

Wroughton & Wichelstowe Planning and Highways Annual Parish Meeting

Report April 27th, 2026

This report is being read out on behalf of Councillor Holly Woodward, Chair of the Planning & Highways Committee.

As ever, the P&H committee has had a busy year. The committee reviews and responds on all planning applications that affect Wroughton, alongside matters relating to highways, flooding and footpaths/cycleways/bridleways. With all the potential building activity happening in the wider Parish, there is always much to discuss at our meetings, which take place twice a month, and which the public is welcome to attend.

Planning Applications– We see on average around 5 planning requests per meeting from small individual developments to the large sites at Wichelstowe, the Old Brickworks (Hills) sites and the proposals for Langton Park. Wroughton & Wichelstowe parish councillors discuss every one and make recommendations to Swindon Council, based on our local knowledge and our Neighbourhood Plan. However, SBC are the ultimate decision makers and our input can only go so far. The current Government's emphasis on making development applications easier, and developers' ability to take refusals to appeal on the basis that they are likely to win means that SBC is not keen to spend money on fighting appeals which they are likely to lose. So, realistically, our focus has to be on ensuring that new sites include the necessary infrastructure improvements and that the effect on the local environment is as limited as possible.

We also consider all Tree Protection Orders's received.

Public consultations – We respond to SBC and national consultations, which this year have included those on Swindon's Country Parks and the Active Travel & Transport one, where we input ideas on improving the footpaths, cycleways and bridleways network locally.

Strategic Planning – We have publicised information in the new SBC Local Plan consultations for 1030 new houses along Swindon Road, and put forward residents' objections. We also hosted a public meeting at which SBC presented their Local Plan ideas, which we estimate was attended by up to 200 members of the public who were keen to express their opinions. While we accept that new development has to take place, it should not occur without the necessary infrastructure improvements, such as schools, medical facilities and local community facilities. We are also in regular contact with the Wichelstowe Joint Venture group, and have been involved in the preparatory work for the new Sports Hub there.

Highways and Footpaths – We are aware of the issues relating to the bridge over the M4 in North Wroughton and the wall on Marlborough Road, and the regular problem of potholes. While we cannot solve them ourselves, we keep pushing SBC to resolve them as fast as possible.

The Footpaths group held another footpaths walk in October to identify issues on paths outside the village and these are being passed on to SBC's Rights of Way Officer and the Ramblers' Association for action.

Flood working party – This has now been set up and has had two very successful meetings to date, with input from Swindon Council, Thames Water and the Environment Agency, as well as WWPC. For the first time, everyone has been in the same room and is willing to make progress. Several councillors have been shown around the reservoir area by Thames Water, and it is now clear that the flooding in various parts of the village is not coming from there. SBC has identified the issues

in Wroughton as being a top 3 priority for them, and discussions are in train to definitively identify the cause of the issues at Perry's Lane and The Pitches with a view to trying to solve them. Further meetings are planned for this year.

Strategic Priorities for 26-27 – Some elements we are focussing on include:

- Development of an updated Neighbourhood Plan, which we intend to having ready by late 2027.
- Working with the Wichelstowe group to facilitate plans for the new Sports Hub
- Resolving the collapsed wall issue on Marlborough Road and working with SBC to improve safety on that stretch of road.
- Working towards identifying a site on south side of Swindon for Biodiversity Net Gain credits sale, so that local developments don't cause a reduction in local biodiversity.
- Resolving the ongoing flooding problems at various pinch points in the village, by working collaboratively with SBC, Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

Thank you.