

## **Kidlington Parish Council Chair's report February 2022**

At the time of writing, the agenda and supporting papers have just appeared for the County Council (OCC) Cabinet meeting on 15 March which will reconsider Oxford United's (OUFC's) Stratfield Brake proposal. The recommendation is in much the same form as detailed in my report before last: to open negotiations, subject to certain conditions, not to decide on the proposal one way or the other.

The main reason why the proposal was deferred in January was to enable OCC to carry out an opinion survey on the issue. The results of this are included among the Cabinet agenda papers at [https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s59844/CA\\_MAR1522R15%20APPENDIX%201.pdf](https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s59844/CA_MAR1522R15%20APPENDIX%201.pdf). Here are some of the key findings.

A total of 3,740 survey responses were received (including 516 from outside Oxfordshire), of which 79% were OUFC supporters. Unsurprisingly, 80% of the total wanted OCC to start negotiations with OUFC, and 18% did not. More relevantly for our purposes, of the 818 local residents (from Kidlington and Gosford and Water Eaton) who responded, 58% were against, 38% in favour, and only 4% unsure; about 40% were OUFC supporters. On the other hand only 122 out of the overall total thought that a better solution would be to stay in the existing Kassam Stadium site.

Concerns expressed by respondents to the survey mirrored those that we have put forward: the impact on wildlife and the environment, the need to protect the Green Belt and the Kidlington gap, the need for sufficient transport infrastructure and issues of congestion and parking, the scale of development in the area as a result of the planned new housing. Only 108 respondents overall were in favour of removing the requirement to keep the Green barrier with Oxford, and only 33 of these were local residents.

If the Cabinet meeting on 15 March decides to go ahead and enter into negotiations, we will be meeting with OUFC shortly afterwards to discuss a timetable for OUFC and OCC to produce a set of concrete and specific proposals that address the concerns and issues we have put forward. When these proposals are received, and taking into account the reliability of any associated agreements, we will make a decision whether or not to support them. We have not yet decided what form of further public consultation or engagement we will carry out before the final decision is made.

I might add that the cover of the last KN gives a graphic and very accurate picture of the scale and location of the imminent new housing developments, but may be a little misleading on the Stratfield Brake proposal. As we understand it, the triangle of land opposite Stratfield Brake on the Eastern side of Frieze Way would remain in the Green Belt, though it would be used for playing fields. We will certainly oppose any Green Belt encroachment here, since it is a vital part of the remaining Kidlington green gap. This is not, of course, to minimize the potential impact of a stadium development on the Stratfield Brake side of the road.

DAVID ROBEY