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Mr Bob Duxbury
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Friday 5th April 2013

Dear Mr Duxbury

Re: Banbury Town Council Planning Committee Proposed Site Visit to 20 Horton View, Banbury

We wish to respond to the items that Cllr Mallon brought to the Planning Committee's attention on Thursday 28th March. We believe some of his points were misleading and feel the committee need to have the incorrect points raised corrected before they visit the site for themselves.

Parking

Could we bring to your attention our plan (Parking 1). Cllr Mallon referred to the parking area in front of the building that also includes the newspaper shop. He quite rightly pointed out that this area is a communal parking area shared by the businesses, however we would like to also point out that there are three parking bays situated directly in front of our property, (20 Horton View), and added to that the space to the side of the property that will accommodate 2 further vehicles (behind the private gates) this amounts to the 5 spaces that we referred to in the original submission of the plans and that Cllr Mallon questioned. There is also private parking to the front of the hairdressers and designated parking to the front and the side of the newsagents/flat which is exclusively for their use. You will therefore see from this plan that the parking area has in fact already been, and to quote Cllr Mallon, "Sorted out by the owners of the property".

In September 2011 until January 2013 this unit was Letto Twinkle Boutique, a children's clothing shop. The tenant was informed that the planning use would require changing back to A1 Retail at the time of taking on the property. We understood that this change had already been carried out by the previous tenant. If that change had been completed we would not find ourselves in the position we are in today. There has been no traffic or parking problems while this previous retail use was being utilised over the last 15 months.

Our last business, Oxford Mobility Services, traded from 20 Horton View for 13 years. This was a very prosperous business and employed 15 staff and ran 12 vehicles from the premises, most of which came to our yard/office each morning to pick up materials and paper work. We received large deliveries on a daily basis that included articulated lorries and skip deliveries. These vehicles always reversed into the entrance road. The proposed Funeral Directors business, we believe, will in fact generate less traffic than the past.

The Sports Ground

As previously mentioned we have traded from this site for the past 13 years and know the area very well. Again Cllr Mallon pointed out that 20 Horton View is situated along the road, and that it ends in a "Private Car Park" and is owned by Banbury Town Council. This being the case there is no passing traffic of any description, the only traffic that goes by the site is traffic that is using Horton View Sports Ground. Surely this is a good thing?

On the Horton View Sports Ground web page it states: "*This is a multi-use sports ground with football, cricket, tennis and bowls facilities and a car park. The two principal users of the site are Banbury Central Bowls Club and Banbury Lawn Tennis Club. The pavilion includes a function room which is an ideal venue for meetings, presentations, children's parties and indoor sports*". In addition to that we feel it also most relevant to mention that the venue has also been used for funeral receptions. We have seen funeral receptions taking place here over the years and indeed with limousines passing through to convey the family to this venue following the funeral service. And long may that continue.

From the paper work attached it clearly states that Banbury Tennis Club have "Club Nights" on Tuesday and Friday evening from 6pm and the summer league matches commence on Saturday 6th April and the Club Finals Day is the Sunday 15th September. From the Fixture List it is clearly evident that no matches take place in normal working hours.

The Banbury Bowling Club is open for play from 12.00pm Monday – Friday and on Wednesday afternoon there is a league for club members and bowlers from local clubs. From their Fixture List for 2013 there are only 6 fixtures that are going to take place within the normal working week.

As both these clubs are very restricted by summer use, we fail to see how this parking area can be, quote "Used extensively" and with "Heavy usage all year round" especially with regard to the normal working week? This car park is normally empty and with Cllr Mallon offering the use of it for the Councillors Site Visit this clearly demonstrates the fact.

We do acknowledge however that in the summer months, members do use these facilities more regularly but this is always after office hours and the evening time.

Understandably Saturday is a day that attracts lots of usage here and this will be when the proposed business at Horton View will be certainly less active anyway. Cllr Mallon spoke at some length with regard to how the neighboring sports ground was private property, speaking personally, and on behalf of the Town Council. If the concern of usage of the empty car park in the week be such a factor, may we suggest that the large gates situated at the entrance be closed and club members given keys to gain access in the day if they so wish, and perhaps opened each evening when the facilities actually become used? We fail to see that any future customers, for any of the local businesses in the area, would blatantly ignore the quite obvious private property signs and notices of no parking within this location and if necessary families may be asked as to where they have parked, should they have decided to park in a location other than the designated spaces belonging to the premises.

