

# YORKSHIRE LAND

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[www.Oxspring-Fields.co.uk](http://www.Oxspring-Fields.co.uk)

Councillor Ian Goldthorpe  
Chairman of Oxspring Parish Council  
Malydon  
Bower Hill  
Oxspring  
SHEFFIELD  
S36 8YE

Dear Councillor Goldthorpe,

## **PROPOSED OXSPRING FIELDS DEVELOPMENT**

We attach a copy of a self explanatory letter addressed to your colleagues, Councillor Mrs Ann Walker and Mrs Cheryl Kelleher (Joint Chair of the Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Group) in which we raise a number of important matters of concern, which we trust will be acted upon.

In addition to the issues raised in the attached letter, we do have further concerns. For example the Parish Council recently published its 'Summer Newsletter' which makes reference to the Neighbourhood Plan, in particular, under the sub-heading 'Community Services and Facilities' the Parish Council seem apathetic in working proactively towards the successful delivery of the long awaited Sports Pavilion/Community Building, despite having recognised and confirmed a need for such a facility, within the past six months, in order to create a heart to the village.

We have already provided Oxspring Parish Council with illustrative plans for this facility and confirmed our willingness and ability to fund this proposal to the sum of £ 500,000.00 (**Five Hundred Thousand Pounds**) via a Section 106 Agreement as part of the proposed Oxspring Fields development; this is a considerable sum of money which the Parish Council could use to attract further grant/match funding sources which could then be utilised to carry out further improvements on the village sport's field e.t.c.

Without question, a Sports Pavilion/Community Building which could host a whole range of uses, will benefit the whole community and also provide extra and enhanced facilities for the local primary school.

In addition to the delivery of the above, the proposed Oxspring Fields development will **provide at minimum 36 Affordable Homes** of which a part will be available for rental at below open market rates. The Neighbourhood Plan Group's own Housing Needs Assessment which was compiled by consultants 'URS' less than 12 months ago, following instructions from the Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Group, identifies a need for a number of low cost homes for local people.

*Do you agree that it would be beneficial to meet with us to discuss how we can work together to provide these long overdue affordable homes in Oxspring ?*

*Do you accept that this is ultimately what the Neighbourhood Plan Group should seek to achieve ?*

*Will you please advise why Oxspring Parish Council has refused to meet with ourselves and our professional representatives since January 2015 (despite a number of requests having been made) to discuss and explore how our proposed Oxspring Fields development could in any way assist the Parish Council in meeting many of its own identified objectives ?*

When we met with yourself, Councillor Ann Walker and John Wade in November 2013, both yourself and Councillor Walker were very receptive to our proposals and, in fact, Councillor Walker commented positively that she believed Oxspring needed a small number of bungalows as part of the proposed development mix, suitable for residents who currently reside in Oxspring and who may wish to scale down from a larger property but remain within the area; a valid comment, which we said that we would take into consideration at the design stage of the development.

We ask that you carefully consider and digest the content of the video recording of a meeting (<http://www.oxspringplan.org.uk/about/videos/>) which took place on the village Sports Field, between a senior BMBC Planning Officer, Ms Helen Willows, and representatives of the NPG.

In the recording, the then Neighbourhood Plan Group Chair, Mrs Ruth Rovira Wilde, confirms the need to deliver Affordable Housing for the Parish, whilst BMBC's senior Planning Policy Officer Ms Helen Willows makes it clear that BMBC are looking to support not only local needs housing but also to make a significant contribution towards the provision of Executive, Low Density housing to meet the aspirations of the Economic Strategy. Ms Willows also makes it clear that **it is important to support the historical pattern of development in Oxspring;**

*Does the Parish Council accept that the Oxspring Fields proposals will maintain Oxspring's historical linear pattern of development ? (Please see Overview Plan attached)*

The Neighbourhood Plan Group, in contrast to our Oxspring Fields proposals, has identified a number of other 'potential' housing sites for Oxspring, as illustrated on the attached plan extracted from page 10 of the 'Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Summary of Housing Needs and Capacity Assessment notes' (SHNCA) dated 15 October 2014, which can be viewed on the Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan website. Page 9 of the document (also attached) identifies that the Neighbourhood Plan Group suggest **Site 3** is capable of accommodating between 42 and 51 **new** homes.

As you will note from page 10 of the above referenced document, **Site 3** consists of 'The Willows' an existing well kept development consisting of a small number of semi detached homes, mainly in Private ownership, together with a larger number of bungalows for the elderly which we understand are in the ownership of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC).

