

Welcome to the regular Update.

Covid-19

I hope you are well. Cases of Covid-19 in Woking have dropped significantly since the last newsletter but have been hovering at about two/day for the last three weeks. As I write this, the Government website shows that there are now no cases in Woking in people over the age of 55, suggesting that the vaccination programme is proving effective.

Road Safety

Our Councillors have been asked to see what can be done to improve the safety of the junction between Pond Road and Hook Heath Road. In particular, visibility is poor when turning right from Pond Road into Hook Heath Road. The Councillors have met officials from SCC on site to review options and SCC will make some proposals.

I had thought that a mirror might be a good idea but apparently roadside mirrors are not allowed by the Department for Transport (DfT). Mirrors are classified as a road traffic sign and as they are not prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD), their use on the highway is subject to special authorisation by the DfT. Requests for special authorisation to enable the placement of a mirror on the highway are assessed by the DfT against stringent criteria, including collision history on the site and a speed limit above 30 mph.

SCC has made a proposal to paint double yellow lines on the west side of Hook Heath Road between the SEAT garage and Pine Road. This is to prevent parking on both sides of the road which can create a chicane and makes it difficult for lorries to get through. The disadvantages are that it will allow traffic to speed up, and will displace parking further down Hook Heath Road. More white lines ('H-bars') will be painted in front of drives between Pine Road and Cedar Road in an attempt to control the displaced parking.

Site Allocations

Woking Borough Council submitted all representations received on the main modifications to the Development Plan Document (DPD) to the Inspector on 12 March 2021. Redacted versions of the representations can be seen on the Woking 2027 website. Given that all green belt sites in Hook Heath are to be retained, we chose not to make a representation.

Government changes to the planning system

The Government commitment to change the planning system made it into the Queen's speech. We won't know how this will affect us until the legislation is finalised. It does however seem likely that there will be a lot of changes to be made in a short time.

Daffodils

We have had daffodil bulbs planted on the land at the junction of Pond Road, Holly Bank Road and Hook Heath Road. Some failed to come up, probably because of the number of people walking over them during the lockdown, but the others put on an attractive display. We've now had the area levelled and had grass seed sown. This was all paid for by SCC, courtesy of Cllr Ayesha Azad.



One of the four clumps of daffodils

Woking Football Club

The developer has submitted an appeal against the refusal to grant planning permission for a new football stadium and associated housing.

The Planning Inspectorate is holding an inquiry into the appeal which started on Monday 10 May 2021. The Inspector has planned a site visit for 24 May with a view to concluding the enquiry. More details can be found on the WBC website.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects

The funds for repairing and adding benches have been approved by Joint Committee and the Council's Engineering Department has started to prepare the project.

We have had a number of suggestions for other ways to spend our money.

One resident requested that litter/dog poo bins be put in more locations throughout the area. Since lockdown began she has been picking up litter on her daily walk. Most of the items have been beer cans, used face masks, dirty tissues, and Co-op and McDonald's packaging.

While being sympathetic to using CIL funds we have discussed the idea with local councillors and it is possible that the Council will pay for this. We thought that we could start with a bin close to the intersection of Cedar Road and Holly Bank Road. It will be interesting to see if it has much effect as I'm afraid a lot of litter comes from people who would throw it away even if standing next to a bin. Another good place for a bin would be opposite the shops on Wych Hill. Cllr Ashall thought it might be possible to organise a litter pick in Hook Heath as there's plenty to pick up.

A second resident asked whether the footpath that runs alongside the golf club car park to the railway footbridge could be made wheelchair and buggy accessible. At present the path often wears away to a hollow, and roots add to the uneven surface. This makes access to St John's impossible for a wheelchair user by this route. This does seem like a legitimate use of CIL funds; the first step is to try and find out who owns the footpath – if anyone - and we'll then develop a proposal.

There have also been comments about the possibility of having a footpath on Hook Heath Road west of the junction with Pond Road, and also on Hook Hill Lane. We looked at both these a few years ago when we created the Neighbourhood Plan and neither seemed practicable. The verges are in private ownership and the costs would in any case be prohibitive. A recent discussion with our local councillors confirmed this view.

Please continue to come up with suggestions for the use of CIL funds; the more detail you can provide the better the chance we can do something with the idea.

Hook Heath Community Facebook page

Since the last Update, membership has risen to over 570 members and continues to increase. 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/>

My personal view is that it's becoming an increasingly valuable way of keeping track of topical issues in Hook Heath, whereas Nextdoor has information about what's happening elsewhere in Woking.

