

AGM 2023 Horse Fields report

Friends of Iffley Village remain deeply concerned about the proposal to build 30+ houses on the last few remaining acres in the Iffley Conservation Area. It is felt that there was insufficient consultation about the allocation plans for Local Plan 2036, and that many local people, including those on Meadow Lane, had no idea what was being proposed. We note that over 1,000 people submitted responses, and of these, 98% objected to the application. We fundamentally oppose the principle of development on this site since it does not comply either with SP42 or the development plan as a whole. This site is not suitable for development.

In our response to the application by OxPlace, submitted in December 2022, FOIV drew on the assessment of experts in five key areas of concern: Heritage and Conservation; Landscape and Environment Planning; Ecology and Biodiversity; Transport and Traffic; Drainage, Flooding and Sewage. The following experts concluded that the application should be rejected: Mark Wood Planning, Orion Heritage; Alison Farmer Associates; Bioscan Ltd; Water Resource Associates; Velocity.

Independently, objections to the application were submitted by the Environment Agency, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, Buglife: the Invertebrate Conservation Trust, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution, Cotswolds Rivers Trust, CPRE Oxfordshire, Cyclox: the Cycling Campaign for Oxford, Oxford Badger Group, the Iffley Fields Residents Association, the Oxford Rivers Improvement Campaign, the Oxford Civic Society, Oxford Pedestrians Association, Oxford Urban Wildlife Group, and a Holding Objection from Thames Valley Police.

We note again that previous attempts to allocate this land for development have been rejected. As the Orion Heritage report commented, *'Previously the OCC planners (in 1994, 2011) decided that a housing development here would not be compliant with the Conservation Area Policy, the experts note that nothing has materially changed within the Fields or CA, nor has there been a change in assessment methodology in intervening years. They note that there is no evidence or explanation set out in the latest site allocation assessment to explain this shift in position. Nothing has changed in intervening years at the site except who owns the land.'*

Note also the government inspector's rider to the site allocation in the 2036 Local Plan (schedule of main modifications [Sp43]: *'Any development proposals would be expected to conserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Iffley conservation area in order to comply with policies dh2 and dh3.'*

In the past few weeks, OxPlace has informed FOIV that they intend to re-submit their application for a housing development on the Horse Fields, in mid-October 2023. The afore-mentioned planning consultant and experts have agreed to review the re-submitted documents (still pending: traffic & highways, landscape).

We are seeking to raise funds via an independent Crowdfund for this review of the additional documents and arguments, since our position remains that this is a wholly unsuitable site for a development.

FOIV is supporting and endorsing the crowd funding. FOIV encourages members to contribute to the crowd fund and 100% of money will be spent on the horse fields