

## Stour and Orwell Society Newsletter 31

Dear Member

The Coronavirus pandemic has produced widespread disruption to many workrelated and voluntary activities – including SOS. We were unable to hold our AGM (usually during April each year) and our annual summer get-together and I apologise for a long interruption to communications via our Newsletters.

However, despite the current problems, your Committee has been active on your behalf. On a positive note we were delighted that the extensions to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB - including parts of the Shotley Peninsula, two highly attractive river valleys, the woodlands at Holbrook Park, the whole of the River Stour and large parts of the south bank of the Stour – were finally approved by the Secretary of State. You may recall that we met with Susannah England of Natural England some years ago, who carried out a detailed survey and put forward the recommendation for the extensions. For full details please visit our website which shows the maps [www.stourandorwellsociety.com](http://www.stourandorwellsociety.com)

In our last Newsletter I drew to your attention the proposed industrial and commercial developments at Wherstead. I show below the situation as it was at the end of last year as a reminder (this appeared in Newsletter 30):

| Description  | Status   | Reference   |
|--|--|-------------|
| 75 new houses on Klondyke field by the Ski Slope   | Granted, awaiting construction                                     | DC/18/00706 |
| Erection of 7 new business units for 24 businesses on Park Farm Barns site within AONB                               | Granted  | DC/19/02200 |
| Service Station, retail shop & restaurant adjacent to A14 J56  | Under consideration by Babergh                                     | DC/19/02789 |
| 18,225 sq metre Warehouse plus lorry park adjacent to A14 J56  | Under consideration by Babergh                                     | DC/19/05093 |
| 10,625 sq metre office / warehouse, adjacent to AONB   | Out for comment  | DC/19/05624 |
| Land adjacent to DC/19/05624, adjacent to AONB   | Marked as undergoing ecological survey                             | None        |
| Curve water park, adjacent to Foodhall Within AONB   | Out for consultation   | DC/19/05630 |
| Stevin's site under Orwell bridge  | Developer has advised this is being considered for development     | None        |
| 3.3ha of B1 development land adjacent to Co-Op offices, adjacent to AONB includes Listed wall, part of walled garden | In Local Plan and developer has stated next site for consideration | LA101       |

SOS vigorously opposed the major industrial applications at Bobbits Lane (the petrol station, lorry park and drive-through McDonalds fast-food restaurant plus commercial warehousing and industrial units to the rear) and the proposed industrial/commercial units off Wherstead Street and Vicarage Lane. We worked closely with the Wherstead Parish Council and invited their representatives to join a Committee meeting so that we could offer a co-ordinated response to the proposals. Prior to the Planning Committee we canvassed its members by letter and Tom Hill spoke to the hearing which was held by video conference. Sadly, his was the sole voice in opposition and all three applications were passed, albeit by a very narrow majority of five votes to four in relation to the pfs and McDonalds. It would appear that the Babergh Planning Committee are giving precedence to possible job creation at the expense of valued landscapes – even in the face of objections from Ipswich BC and their own development plan policy officers, who objected to the Wherstead applications because they had been planning allocations at more sustainable locations.

This willingness to permit extensive development in valuable landscapes has been reflected in recent approvals for housing developments in Stutton and Woolverstone that are within or adjacent to AONB. We are also closely following proposals for a significant housing development in Chelmondiston and have made written objection to a proposal for houses to be built in close proximity to Erwarton Hall. All these objections may give the impression that your Committee always take a negative attitude to 'progress' but our raison d'être is to try to contribute to managing change on the Shotley Peninsula in order to preserve the beauty and tranquillity of the landscapes for us and visitors to enjoy. Sadly too many recent and current proposals are plainly unlikely to contribute to these aims.

### **Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk have published their Pre-Submission Local Plan for Consultation. It can be viewed through the links [www.babergh.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/jointlocalplan) or [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/jointlocalplan). Representations can be made electronically through the Councils' online systems at [www.babergh.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/jointlocalplan) and [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/jointlocalplan](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/jointlocalplan) - the closing date for submissions is the 24th of December. Your Committee will make representations and one of our main concerns is the weakening of Policy LP20 that deals with the protection afforded to AONBs in relation to building development within these areas. The plan also proposes allocations for development in our area, but relatively few of these affect the AONB and APA. Please look at the Plan and make your own views known to the Council!

### **AGM**

Your Committee held a virtual meeting, via Zoom, to discuss how an AGM might be held in the present circumstances. The alternatives are to hold a physical meeting whilst maintaining social distancing or to hold a Zoom AGM. Both of these present challenges as regards administration and providing all members with an opportunity to attend in order that they may exercise their democratic right to attend and question your Officers and Committee as to their performance over the previous year.

One key function of an AGM is to allow members to elect officers and a Committee. Under our constitution, the Committee is elected to stand for one year. At the moment, the Committee is one member short of its maximum of twelve and, over the period since the last AGM (4th April 2019) we have not been notified of any member who would like to join to Committee. Our constitution does not require an AGM to be held on a specific date although, obviously, they should be held at roughly twelvemonthly intervals and this we have been unable to do for 2020.

We do not intend to call an AGM until it is practical and safe to do so. The Committee is, however, authorised under the constitution to co-opt an unspecified number of additional members. So, if anyone wishes now to join the Committee, wishes to raise any issue for its consideration or is dissatisfied with the procedure outlined above then please get in touch with the Secretary.

For information, I have placed a draft copy of the minutes of our 2019 AGM on our website at [www.stourandorwellsociety.com](http://www.stourandorwellsociety.com) It is within the Members Section for which your password is peninsula19

I hope that you are keeping well during these difficult times and, as we approach Christmas, wish you 'Seasons Greetings'.

Kind regards

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Honorary Secretary,

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