Crime

There have been a couple of recent posts on Facebook about groups of youths deliberately throwing branches at passing cars. The incidents took place on the stretch of Hook Heath Road between Pond Road and Gorse Hill, and on both occasions the youths ran off across the golf course. Photographs were taken on both occasions and the police have been informed. There was a similar incident early in April.

Trees

As part of the application by Birchgrove for rebuilding Woodbank they promised £10,000 for planting mature trees. So far we have been unable to trace the money but will persevere; as far as we can make out no trees have been planted yet.

Local Planning Applications in the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Area

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

PLAN/2020/0877

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

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.

We wrote to object on the basis that the modified house, though perfectly satisfactory in the right setting, would be inappropriate for where it is. Also that the proposal fails to comply with policies BE1 and OS1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Our objections (and those of neighbours) were over-ruled; the planning officer thought that because the house could not be seen, its design would not be an issue in the conservation area, and also thought that the increase in height would not significantly affect the view up the escarpment.

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.

One planning application listed in the last Update remains 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. Although the applicant has submitted new plans these apparently fail to reflect the current state of the building and have attracted a further five objections.

Thirteen planning applications have been submitted and approved since the last update.

PLAN/2020/1038

Erection of a single storey rear extension and front porch extension at Danes Lodge, Pond Road.

PLAN/2021/0019

Erection of a four bedroom detached dwelling and detached car port following demolition of existing bungalow and garage at Belfairs, Pond Road.

PLAN/2021/0043

Erection of a detached garage at Willoughby Lodge, Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2021/0049

Demolition of potting sheds, boiler room, extension and chimney. Erection of ground floor rear extension, and insertion of roof lights at Grey Walls, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2021/0053

Erection of two storey side and rear extension following demolition of existing garage at Antibes, 14 Ridge Close.

PLAN/2021/0118

Erection of first floor side extension, single storey rear extension and partial garage conversion at 5 Fernhill Close.

PLAN/2021/0173

Part conversion of detached garage to habitable accommodation and other minor works at Hedge Cottage, Saunders Lane.

PLAN/2021/0178

Erection of a two storey rear extension and portico, garage extension and replacement gates at Windward, Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2021/0204

Erection of rear roof extension and front and side dormer windows to form second floor accommodation and enlargement of lightwell at Fernhill, Fernhill Lane.

PLAN/2021/0206

New front entrance gates and piers at Fernhill, Fernhill Lane.

PLAN/2021/0208

New metal gate to replace timber gate at Beechwood, Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2021/0256

Erection of a single storey rear extension and front porch extension at Danes Lodge, Pond Road.

PLAN/2021/0262

Replacement of garage roof and conversion to games room with exterior staircase at 4 High Gardens.

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

PLAN/2020/1116

Erection of a two bay oak framed garage at Collington, Hook Heath Road.

The planning officer thought that the size of the proposed garage in conjunction with its proximity to the front boundary and its siting in front of the main dwelling would have a detrimental impact on the street scene.

There are four new planning applications which are currently undecided.

PLAN/2021/0214

Erection of detached double garage, canopy porch and garage conversion at Dunsland, Hook Hill Lane.

PLAN/2021/0220

Erection of a two storey side and rear extension with single storey rear extension at Tanahkita, Ridge Close.

We wrote to enquire whether there would be adequate parking. In addition a neighbour has written to object to the size of the extension.

PLAN/2021/0320

Advertisement consent for non-illuminated freestanding sign at Woodbank, Holly Bank Road.

The HHRA wrote to object that the sign was too large for its position and thus failed to comply with policy DM18 of the development plan. The applicant has submitted a revised proposal with a sign half the size. There have been three objections to the new proposal.

PLAN/2021/0485

Erection of single storey rear extensions at Lanson House, Ridge Close.

Two new section 73 applications to vary conditions of already approved planning applications have been approved.

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.

Certificates of Proposed Lawful Development

At the time of the last update there were two undecided applications for a Certificate of Proposed Lawful Development.

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 remains undecided.

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.

The application was approved.

There have been three new applications for a Certificate of Lawful Development.

PLAN/2021/0102

A detached garage at 1 Penwood End.

The application was approved.

PLAN/2021/0357

Single storey rear extension at 10 Hook Hill Park.

PLAN/2021/0375

Part loft extension and conversion at Drummond House, Pine Road.

These last two are recent and remain undecided.

Many thanks for your interest and support
Sincerely,

Mike Cooke, Chairman
On behalf of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum Management
Committee