

# YORKSHIRE LAND

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

Mrs Ann Walker / Mrs Cheryl Kelleher  
Joint Chair of Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan  
c/o 9 Brookfield  
Oxspring  
SHEFFIELD  
S36 8WG

Dear Mrs Walker / Mrs Kelleher

## **OXSPRING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

You may be aware that our Planning Consultant Mr Paul Butler of PB Planning wrote direct to your appointed planning advisers 'Kirkwells' on 7 October 2015 raising a number of valid concerns with regards to the ongoing preparation of the draft Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan (ONP).

The main concerns raised in Mr Butler's letter relate to meeting the **Identified Housing Needs of Oxspring** which have been quantified in an **evidence based** 'Housing Needs and Capacity Assessment' formulated by independent consultants URS, who were commissioned by Planning Aid England in October 2014 on behalf of OPC/ONP.

As key stakeholders in Oxspring we are a little disappointed that, prior to being prompted by Mr Butler on 21 October 2015, Kirkwells failed to acknowledge receipt of the letter and enclosures, which had been sent approximately two weeks earlier. The letter was also copied to the clerk of Oxspring Parish Council (OPC) and it is now available to read online at [www.oxspring-fields.co.uk](http://www.oxspring-fields.co.uk).

The intent of this letter is to bring your attention to both historical and more recent evidence base documentation which shows how members of OPC and ONP have repeatedly confirmed their desire to deliver a comprehensive Community/Sports pavilion on the sports field for the benefit of Oxspring.

OPC first gained planning permission for a Community/sports pavilion in 2008 (Planning Reference 2008/1249), subsequently gaining an extension of time in 2011 (Planning Reference 2011/0785) before the permission time expired in August 2014.

A webpage which is dedicated to providing background information about the sports/community facility, including its previously approved location and design ([www.oxspring-centre.org.uk](http://www.oxspring-centre.org.uk)) highlights the many fund raising attempts (Charitable and public sector grants to local resident donations and a 'stakeholder wall' scheme) which were undertaken prior to the expiration of planning permission in 2014, all of which were unfortunately unsuccessful

Interestingly, whilst reading through the website we found that:

1. *Barnsley Council Leader Sir Stephen Houghton CBE enabled a meeting to discuss support for the centre's place within the borough's strategic provision for sport and leisure (Essential to attract funding for building);*
2. *Angela Smith MP took an interest in the project and met with members to get gain more information; and*
3. *The project gained publicity through an "in depth" interview on Penistone FM.*

These high profile interventions reflect the strenuous efforts of Parish Council members, individuals and other organisations who worked tirelessly over a number of years in an attempt to obtain the funding required to deliver the facility.

More recently, the decision to formulate a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish appears to have renewed ambition for the delivery of the facility, and we are very pleased to see that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has included provision for such a building in the "Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan of January 2015"

Our review of numerous minutes and newsletters of ONP and OPC (which can be found on the ONP and OPC websites) has identified that the ONP and OPC accept Oxspring will accommodate more houses and that, if handled correctly, this may be a positive thing; strengthening the community, whilst importantly providing significant funding for neighbourhood projects, including for the long held ambition to provide up to date changing facilities along the lines of the previously approved but now lapsed plans for improved facilities on the playing fields' site:

#### **Parish Newsletter – Spring 2014**

*"A NP cannot set an agenda against development and change. There is a housing crisis across the Country, let's not turn it into a crisis for our village or for our Parish. We will not turn the tide against housing growth set by Central and Local Governments, but if we work together we can find a solution that could improve all of our lives young and old, now and in years to come. The challenge is for us all to create our NP."*

#### **NP Steering Committee – 10 April 2014**

*"If we are going to have more housing it may well be that we need to increase the facilities that are available to support additional housing, i.e. shops, other business ventures, doctor's surgery facilities etc. We are not suggesting that we inundate our village with lots of different buildings, but it may be viable to consider that if we are ever successful in building our sports hall on the village football field, that we might for instance be able to rent out space to someone wanting to sell refreshments, host a doctor's surgery, hire cycles for the trans-Pennine trail etc."*

