



Hermitage NDP

January 2022 Update

More houses, more cars?

You may have noticed shrubs and bushes have recently been cleared from the meadow at the end of Charlotte Close. Approval for the construction of 16 units on this site was granted last October. Add in the fact that approval for 21 units behind the Old Farmhouse was granted in May last year - that's 37 additional dwellings with the green light to go ahead!

Traffic issues outside The Coop continue to arise – and that's before the 4 apartments above the shop and the 4 detached houses on the site are occupied! The 37 additional dwellings yet to be started will undoubtedly impact on existing congestion at B4009/Priors Court Lane roundabout.

Although the NDP cannot directly address traffic issues (this remains the responsibility of WBC Highways), Steering Group (SG) members are due to meet representatives from WBC Highways, Traffic and Road Safety team at the end of January to raise awareness of issues reported to us and explore options for managing them.

Key themes identified for the Hermitage NDP are –

- Housing
- Getting Around
- Heritage
- Landscape Views
- Wildlife & Biodiversity

The hope is to have a skeleton NDP ready to share with you in April at a public event.

SG members continue to gather necessary evidence and are working on developing policies within these headings to reflect what villagers have told us. This is a much greater task than any of us imagined and although we have now secured a professional to assist in production of the plan, there remains a massive amount of research to be done by just four volunteers. We were lucky enough to recruit an additional member just before Christmas but sadly we've just lost a longstanding member due to competing pressures. We are all volunteers, none of us with knowledge of planning regulations or what criteria merit a view or heritage asset 'significant and worthy of protection' but we are learning fast!

Each one of us is passionate about preserving, as far as is possible, the things that make Hermitage a Great Place to Live. The Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan can't stop development in our village (National Government sets housing targets, which in our area, West Berkshire allocates) but with your help we can influence what will be built, where it will be and how it will look.

If can spare any time to help out, please get in touch: hermitagendp@gmail.com