

PLANNING REF : 230872  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Green Community Centre  
: Arborfield, Reading  
: RG2 9ND  
SUBMITTED BY : Barkham Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/05/2023

COMMENTS:

Whilst recognising that the District Centre is long overdue, we consider this application to be flawed. Barkham Parish Council (BPC) have long argued with Crest, WBC and others, that the Community Centre should be housed in a purpose-built facility to: 1) Optimise the internal layout and 2) Overlook the village green to provide a pleasing outlook. All attempts to enter into a constructive discussion with Crest have been thwarted especially since the intention was announced to repurpose the library building.

Attention to both these points would maximise the opportunity of finding an operator and to make it attractive for the users. If either of these are elements missing it will become an unused 'White Elephant' and a burden to Wokingham Borough Council. Building the Community Centre overlooking the village green will benefit the many, not just the few who are fortunate enough to occupy those houses with this outlook.

BPC have also argued that it is unnecessary to include a commercial nursery (Hazebrouck) in the Community Centre since provision has already been made for a pre-school (Poperinghe) in a separate building. Should Hazebrouck wish to build a nursery in the District Centre they could be provided with the space to do this, but it should be at their expense, not with public funds. In addition, the noise from a nursery within the Community Centre will disturb other users and make some activities impossible. It questionable whether a refurbished building could achieve optimal energy efficiency that will be increasingly required during the coming years, appropriate sound insulation especially with respect to the nursery as mentioned above and a layout that will create the ambience and hence attractiveness of nearby successful bench marks.

A purpose-built Community Centre could be designed with the help of users (perhaps from Arborfield Green and Finchwood) and from potential operator(s). This would ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' and maximise the opportunity for success. In addition, it could be designed with future expansion in mind. None of this applies to this proposal.

BPC have looked at costings and believe the parish council(s) and others may be able to cover any increase in these. In addition, there should be no delay to the overall delivery of the District Centre since applications for the supermarket and pub have yet to be submitted.

BPC also have concerns regarding building schedules. We are particularly concerned that the houses will be constructed first and that the Community Centre will follow only when the land occupied by the current Community Centre is required by Crest for yet more housing. It is well known that the residents of Arborfield Green are opposed to further housing until there are significant improvements

to the existing infrastructure and yet this application proposes a further 200 dwellings without any commitment to build the Community Centre, Supermarket or Pub.

There are also safety issues. BPC can foresee a situation where the Arborfield Green residents and others will be required to traverse a building site to access the Community Centre or shops.

The application gives no explanation why some of those elements of the s106 Agreements that are missing such as the Medical Centre.

For the reasons given above Barkham Parish Council are unable to support this application but would welcome further discussions.

PLANNING REF : 230872  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Green Community Centre  
: Arborfield, Reading  
: RG2 9ND  
SUBMITTED BY : Barkham Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/08/2023

COMMENTS:

Barkham Parish Council can see no material changes to the plans that addresses the concerns of the parish council, and therefore, the previous comments submitted by the parish council on the 25th May 2023 still stand.

The Parish Council also have concerns that Wokingham Borough Council has proposed the Bohunt 6th Form Centre be sited in the legacy building (MOD Library) where the community centre is currently contained in the plans. This has been widely shared on Facebook by Cllr Pittock and Cllr Cornish, informing the residents of the possibility of this building being used, and that feasibility studies are being undertaken. Where does this leave the community centre? There is nowhere else in the plans for it to go!

The Council is also disappointed to see that the number of dwellings has been increased in the revised plans.

Due to the previous comments not being considered, the proposed plans for the Bohunt 6th Form centre and the additional houses that have been added, the Parish Council are unable to support this application and request that it be refused.

**From:** Barkham Parish Council <clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk>

**Sent:** Thursday, September 7, 2023 10:41 AM

**To:** Nick Chancellor <Nick.Chancellor@wokingham.gov.uk>

**Subject:** District Centre Application

## External Email

**CAUTION: This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL - STOP & THINK before clicking a link or opening attachments.**

Dear Nick,

As discussed I reported our discussions to the council, and stated that you had asked if we had any comments on the appearance of the community centre as planned. Other than the comments already submitted on the location of the community centre, the Council have no comments on the design of the building.

Kind regards

Ellen Tims  
Clerk to Barkham Parish Council

Barkham Parish Council  
Arborfield Green Community Centre  
Arborfield  
Reading  
RG2 9ND  
0118 976 2089

Please note my working hours are 9.30am – 2pm Monday to Thursday.

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PLANNING REF : 230872  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Village Hall  
: Eversley Road, Arborfield  
: RG2 9PQ  
SUBMITTED BY : Arborfield & Newland Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/05/2023

COMMENTS:

Arborfield and Newland Parish Council welcome the submission of the planning application for the Arborfield Green Village Centre and note that the applicant has submitted this application significantly later than was required in the original approval of the outline plan for SDL. The Council notes the strength of feeling in the local community that the lack of facilities is affecting residents' quality of life and is leading to a significant increase in road traffic in the area as residents have to use private cars to access shops and other facilities. In this context we would like to see Crest

Nicholson proceed with this development with all haste and WBC to impose a planning condition to ensure that the facilities envisaged in this application are built before the housing that is also part of this application. While we support the overall design and aims of the application and we welcome the re-use of the ex-army building as the community centre we would like to see the old stables brought into the landscaping and use plan in this parcel so that this important historical asset can be enjoyed by the local community.

PLANNING REF : 230872  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Village Hall  
: Reading, Berkshire  
: RG2 9PQ  
SUBMITTED BY : The Arborfield & Newland Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 24/08/2023

COMMENTS:

Arborfield & Newland Parish Council would like to see the landscaping scheme include the old stables

PLANNING REF : 230872  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : FBC Centre  
: Gorse Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham  
: RG40 4ES  
SUBMITTED BY : Finchampstead Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 25/05/2023

COMMENTS:

The only observation made by the Council was in relation to the Community Centre, which they felt must be fit for purpose whether refurbished using the existing building, or a new building.

PLANNING REF : 230872  
PROPERTY ADDRESS : FBC Centre  
: Gorse Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham  
: RG40 4ES  
SUBMITTED BY : Finchampstead Parish Council  
DATE SUBMITTED : 17/08/2023

COMMENTS:

The Council is disappointed to see there is a further increase in dwellings, with still no significant improvements to the existing infrastructure of the District Centre in terms of the facilities for existing residents such as the Community Centre, Supermarket, Pub and other retail shops.