#### **NP Steering Committee – 21 May 2014**

*"A discussion took place regarding some of the conflicting information and aspirations that have been gathered so far, such as a piece of land that might be suitable for building, but that might also have been identified as space that people in the village might want to protect. Ruth Rovira Wilde advised that she had spoken with the planning officers at the Local Authority and asked for their advice on how best to deal with such issues. An option highlighted by the Local Authority was that the residents of Oxspring, through the emerging NP, could identify and prioritise a number of potential sites, from least preferred to more acceptable, for different land uses, including housing development. The Local Authority could then consider these sites as part of their Strategic Housing Land Review which is to be completed by the autumn"*

*"M Dando (Planning Aid England) suggested that we may wish to request some Consultancy support through the time allocation and resources provided to Oxspring NP. **This consultancy could then be used to produce a professional Housing Needs Assessment and Site Appraisal for Oxspring.** RRW will contact M Dando to see what the implications are and she will ask him if we should use the BMBC proposed process detailed above... it was also agreed to put some of*

*Planning Aid England's time to use to help us with the site assessment surveys. This obviously means that we are getting appropriate expertise to assess any possible suitable sites for development in the village."*

#### **NP Social Sub Group – 4 September 2014**

*"The Group discussed in detail the following issues, to be proposed in the overall neighbourhood plan, aimed at developing and improving the social elements of the village, and the wellbeing of current and future residents:*

- ***Developing a community spirit*** – *it is felt that Oxspring is seen by many residents and visitors as a crossroads and place to simply pass through. However during recent resident's group survey, community spirit is an often mentioned as a priority. It is proposed that in future building and community projects should drive towards creating a 'heart' to the village. This could be achieved with a new development that included -*
  - *Sports and fitness – Gym, Tennis and badminton etc*
  - *Changing rooms/ toilet facilities (for visitors to the village as well/Pennine trail)*
  - *Community Meeting and function facilities (possibly using a private company to run the non educational facilities)*
  - *Youth Club/ After School club*
  - *Health care (as Thurgoland), with drop in facilities for Dentist, Chiropody, Opticians etc.*
- ***Sports and Leisure*** – *School/ Heart of village project would include much of this;*
  - *General Changing rooms and keep fit facilities, indoor and outdoor*
- ***Housing/Accommodation*** – *it is clear that Oxspring will have more houses/accommodation, within a short space of time, and around the table the position taken was that if handled correctly, this may be a positive process, and strengthen the community, whilst importantly providing significant funding for the neighbourhood projects."*

#### **Parish Newsletter – Spring 2015**

*"An audit of the village's existing services and facilities will be undertaken and policies written to protect and enhance those services and facilities for the future. For example, **it has long been an ambition of the village to provide up to date changing facilities etc for anyone using the playing fields for sport and recreation. If it is practicable to do so, in line with Barnsley's emerging Local Plan, a policy will be formed along the lines of the previously approved but now lapsed plans for improved facilities on the playing fields' site. This would include improvements to the fields as well as the construction of a suitable building.** With improved facilities both the school and community sports groups could be encouraged to make more use of the site. This could possibly incorporate a commercial venture such as a café, shop, room for hire or cycle hire business in order to provide the necessary funding to maintain the improved facilities."*

#### **NP Steering Committee – 8 September 2015**

*"A discussion took place about the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan produced by Louise Kirkup of Kirkwells. Those present at the meeting felt that the first draft plan was well produced and that the draft policies met the needs and aspirations of the village"*

Further evidence of ONP's willingness to accommodate a mix of housing and the delivery of community facilities for the Parish is provided in the Promotional video of a meeting between representatives of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (BMBC) Senior Planning Policy officer, Ms Helen Willows, which took place on Tuesday 25 February 2014 on the village sports field (<http://www.oxspringplan.org.uk/about/videos/>). A transcript of the video is available at [www.oxspring-fields.co.uk](http://www.oxspring-fields.co.uk)

At the meeting it was stated by the then Chair of the ONP Steering Committee, Ms Ruth Rovira-Wilde that:

