

Kidlington Parish Council Chair's report August 2021

Kidlington is surrounded by Green Belt, but as everyone knows this is about to change: how will it look after 4,400 new houses are built in our area? There will still be Green Belt between us and Oxford to the South, and between us and Begbroke and Yarnton to the West, but it will be much reduced. The rest of the Green Belt circle will remain unchanged, including the very beautiful fields to the East.

To the South-East, in Gosford and Water Eaton parish, there will be new building all along the North-South Bicester Road from the Sainsburys roundabout to the existing houses in Gosford. On its Southern side this development of 440 homes will be separated from Oxford by a triangle of Green belt with the base along the A34 and the apex at the Sainsburys roundabout; along its Eastern side, between Water Eaton Lane and the A34, the rest of the Green Belt will remain.

To the South-West will be the only new housing development in Kidlington proper, 120 houses at Stratfield Farm. This will be bordered on the South by the Green Belt playing fields at Stratfield Brake and the open land to the West of them. On the Western side of the Village, bounded by the canal, there will be a continuous Green Belt corridor between us and the massive developments of 1950 houses at Begbroke and 540 at Yarnton.

We may not like these new developments, therefore, but they certainly don't have the drastic consequences for us that they have for Begbroke and Yarnton. It is also worth underlining that Cherwell Council's delivery requirements include a number of other green provisions. There will be play areas, allotments, and a cemetery extension within the Bicester Road development, an enhanced area of woodland along the south-eastern boundary of the site, and 11 hectares of land to provide formal sports facilities in the remaining Green Belt triangle. At Stratfield Farm requirements include the provision of play areas, allotments, the extension and protection of the existing orchard and, over about half the site, a nature conservation area on 5.3 hectares.

This leads me to the subject of green spaces within the existing Village. As well as the wildlife reserve at St Mary's Fields, we have six substantial sports grounds. Scattered across the Village there are also a good number of attractive smaller greens, all of them well provided with trees: the largest is at Lyne Road, with a dozen or so others, depending on how you count them, at places like Foxdown Close, Wilsdon Way, and Alexander Close. We now have a web page dedicated to these small greens, with photos and a Google map, at http://www.kidlington-pc.gov.uk/Small_Greens_40914.aspx. They are an important asset for the village.

Overall it looks as if later housing developments are better provided in this respect than older ones. Cherwell Council's requirements for the new developments continue this upward trend. The Parish Council will be watching carefully to see that these requirements are met.

DAVID ROBEY