School Traffic and Footfall

We are all aware that at 3.15 in the afternoon each day the local schools descend onto Springfield Avenue and then fountain off in varying directions as they make their way home. Yes some take the route through Horton View and use the newsagent shop on the way home but not all, "Two and a half thousand of them!" Extra cars may well also be evident at this time for a short period as children are collected by parents.

Banbury School is situated on the Ruskin Road, not directly onto Horton View so it is Ruskin Road and Springfield Avenue that are the main junctions.

Blessed George Napier School is situated on Addison Way, so the main junction is Addison Road with Grange Road, onto the Main Oxford Road.

We understand from Mr Frost that the last sensible time for a funeral service in the afternoon in the locality is 3pm. A service at the crematorium or a service held elsewhere beforehand is unlikely to take place after 3pm therefore no funeral vehicles, however large or small, will be anywhere near this busy area at this time of day. Funeral vehicles would have left by 2.30pm.

Other Traffic Issues Mentioned

The Horton General Hospital has its main entrance on Hightown Road and Sainsbury's entrance further along the Oxford Road, both of which have their own parking areas. We fail to see why these points are relevant and were brought up by Cllr Mallon.

Main Roads

Cllr Mallon informed the committee that the A361 Bloxham Road has the "Highest traffic usage and issues of accidents in Oxfordshire". Horton View does not have a junction with the A361. Surely if the A361 has a bad reputation, this would not be the junction with Springfield Avenue where there are already speed restrictions in place and again no relevance to Horton View.

Horton View does have a junction with the main Oxford Road which is controlled by traffic lights, but strategically speaking, this is a good thing there being good access to the main road and no reason to take alternative routes around the houses.

The Bus Route

As Horton View is a Primary/Premium bus route, statically, this is surely beneficial to the location of the proposed business as the service is then available to all members of the public.

Mr Frost informs us that when a family first make contact with a Funeral Director to make arrangements, a funeral director will always offer the facility of visiting the family in their homes rather than expect the family to travel into town from a neighboring village or from across town. Surely by offering this service it will further reduce the effects of extra traffic in the area rather than add to it. Cllr Mallon referred to the proposed plans of the property and there being a consultation room and thus evidence of people visiting the premises. Nobody can expect to run any business, in any form and within any usage banding, and not expect potential visitors to a premises at some stage during the day.

As detailed in our past letter which was published on the council planning website, the private removal vehicle (estate car) or hearse, when arriving before a funeral, will park behind the private gates at the property and be loaded, whilst the gates are closed, privately and discreetly. As you will appreciate with the addition of a carport there will be no reason for any local resident to see anything that may cause them any concern.

May we also bring to the committee's attention at this moment the location of the other two Funeral Director's premises in the town, both set within large residential areas which are perhaps more over looked by local residents?

The Post Office

Once again quoting Cllr Mallon, "Easington Post Office is the second most used Post Office in North Oxfordshire". This must be commended then and shows good business and management skills with easy access and parking to warrant such a title. Why should any potential new business in Horton View, given the fact that there is a successful Post Office in the vicinity, be penalised as a result of this?

20 Horton View was built as a retail unit by the Co-op some eighty years ago, well before Springfield Avenue was laid out. On this basis how can Cllr Mallon recommend refusal for retail use when he stated in the last meeting that he, along with the Town Council, clearly want retail use for the site. We also find it startling that he believed the business would not thrive. This type of feeling is not the attitude you would want or expect from a Councillor. You only get out of a business what you put into it. With the right professional people, dedication and commitment this site will thrive and prosper, as it did for some 13 years when we ran our business, Oxford Mobility Services, from the location.

On a more sensitive matter we think it may be worth pointing out that Mr Stokes (of 20a Horton View and main objector) sold us 20 Horton View in 2001 while it had Class 1a retail use. We changed the usage to Office and Store Use so our business could trade from the property. When the unit was in his ownership he had no objections living next door to a Class 1a retail unit at that time.

Having enjoyed a very successful 13 years trading and running our business from 20 Horton View and now as a result of this enjoy a pleasant retirement, we feel that we can assist the "next generation" and help what we believe to be a young, local man, who we know has a good reputation in his profession, to start a small business for himself and his family as we did some years ago. Why deny him this opportunity and render our premises unfit for the purpose by turning down this application. If A1 retail usage is refused on the grounds of the nature of this business surely this could be deemed as discriminative and then makes our property un-rentable to other interested parties that may also require future retail usage.

I do hope our concerns have been of some help.

Yours sincerely

Mr & Mrs P D Jordon