

Please read this! Your help is needed...!

Support required for Whitchurch to acquire village sports field

After many years of discussion, the opportunity for our village to acquire the privately-owned cricket field has at last arrived. The Parish Council is asking all individual residents who support the scheme to let the SODC planning officer know that they are in favour of it.

A planning application has been submitted to the SODC planning department, jointly by the Parish Council and by the Whitelock family, owners of the cricket field. This is for a house in the corner of the cricket field and a car park near the house for users of the Sports Field and the school.

If planning consent for the house is granted, the Whitelock family will gift the entire Sports Field to the village, apart from the house plot. The land will be owned by the village, thus preventing any further development of the land in the future, and will be available for use for cricket and other sports, as well as village events and activities.

Back in January a public meeting was held in the village hall and the proposal was explained by architect David Parker. Since then, the plans for the house and the car park have been amended in several ways to take account of people's views:

- the width and ridge height of the house have both been reduced
- the garage has been re-located to reduce the front elevation
- the plot for the house has been narrowed
- the car park has been reduced to a more appropriate size
- vehicular access to the ground will be from the corner of the house plot and thus shared with the house, further reducing the size of the plot

The SODC Planning Office will probably not be able to support the application directly, as it is contrary to existing policy, but it can recognise the community benefits that the proposal would bring. If we can show that there is a sufficient community gain for the village and plenty of village support for the project, the Planning Committee of SODC councillors are able to give permission even though it is against planning policy. This has happened in similar cases and we anticipate that we can be successful – with your help.

The Parish Council and the Whitelock family have worked hard together to prepare a planning application that takes into account the interests of the village and the school and provides all the necessary documentation which includes a transport statement, flood risk assessment, advice about the trees and an ecology report, so as to maximise the chances of success.

To achieve this it is essential to demonstrate a strong degree of support for the application from Whitchurch residents. That is why your help now is vital.

Please go to the Whitchurch Web (www.whitchurchonthames.com) and click on the recent news item on the cricket field, then click on the link to the SODC page. Here you can use the “**Comment now**” button and give your support. Your comment will be registered and acknowledged by email. If you want to see full details of the application including drawings, photographs and reports you can do so through that page.

(You may see that SODC has a separate planning application for extended use of the land to cover recreation generally. This does **not** need your expression of support.)

Alternatively, please write to the SODC Planning Officer, Mr Tom Wyatt, at SODC Planning Dept, South Oxfordshire District Council, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8NJ before the end of the month quoting reference **P10/E0945** and telling him that you support the application.

Here are the key benefits for the village – you may wish to mention some of these points:

- To secure this important open space in perpetuity for village use – fetes, exercise, picnics and general recreation
- To allow cricket and, in the future, junior football, tennis and other outdoor sports to be played
- To enable the sports field to be used by children from the adjacent primary and pre-schools
- To provide an appropriate amount of off-street parking, relieving Eastfield Lane
- To protect environmental features such as trees, hedgerows etc and allow use of parts of the site as a nature area

Please indicate your support by the end of this month. Thank you for your help.

Harry Butterworth

Harry Butterworth
Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

20th July 2010

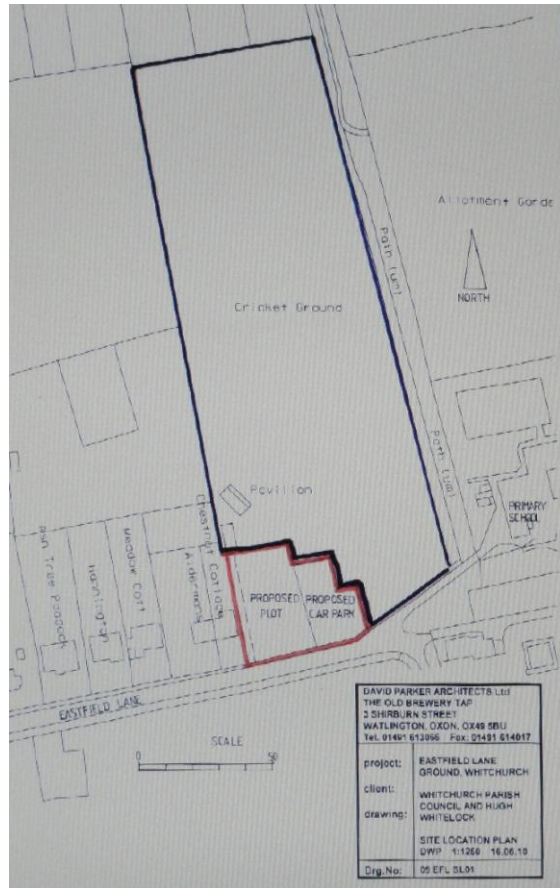
See next page for an impression of the proposal



Aerial view of cricket field showing proposed new house and car park



South elevation of proposed house



Plan view of cricket field and area for house and car park