**“The reason we’re here now is because, the current sport fields would, the people in the village would like to develop a sports, a better sports facility for its changing rooms, rather than the shed that they’re occupying at the moment at the other side of the road and ancillary to that we would want to have some other recreational facilities at this particular site (Oxspring Sports Field).”**

**“.....as a community we think we can support the Local Authority but perhaps be more creative in trying to find a made to measure solution for Oxspring in so far as we know from what local people have told us so far that what we need is affordable housing or at least a mixture that would allow for starter up homes as well as maybe more executive homes and we feel that if we can try to encourage working from homes or businesses that use their home as a base and try to bring in you know starter up units in that respect in the village as well as I mentioned to you if there is a new sports facility that can have some ancillary businesses that are linked to recreation such as a bicycle hire and that its linked to the Trans Pennine trail that might help create jobs in a way that perhaps benefits our village and our parish.”** (Our Emphasis)

Via a Section 106 Agreement linked to our Oxspring Fields development, we are committed to providing £500,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Pounds) funding to OPC for the delivery of the community/sports pavilion. This should enable OPC to obtain match funding towards the construction of a comprehensive facility for the Parish. Undoubtedly, this not insignificant level of funding will provide OPC with the ability to turn a dream into reality; delivering a 21<sup>st</sup> century state of the art building with **eco credentials**, that satisfies the needs of all. Such a building would also help to achieve the Community Spirit which was identified by ONP (following public consultation) as a priority for Oxspring.

Our suggested plan of the proposed community building, can be viewed online at [www.oxspring-fields.co.uk](http://www.oxspring-fields.co.uk)

Naturally, whilst it is OPC and the local community who should inform the final design of the building, we envisage that it will include modern heated changing facilities with washrooms, an indoor hall (for both sports and community gatherings) and also a Kitchen/bar area. You will recall that in our consultation material, we also proposed an adjoining Drop in Doctors Surgery. With the funding proposed, the inclusion of such a facility is not beyond the realms of possibility, if required.

Once complete, the building would be used as a hub for clubs and events and could even be utilised by Oxspring Primary school during the day time as an extra classroom, if necessary. The facilities would certainly be of benefit to the school children undertaking P.E activities at the sports field (i.e. WC’s, washing and changing facilities). In addition, OPC could rent out the building for a wide range of public or private functions and special occasions, subsequently using the income generated to pay for the upkeep of the facility and also fund other worthy projects around the village.

It is clear that a comprehensive sport/community building for Oxspring would form an invaluable asset, which will help to stimulate vibrancy in the community and further enhance the heart of the village in this specific location, initially chosen by OPC.

You will be also aware of our proposals to deliver a **tourism hub** in the form of the ‘Trans Pennine Trail visitor centre’. This self funding proposal will be operated privately, but has been designed to satisfy both ONP and OPC’s documented desire to incorporate new commercial ventures by providing for a small cafe and WC facilities, cycle hire and repair e.t.c. We believe that this facility (which will also create a number of local employment opportunities) is long overdue, and once built will become very well used and supported. It is nationally recognised that tourist related facilities

help stimulate local economies and promoting tourism is also something which is strongly supported by BMBC.

Our Oxspring Fields proposals have not been formulated to hijack or pre-empt the Neighbourhood Plan, but rather to deliver in full and on one site the complete market and affordable housing needs of the village (which have been identified by an independent and professional consultancy), whilst delivering the vast majority of identified aspirations, and more. Logically, the delivery of this site is the only way in which local aspirations will be realized.

Considering that the existing ONP boundary already includes 3.17ha of our Oxspring Fields site, we would welcome the opportunity of a meeting between ourselves and our respective consultants, to sit down, in a calm and constructive manner, to discuss and consider how a phased development could be the solution, to delivering both the identified housing needs and other aspirations of the Parish.

We trust that you will give this matter your further consideration and look forward to hearing from you with dates of your availability.

Yours sincerely  
**YORKSHIRE LAND Limited**

**Steven Green**  
Managing Director

Cc:	Ms Louise Kirkup	-	Kirkwells Ltd
	Ms Stephanie Tolson	-	Clerk to Oxspring Parish Council