

## **Kidlington Parish Council**

### **Chair's report: October 2023**

The Parish Council held an Extraordinary Meeting on 2 November to decide our responses on two major issues: Cherwell's 2040 Local Plan consultation, and the current plans put forward by Oxford United to close the Oxford to Kidlington Road for periods before and after matches after the new stadium is built on the Triangle site.

The current draft Local Plan is at the first stage of public consultation. It will now be revised and put forward again, and we will have another opportunity to object to it if we wish. The present version contains a great deal that is welcome, particularly about enhancing the Village centre and improving sustainable transport. But readers will no doubt all know about its most controversial part, the proposal to build 300 new houses on the Green Belt site North-East of the Moors.

We are in no doubt that there is strong opposition to this plan in the surrounding area. There are two good arguments in its favour: it would provide more affordable housing, for which there is an urgent need, and it could increase playing field provision. In the Council's view these arguments are significantly outweighed by other factors, the most important of which are: the further loss of Green Belt, after the drastic losses resulting from the 4,400 new dwellings to be built in and around Kidlington to meet Oxford's housing needs; and the significant increase in traffic congestion in a quiet residential area, since the only traffic entrance proposed for the site is near to the bottom of the Moors and the junction with the High Street.

We also contest the housing need figures that underlie the proposal. Cherwell and Oxford together have adopted inflated calculations of housing need well above those produced by the government's standard method of calculation, the method that, in contrast, the other three Oxfordshire District Councils have followed. They have also not taken into account the fact that the developers are proposing to exceed the 4,400 dwellings on the Oxford-need sites by at least 10%, thus substantially increasing the local supply of both market and affordable housing. The proposal is that 30% of the 300 Moors dwellings would be in the affordable category. But there are better ways to meet the urgent need for affordable housing than by building a large amount of unneeded market housing on a Green Belt site.

As for Oxford United's stadium plans, these currently envisage closing the Kidlington-Oxford Road to traffic for one hour before and up to two hours after matches: the exact details are not yet clear. The Parish Council has expressed grave concern at this proposal and will be taking it up with the Club and the County Council. The 4,400 plus new dwellings in Kidlington, Begbroke, Yarnton and Gosford & Water Eaton will increase the population immediately to the North of Oxford by 50%, from 20,000 to 30,000 approximately. There will be the added impact of the large Oxford North development as well. Congestion on the roads into Oxford from the North is getting worse and will become a great deal worse still. Closing the main route from Kidlington will create heavy knock-on congestion on the route via Peartree and make it extremely difficult for residents to get into Oxford on Saturdays and evening matchdays.

In agreeing in principle for the stadium plan to go forward, the County Council imposed a number of requirements that will need to be satisfied before the lease is finally signed. These include the requirement to provide pedestrian and cycle routes from Parkway Station to the stadium "without disrupting vehicle movements on the Oxford Road". We expect the County Council to stand firm by this requirement, and not allow plans to go forward that will disrupt traffic into Oxford as drastically as those currently proposed.

See the Parish Council website for links to all the documentation referred to above.

DAVID ROBEY