

Welcome to the regular Update.

Covid-19

I hope you are well. Compared to when we last issued an Update, cases of Covid-19 in Woking have risen by more than an order of magnitude. Fortunately, hospital admissions have not risen by so much. While we seem to have been helped by the vaccination programme, the numbers being vaccinated now have reduced and other European countries are catching up with the UK. In Surrey, with 75% of the 18+ population vaccinated (as of 1st September), Woking has one of the poorer performances, brought down by Sheerwater which has the lowest proportion of vaccinated adults in any area in Surrey.

Planning Application

Most planning applications only impact near neighbours and you can read about them (when interested) in the second part of this Update. Occasionally one is of more general interest and there has been one of these submitted recently.

PLAN/2021/0959 Prior approval for installation of a 15-metre-high telecoms monopole supporting 6 no. antennas, 4 no. equipment cabinets and development works ancillary thereto. On the grass verge, at the corner of Hook Heath Road / Pond Road. (n.b. This is on the grass by Overdale, not by Woodbank.)

There have been applications to install transmitters on the grass verges at this junction in the past. The most recent was **PLAN/2011/0710**, a mast to be shared between O2 and Vodafone which attracted 154 letters of objection and one in support. It was rejected because it was deemed that the mast by reason of its siting, scale and appearance would appear visually prominent, incongruous and add visual clutter, contrary to the policy in the Woking Borough Local Plan. Logic would dictate that the same would apply to this proposal.

If you have a view then please take this opportunity to make your opinion known. You can find details on the Council web-site at:
<https://www.woking.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/review-or-comment-application>

You can comment directly on the web-site using the 'comments' tab or you can send your views in an e-mail to: developmentmanagement@woking.gov.uk by 24 September 2021.

You can object on the grounds that

- it is contrary to Policy OS2 of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Plan which specifically designated the proposed site as a Local Green Space, and therefore 'particularly special to Hook Heath' and to be protected from development. Policy OS2 states that 'the use of Local Green Spaces for "street furniture" should be minimised'. The proposal would be contrary to this aspect of the policy.
- it is contrary to the ongoing endeavours of local residents to preserve and enhance such small green areas within Hook Heath through use of Community Infrastructure Levy funds and a grant approved by Joint Committee.
- it has an appearance which would be incongruent in the street scene due to the scale of the proposal. The cabinets and mast would create visual clutter in a central residential area. The mast would be highly visible to residents even between the mature trees of Hook Heath.
- it poses an additional hazard on a junction which is already deemed dangerous for road users and pedestrians as evidenced by the need for a recent inspection by a SCC highways engineer.

In addition

- This residential location at the heart of Hook Heath at the top of the escarpment is highly inappropriate for a mast of such height.
- It is located in the most densely populated part of Hook Heath as evidenced by a list of 88 residences on the neighbour notification list.
- WBC has previously rejected several similar proposals at this site.
- In the past, objectors have complained about radiation risks; see for example <https://rfinfo.co.uk/mast-objection/> .
- There is no evidence that the applicant has considered sharing a mast with another operator and no evidence that they have taken Woking's total mast requirement for themselves and other operators into account.

Or if you use '3' as your mobile phone network you may want to write in support.

Road Safety

Surrey County Council has painted double yellow lines on the west side of Hook Heath Road between the SEAT garage and Pine Road, and white lines ('H-bars') in front of drives between Pine Road and Cedar Road in an attempt to control the displaced parking.

Noise

A couple of residents have commented about the noise from garden equipment which they consider excessive. Unless you (or your gardeners) decide to change to battery operated equipment there is probably little that can be done but we would encourage residents to be considerate of their neighbours, and in any case to avoid using loud power equipment on Sundays.

It's around this time of the year that we usually comment on the need to cut back hedges so they don't obstruct pavements and to be considerate with bonfires. However, until the Council can get Amey to reinstate their green bin collection I don't expect there will be much hedge cutting, and where there is, there may be more bonfires.

Site Allocations

The Inspector has published his final report on the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) together with a list of main modifications to the Council's draft. As far as Hook Heath is concerned there are no changes.

Local to us, the main issue is the removal from the green belt of nursery land adjacent to Egley Road (north of the school). To compensate, the Inspector has recommended that the Council 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.'

I think we can expect arguments over the interpretation of this wording.

Government changes to the planning system

No official news about the changes but a suggestion that there will be no impact on the green belt and that consequently the impact on Woking will not be significant. We can only wait and see.

Woking Football Club

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

In May the Planning Inspectorate held an inquiry into the appeal and we are now waiting for the report.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects

The Council's Engineering Department has started the project to renovate and install benches but progress has been slow. We had a suggestion (that we accepted) that the bench outside the SEAT garage should be moved down Wych Hill next to the bus stop.

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

We remain hopeful that the Council will install more litter bins in Hook Heath without recourse to CIL funds. Cllr Ashall has organised a litter pick in Hook Heath and it will be interesting to see how much rubbish is picked up.