Clearly, whether a firm proposal or not, The Neighbourhood Plan Group has identified and considered the '**Willows**' development for possible **Demolition** and subsequent redevelopment, this is in addition to the **Demolition** of the existing and thriving village primary school (also a Borough council asset in continuing use) for a new development of 17 interim eco houses, as shown in the First Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

It was stated by members of the Parish Council at the Parish Council meeting of Monday 13 July 2015, at which both myself and Samuel Green (Yorkshire Land Ltd) were in attendance, that the First Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan of January 2015 and the associated background documents 'do not actually form a Neighbourhood Plan' but are rather 'just a drawing together of the community's ideas' and that this coupled with the fact that there is no legal requirement to consult anyway until the statutory 6 week period prior to the Plans' submission for examination by Government Inspector, renders it's content meaningless.

We utterly dispute this suggestion in asserting that the whole Neighbourhood Plan process is based upon the consolidation of ideas and aspirations. We accept that the First Consultation Draft

Neighbourhood Plan Document has not been formally adopted or 'made' however, whilst there is no legal requirement to offer consultation on a draft Neighbourhood Plan until a 6 week period prior to its submission for examination by a Government Inspector, Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Group has chosen to do so; hence the reference to 'Consultation' on the front page of the booklets (attached) which have been professionally published and publicly advertised. It is therefore undeniable that First Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan can constitute anything other than the most recent views of the Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Group.

*In consideration of the above, do you accept that that many of Neighbourhood Plan Group's current suggestions are simply ridiculous, ill thought out and undeliverable ?*

A number of other small sites (reference 1, 4, 5, 9 and 10 on the attached plan) have also been suggested for possible housing development by the Neighbourhood Plan Group. **All of these sites together with a part of site 7 are designated as Green Belt land.** Furthermore, site 11 which is shown to be capable of accommodating between 55 and 68 new homes is **also within the Green Belt**; however, this site (Draft Local Plan Reference 'P2') is the only proposed Employment allocation designated by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough in the Draft Local Plan to meet the needs of Penistone and the Western Rural Area.

Our Planning consultants have previously made both the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Group aware that BMBC Core Strategy Policy CSP 15 'Affordable Housing' requires that only development of 15 dwellings or more in the Western part of the Borough must deliver 25 % affordable housing. For clarity, developments of less than 15 dwellings **do not** have to provide affordable housing and as more than 50 % of the sites identified by the Neighbourhood Plan Group in the SHNCA fall below the 15 dwelling 'Affordable Housing' threshold, it is most unlikely that any developer would deliver affordable homes.

We believe it is clear from the SHNCA that the Neighbourhood Plan Group recognise that unless housing development takes place on the Safeguarded Land (Local Plan Site Reference 'SAF 18' - Land North and South of Roughbitchworth Lane) they will need to utilise Green Belt land in order to meet their identified housing needs, however, in the Parish Council's summer newsletter under sub heading 'Development' it is stated that:

*"In BMBC's emerging Local Plan (which will remain in force until 2033) there are **no sites** allocated in Oxspring (or the immediate surrounding area) for housing development, but small scale development may take place on appropriate sites (i.e. not Green Belt) that may become available. These are known as "Windfall Sites". It is, therefore, necessary that the NP has policies to cover future development on such sites, including appropriate design, housing mix and numbers of new dwellings."*

*Will you please advise where all of the **Non-Green Belt** windfall sites in the Parish are located in order to accommodate Oxspring's entire identified housing needs ?*

The above statement does not reflect the Conclusions and Recommendations of URS's NP Housing Needs Advice Note. Consultants 'URS' were commissioned by Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Group/Parish Council to provide a reasoned analysis for calculating and agreeing the 'fair share' of housing allocations for Oxspring up to the year 2026. URS concluded that up to 68 new homes are needed for the Parish.

The Barnsley Local Plan, when adopted, will be the statutory development plan for the Borough until the year 2033. As the SHNCA only accounts for housing need in Oxspring up to the year 2026, an additional 7 years housing supply is unaccounted for and, Ultimately, more homes will be required for the parish.

With respect, the housing sites that have been considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Group in the SHNCA beggar belief, site 4 has severe level differences and site 9 is located further away from the centre of the village up a steep incline, which is likely to discourage walking. It is apparent that no proper consideration has been given to matters such as land ownership, availability, access and drainage.

