has intimated that an appeal may be lodged, the time limit for which expires at the end of December. Woking Football Club has confirmed that they will not support an appeal, so the prospect of an appeal by Goldev is diminished. As a consequence, the developer has approached the South Woking Action Group (SWAG) - who fiercely objected to the original development application - to discuss a modified scheme for housing on the football club site. As far as is known at the present time, the modified scheme will not include “high rise” flats. It is difficult to see how a modified scheme could meet the financial needs of Woking Football Club whose intention all along was to seek an adequate recurring income stream from the development. The football club does however have a “Plan B” involving American backers! We will have to wait and see how Plan B unfolds, but it is not thought to include housing development of the football ground!

As a separate but no less important issue, the Goldev planning applications prompted the publication of a report by a Council Task Group which scrutinised WBC procedures leading up to the applications. The Task Group have appointed an LGA qualified professional person independent of the Council to ‘investigate the processes and actions of the Council in respect of the Woking Football Club and Associated Developments and to make appropriate recommendations to the Council arising from its investigations and review’. The investigator's report is expected to be published in January 2021.

## **Government consultations on planning**

The Government has been consulting on two separate issues, one of which is changing the planning system to make it easier to get planning permission in some circumstances. The other is changing the way housing allocations are made. Both have run into trouble with Conservative MPs and the latter has now been abandoned.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects**

We have firmed up an estimate for renovating existing benches and installing two more. This will (we hope) go to the next Joint Committee meeting in March.

## **Commenting on a planning application**

We write comments on planning applications perhaps six times per year. If you decide to do so then it's likely that this will be a one-off event (unless all your neighbours are very busy with extensions). You can get some idea of how to go about it by reading objections to other proposals but it's often difficult to work out what's likely to be useful. Locality's Neighbourhood Planning Newsletter for October included an article giving guidance on how to go about it.

<https://locality.cmail20.com/t/d-l-ctloid-ydlkuttkhi-x/>

The article is aimed at Neighbourhood Forum committees but it's useful for anyone.

## **Hook Heath Community Facebook page**

Since the last Update, membership has risen from 351 members to 451 members. If you're already a Facebook member then you can search for 'Hook Heath Residents' and apply to join - or go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HookHeath/>

355 residents are now members of Nextdoor, different from Facebook in that it gives you access to neighbouring parts of Woking as well.

[https://nextdoor.co.uk/neighborhood\\_feed/](https://nextdoor.co.uk/neighborhood_feed/)

## **Local Planning Applications in the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Area**

Four applications reported in the last Update have been approved by the Council.

### **PLAN/2020/0062**

Erection of a single storey extension and conversion of existing garage. Install two front dormers at 1, Hurst Close.

### **PLAN/2020/0682**

Erection of a detached outbuilding to be used as a garden room at Little Dene, Mount Road.

### **PLAN/2020/0689**

Erection of a rear veranda at 3 Rafdene Copse, Hook Heath Avenue.

### **PLAN/2020/0729**

Erection of an oak detached garage at Hill House, Hook Heath Road.

One planning application listed in the last Update is still undecided.

### **PLAN/2020/0364**

Section 73 application to change the design of the new houses at what was Ridge End, Hook Hill Lane.

This application attracted twelve objections from residents complaining about the positions of the extra windows and doors.

One planning application has been submitted and approved since the last update.

### **PLAN/2020/0829**

Erection of a single storey rear extension at High Trees, Golf Club Road.

There are six new planning applications which are currently undecided.

### **PLAN/2020/0877**

Erection of two detached houses following demolition of the existing detached house and garaging on site at 1 Derrydown.

There are two points about this application. Firstly it does not include details of boundary treatment to establish privacy between the two houses. If passed, prior approval of hedges/walls/landscaping etc. would probably be one of the conditions.

The second is a philosophical point; one of the two houses has two bedrooms and two offices. With two bedrooms the house requires two parking spaces

which it has – and which will be more than adequate for the intended owners. However, it is possible that a subsequent owner, many years from now, would convert the two offices into bedrooms without planning permission or increasing the parking provision. The offices are not that large so on the face of it, it's unlikely. However, is that something the planners should take into account? Many councils have policies on parking spaces so I expect there's a precedent somewhere.

**PLAN/2020/0987**

Proposed ground and first floor rear extension at The Orchard, Pond Road.

**PLAN/2020/1001**

Extension of the existing dropped kerb/vehicle crossover at Brackenbrae, Hook Heath Road.

**PLAN/2020/1029**

Erection of single storey rear extension with balcony over, rear roof extension and single storey side extension following demolition of existing conservatory at The Fairway, Fairway Close.

**PLAN/2020/1037**

Erection of first floor extensions and external alterations to existing bungalow to create a two storey dwelling, alterations to external materials and alterations to detached garage at Fairfield, Sun Hill.

Fairfield is on a plot just north of the fields separating Hook Heath from Mayford. As such it is in the Fisher Hill conservation area and green belt and also lies on the escarpment with two locally listed buildings as neighbours.

We have written to object on the basis that the modified house, though perfectly satisfactory in the right setting, is entirely inappropriate for where it is. The proposal fails to comply with policies BE1 and OS1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is the first time we have referred to OS1 (which is about views) in a letter of objection.

**PLAN/2020/1071**

Retrospective consent for demolition of chimney stack and replacement with rear steel flue. Erection of rear hardstanding at Fulford, Hook Hill Lane.

Technically, planning permission appears to be required for the hardstanding (patio) as its height has been (slightly) increased above 300mm. However, I don't understand why planning permission is required for the flue as it's less than a metre above the ridge line and (I thought) would normally be permitted development. No doubt the reason will become clear when the planning officer reports.

There are two new section 73 applications to vary conditions of already approved planning applications.

**PLAN/2020/0945**

Proposal to change the design of the new house to be built in the grounds of Little Ponds, Mount Road.

**PLAN/2020/1003**

Proposal to change the design of the two houses to be built behind Bernisdale and Oakwood, Hook Heath Road.

Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development

There were two applications for a Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development, both currently undecided.

**PLAN/2020/0809**

Certificate of Existing Lawful Development for the existing use of Links Cottage as a residential dwelling house in Golf Club Road.

Links Cottage is a separate building in the grounds of Links House and has been used as a house for years. This application appears to have been an attempt to get it recognised as an independent dwelling house, separate from Links House, as the application was accompanied by a plan showing a proposed curtilage. We wrote to object – not to the use of the cottage as a dwelling house - but to the attempt to use a CofELD as the means to achieve separation of a plot into two. The plan gave no indication as to how the cottage would be reached from the road or as to where the associated parking would be – or any of the other details normally required with a new house.

The application may lapse as Links House including the cottage is currently shown on Seymours' website as sold subject to contract.

**PLAN/2020/1125**

Certificate of Lawful Development for the erection of a first floor side extension to form annexe accommodation at Tree Tops, Mile Path.

This appears to be the use of a Certificate of Lawful Development to extend the life of an approved planning application which had been only partly started.

**Hook Heath Residents' Association Committee**

Can I remind you once again that the HHRA Committee has vacancies for anyone interested in helping us. If you would like to find out more then

please get in touch with any member of the Committee. The current members are happy to carry on for the time being but we're all getting older!

Many thanks for your interest and support and good wishes to all for a very happy Christmas

Sincerely,

Mike Cooke, Chairman

On behalf of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee