

# HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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**Draft MINUTES** of the **Environment and Planning Committee** meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Library, Church Street, Hungerford.

**Present:** Cllrs Fyfe, Keates, Hudson, Simpson, Cole, Cusack and Coulthurst.

**In attendance:** Wendy Crookall, Deputy Town Clerk (DTC)

Cllr Fyfe introduced Cllr Coulthurst who gave a brief presentation to Councillors on Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, which became law by the provisions of the 2021 Environment Act. Since the beginning of April, all developers (major and minor) are required to demonstrate that their sites will achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity, through enhancements to hedgerows, habitats, and water courses. Where it is not possible to achieve on-site net gain, developers will have to contribute an equivalent gain at specialist biodiversity sites, which are expected to become a new industry in response to this legislation. There are exceptions for very small developments and for householders. The legislation introduces a 30 year commitment to manage and monitor the delivery of biodiversity net gain, overseen by local authority planning departments, and its implications are not yet fully understood. Local authorities have had imposed a biodiversity duty, which has to be accommodated in all major strategy policies (such as local plans), for some while.

Cllr Fyfe thanked Cllr Coulthurst for an interesting presentation and formally opened the meeting at 18.47.

**EP2024017 Apologies for absence – Cllrs Winsler, Carlson, Armstrong, District Cllrs Gaines, Benneyworth & Vickers**

**EP2024018 Declarations of interest - none**

**EP2024019 Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and update on actions.**

**Proposed: Cllr Keates**

**Seconded: Cllr Coulthurst**

**Resolution: Minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 approved as a true record with 1 abstention**

**EP2024020 Planning applications:**

a) **24/00487/HOUSE  
Mr & Mrs Benton,**

**Stubwood House, Stubwood Farm, Salisbury Road, Hungerford, RG17 0RD**

**PROPOSAL:** Proposed swimming pool in the rear garden.

[Planning Documents \(westberks.gov.uk\)](http://westberks.gov.uk)

Cllr Fyfe gave an overview of their previous planning application in 2022, which HTC had no objections to but was refused by WBC. The current application for a 'swimming pool' was discussed and Councillors had no objections to it.

**Proposed: Cllr Simpson**

**Seconded: Cllr Keates**

**Resolution: No Objection**

## **EP2024021 Case Officers Reports**

Cllr Fyfe gave a summary of the Case Officers Reports below. There were no questions raised.

- a) **24/00035/ADV**  
**20 High Street, Hungerford, RG17 0NF**  
**PROPOSAL:** Replace 1no. Projecting signage with new 600mm. Retain existing brackets & paint blue to match fascia. Replace 2no. Fascia and 1no. Logo with 2no. New blue fascia & 1no. New 150mm logo height. Install new window message "A good way to bank." Investigate door handle and replace with stainless steel if required.  
WBC: Approved Application  
HTC: Proposed No Objection to this application  
[Planning Documents \(westberks.gov.uk\)](http://westberks.gov.uk)
- b) **23/02356/HOUSE**  
**The Hermitage, Wantage Road, Eddington, Hungerford RG17 0HA**  
**PROPOSAL:** Single storey rear extension, internal works.  
WBC: Approved Application  
HTC: Proposed No Objection to this application  
[Planning Documents \(westberks.gov.uk\)](http://westberks.gov.uk)
- c) **23/02357/LBC**  
**The Hermitage, Wantage Road, Eddington, Hungerford**  
**PROPOSAL:** Single storey rear extension, internal works.  
WBC: Approved Application  
HTC: Proposed No Objection to this application  
[Planning Documents \(westberks.gov.uk\)](http://westberks.gov.uk)
- d) **23/02441/FUL**  
**Unit 4, Station Yard, Station Road, Hungerford RG17 0DY**  
**PROPOSAL:** Retrospective subdivision and refurbishment of industrial unit to create three new industrial units, including internal reconfiguration and minor external amendments.  
WBC: Granted Retrospective Approval  
HTC: Proposed No Objection to this application  
[Planning Documents \(westberks.gov.uk\)](http://westberks.gov.uk)

e) **24/00008/HOUSE**

**Lorelei, Moores Place, Hungerford, RG17 0JS**

PROPOSAL: Removal of existing conservatory - Build new brick built conservatory

WBC: Approved this application

HTC: Proposed No Objection to this application

[Planning Documents \(westberks.gov.uk\)](http://westberks.gov.uk)

**Meeting ended 18.52**

Presentation By Cllr Coulthurst

## Biodiversity Net Gain

Introduction to BNG by and for  
Hungerford Town Council



## A brief introduction to BNG

- A requirement enforced by the Environment Act 2021
- Each site granted PP must achieve an increase in biodiversity of 10%+
- Mandatory for major developments since February; now applicable to all planning permission applications
- HTC view? More later...



## A big deal?

- Natural England
  - “the biggest change to planning regulations in decades”
- West Berkshire Council
  - congratulated themselves as taking significant steps to conserve biodiversity and actively include BNG in major strategy pieces
  - North Wessex Downs National Landscape (previously, AONB) covers three quarters of the district
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
  - it will apply to these from November 2025



## Who is affected?

- Major and minor sites and developers
- Landowners/managers – selling into BNG
- Natural England – maintaining an off-site BNG register
- Local Planning Authorities – overseeing delivery
- Exemptions
  - householder development (as defined, Town & Country Planning 2015 Order)
  - development of specialist BNG sites
  - development that does not “impact” (damage) a priority habitat and involves less than
    - 25 square metres of on-site habitat
    - 5 metres of on-site linear habitats (hedges)



## Five essential actions for developers



## Measuring biodiversity

- First find yourself an ecologist
- Biodiversity value is measured in standardized biodiversity units
  - assessing factors like habitat size, quality, location, type
- Net gain requires suitable habitat creation or enhancement
- Likely to take time to establish protocols
  - some established measures, e.g. Living Planet Index
  - others to be established



## Wrap-up

- BNG applies to most planning applications from now on and it is a big deal
- HTC view?
  - We have encouraged climate change mediation and improvement measures (e.g. through comments on the WBC Planning Application Validation Checklist, August 2023)
  - This *will* increase development costs – and fuel the “reports” industry
  - Possibly tough on small schemes, especially the on-going element
- Questions?
  - I’ll give it a go!
  - More likely, need to research and revert



# Notes

## Major developments

Development involving any one or more of the following:

- the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;
- waste development;
- the provision of dwellinghouses where
  - (i). the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or
  - (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (i);
- the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more

## Small developments

A small development does not fall into the category of a major development, as defined in article 2(1) of the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#).

A small development could include a:

- residential development where the number of dwellings is between 1 and 9 on a site of an area 1 hectare or less, or if the number of dwellings is unknown, the site area is less than 0.5 hectares
- commercial development where floor space created is less than 1,000 square metres or total site area is less than 1 hectare
- development that is not the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits
- development that is not waste development