In our view the SHNCA, in which the Neighbourhood Plan Group identify 11 potential housing sites within Oxspring, provides a clear indication of the inexperience of the Neighbourhood Plan Group to properly consider the commercial suitability of a site to provide an housing allocation; In our opinion the proposal to demolish the existing village primary school and redevelop the site with 17 interim eco homes is another absurd, ill thought out and undeliverable proposal that has incurred expense in the preparation of colour indicative plans and artists impressions, which have all been paid for with public funds.

It remains our belief that the 17 interim eco homes suggested in the First Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan were being promoted by the Former Chair, Mrs Ruth Rovira-Wilde, who is a Director of a company which holds commercial interests in this field !

To date, the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Group have failed to identify suitable land on which to accommodate their recognised housing needs, as set out in the SHNCA report.

We believe that Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Group members have embarked upon a crusade to stifle our well thought out development proposals. Certain members of the Parish Council and of the Neighbourhood Plan Group have made known their strong **personal opposition** to the Oxspring Fields proposals which will, without question, enhance existing and provide much needed new facilities in Oxspring. In addition our proposals will provide much valued custom to local businesses in the area including the Travellers and Waggon and Horses Public house/Restaurants and the Post Office/Village Store. It would be of great detriment to the village if these businesses were to close down due to a lack of trade; this situation has occurred in other nearby villages including Hoylandswaine, Ingbirchworth and Silkstone Common.

In summary, our consultants have previously set out the many benefits that our proposals will deliver to Oxspring. The Oxspring Fields site is well contained on all sides by Strong, Logical and Enduring boundaries which will prevent any possibility of future housing sprawl in this location.

Amongst the countless other benefits which this proposed development will provide (but are not mentioned here) the surface water runoff onto Sheffield Road (which has previously been experienced after many days of torrential rainfall) will be remedied and the Bus stop at the bottom of Thurgoland bank (which is currently in a dangerous position) will be relocated into a lay-by/refuge lane within the site boundary. The scheme will also deliver the long awaited Sports Pavilion/Community building, upgrades to the village sport's field, a Tourism hub (creating Local Employment opportunities) and Country Park with meandering walkways and new access points onto the Trans Pennine Trail. All of these facilities will be delivered at **no cost** either to the Parish or the Borough Councils.

In addition to the benefits set out above, importantly, the Oxspring Fields development can accommodate all of Oxspring's housing needs (both market and affordable) until at least the year 2033 on just one site, which is contained within Strongly defined boundaries. Furthermore, the Oxspring Fields proposals maintain Oxspring's historical linear pattern of development

By developing new homes in this location, No existing homes within the village will be adversely affected during the build out phase (i.e. Construction traffic and noise e.t.c) or lose their immediate views once the development is complete; the same cannot be said of the safeguarded land in the Parish

*Setting aside the considerable benefits that the proposed Oxspring Fields development will deliver to the Parish, would the Parish Council prefer to see new housing development take place in Oxspring adjacent to Roughbitchworth Lane on the Safeguarded Land 'SAF 18' or alternatively adjacent to the B6462 'Sheffield Road' on Oxspring Fields ? (Both sites are identified on the attached overview Plan)*

*Have the Neighbourhood Plan Group, in their survey of resident's views, asked which of the two sites (SAF 18 and Oxspring Fields) would the community prefer to see developed ?*

*If not, why hasn't this relevant question been asked ?*

The Oxspring Fields Development proposals provide the opportunity to achieve an exemplary development, capable of National recognition, showing what can be achieved when Developers and communities work together.

We respectfully request that the Parish Council now carefully review and properly reflect on our Oxspring Fields proposals and that in doing so you end the 'NIMBY' tactics and now engage in a positive and meaningful manner to ensure that considerable once in a lifetime benefits offered by this proposed development are delivered to enhance the community which you represent.

We remain available to discuss our proposals as always and look forward to receiving your reply in due course.

Yours sincerely  
**YORKSHIRE LAND Limited**

**Steven Green**  
Managing Director

ENCS Letter to Councillor Ann Walker and Cheryl Kelleher (Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Group)  
5 A1 Plans Relating to the Oxspring Fields Development  
Pages 9 and 10 of the 'Summary of Housing Needs and Capacity Assessment Advise Notes For Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Document'  
Enlarged Plan from Page 10 of the 'Summary of Housing Needs and Capacity Assessment Advise Notes For Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Document'  
Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Draft January 2015

Cc: Mr Michael Wellock - Kirkwells Ltd  
Mrs Louise Kirkup - Kirkwells Ltd