

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2024 from the Chair of the Planning Committee

2023-24 has been a busy year for the Planning & Highways Committee. We meet every 2 weeks to discuss every planning application in the parish, and to consider the potential impact on the neighbourhood. We agree a response from the Committee, which is sent into Swindon Borough Council, and which advises whether we support or object to the application.

Wroughton Parish Council is a consultee for all planning applications within the parish, but we are not the decision maker – the decision maker is Swindon Borough Council who is the Local Planning Authority.

We are consulted about all kinds of plans, from extensions, and conversions, to housing developments. More recently, we've also been consulted about a new Tree Preservation Order concerning 32 trees near Alexandra House. We also receive confirmation from Swindon Borough Council when it's made decisions on applications by individuals or organisations to carry out work to trees on which there is a Tree Protection Order.

We have also set up quarterly meetings with the team over at Wichelstowe to try to ensure that we are kept closely updated, and hopefully consulted, on their plans for the sports pitches and community space at Wichelstowe, as both Mid & West Wichel sit within our parish boundary.

In the last couple of months, we've started to look at how we might approach the revision of Wroughton's Neighbourhood Plan, which needs reviewing before its end date of 2026. Neighbourhood planning is supposed to give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Having a Neighbourhood Plan also means that Swindon Borough Council have to give us an additional 15% of any Community Infrastructure Levy.

We are watching with interest to see whether the Borough Council follows its own proposed timetable for the revision of the Borough's Local Plan. We will be encouraging residents to respond to the areas put forward by Swindon Borough Council for possible future development, because legally our Neighbourhood Plan should positively support the strategic development needs which Swindon Borough Council sets out in their Local Plan, so it's really important for the neighbourhood planning process that local people have an input into, and respond to any consultations on, the Borough's proposed site allocations. We will then consider the best time to set up a working party and we will be asking residents to join. In the meantime, we are making sure that our Planning Committee members are all up to date with the latest Government guidance on Neighbourhood Plans.

And finally, highways. The responsibility for highway safety sits with Swindon Borough Council as the local highway authority, but this doesn't stop us from lobbying the Borough to make our roads safer. We are in the process of asking Swindon Borough Council for speed data for the main roads in and out of Wroughton and Priors Hill, so we can consider the possibility of purchasing radar speed signs to try to reduce speed and improve safety on Wroughton's busiest and fastest roads.