We have looked at the footpath that runs alongside the Golf Club car park to the railway footbridge to see if it 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. With the help of the Golf Club, we have now established that they are in fact the owner of the land (though it is outside their fence) and that they would be happy to see a proposal to improve it. If you have a view about this project, please let us know.

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. As of 31 July, the CIL pot stood at £50,780.44 less approximately £10,000 to be spent on current projects.

Hook Heath Community Facebook page

Membership has risen to 610 members. Just a reminder that 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/>

Trees

As part of the application by Birchgrove for rebuilding Woodbank they donated £10,000 for planting mature trees. The Council have the money and

we have been in discussion with the arboriculturalist regarding choice of species and suitable location.

Local Planning Applications in the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Area

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

PLAN/2020/0364

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

PLAN/2021/0220

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

PLAN/2021/0320

Advertisement consent for a 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 submitted a revised proposal with a sign half the size. There were three objections to the new proposal which was approved.

PLAN/2021/0485

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

One planning application listed in the last Update was rejected.

PLAN/2021/0214

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

The reason it was rejected was lack of car parking and the size and position of the garage.

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

PLAN/2021/0543

Erection of a two-storey front, side and rear extension and a single storey rear extension following removal of existing rear annex. Removal of existing front porch to be replaced with a new canopy and front door and insertion of additional door to front elevation. Alterations to rear fenestration at Danesfield, House Holly Bank Road.

PLAN/2021/0591

Existing garage conversion and erection of detached garage at Sandown House, Cedar Road.

PLAN/2021/0707

Roof alterations including raising the ridge height and insertion of 2no front dormers, 4no front rooflights and 5no rear rooflights at Eastwood, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2021/0762

Erection of two storey side extension with front dormer, detached garage and open (unsheltered) swimming pool at Saketha, Golf Club Road.

PLAN/2021/0779

Erection of 2no. dormer windows, open porch, and entrance gates at Haere Mai, Mile Path.

PLAN/2021/0787

Demolition of conservatory and erection of part two storey, part single storey rear extension (part retrospective) at 10, Hook Hill Park.

There are thirteen new planning applications which are currently undecided.

PLAN/2021/0629

Replacement of wall and pillars previously approved in mix of render and brick with concrete pillar caps with new double-brick wall and pillars in brick with moulded pillar caps. Dimensions and layout of pillars and wall to remain as previously approved at Honey Pots, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2021/0650

Erection of first floor side extension and single storey front extension, with associated internal works at Gainford, Hook Heath Road.

Modified plans were published in early September.

PLAN/2021/0660

Proposed part loft extension and loft conversion with Valley dormer extension to side roofs and new dormer window to side elevation at Drummond House, Pine Road.

Modified plans were published in early September.

PLAN/2021/0703

Erection of a first-floor side extension and alterations to rear fenestration at Minwood Cottage, Golf Club Road.

Modified plans were published in August.

PLAN/2021/0794

Roof extensions forming gable to the front and 2 x gables to the rear to facilitate the conversion of roof space to habitable accommodation, alterations to fenestration to facilitate the conversion of the existing garage to habitable accommodation and detached double garage at Cedarwood, Hook Heath Road.

PLAN/2021/0833

Erection of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension at Violet Haze, Blackbridge Road.

Objections by neighbour and the Neighbourhood Forum.

PLAN/2021/0834

Erection of first floor front and side extension, insertion of 1x rear rooflight at Minwood Cottage, Golf Club Road.

See also PLAN/2021/0703 above.

PLAN/2021/0865

Proposed removal of a front holly hedge and the replacement with a 1.2-metre-high brick wall at Belfairs, Pond Road.

Objections by neighbour and the Neighbourhood Forum.

PLAN/2021/0883

Change of use of the existing outbuilding ancillary to the dwelling from artist's studio to guest accommodation at Keighley Lodge, Pond Road.

PLAN/2021/0903

Erection of a rear extension to existing outbuilding at Saracens, Saunders Lane.

PLAN/2021/0934

Erection of part two storey, part single storey rear extension and single storey side extension at Robinia, 2 White Pillars, Holly Bank Road.

Three letters of objection from neighbours and one of support.

PLAN/2021/0998

Erection of a single storey rear extension, 3no rear dormers and insertion of 4No front and 1no side rooflights at Domus, The Drive.

plus, the proposal for a communications mast described on the front page of this Update.

Certificates of Proposed Lawful Development

The following application remains undecided and may have been allowed to lapse.

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.

Two applications for a Certificate of Lawful Development mentioned in the last update have been decided.

PLAN/2021/0357

Single storey rear extension at 10 Hook Hill Park.

The application was withdrawn.

PLAN/2021/0375

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

The application was rejected on the grounds that a full planning application was required.

One new application is undecided.

PLAN/2021/0935

Construction of an unenclosed swimming pool at Tatton, Hook Heath Road.

Many thanks for your interest and support

Sincerely,

Mike Cooke, Chairman

On behalf of the Hook Heath Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee