

Planning- A guide to how the parish council deals with planning applications.

This guide will cover the following –

1. What our role is
2. What we do when a planning application is received.
3. What happens next?

We hope you find this guide useful, if you would like to make any comments about this guide please let us know by emailing

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1. What is our role?

The role of the Parish Council (PC) is to represent local views and should: -

- Provide local knowledge.
- Raise areas of concern.
- Inform, debate, and add value to the process.
- Contact and involve ward (Unitary) councillors if required.

The parish council is a statutory consultee in the planning process and must be informed of all **Full** planning applications, and any amendments to those applications, within the parish.

The PC can only comment on these planning applications in the same way as any other member of the public, however, any comments by the PC must be agreed during a properly called public council meeting.

Members of the public attending the meeting can comment, speak in support of, or object to any application during the 'Open Forum' segment of the meeting, but not during the council's deliberations later. However, they may be asked to provide clarity on details of the application during the PC's deliberations at the invitation of the person chairing the meeting.

Comments agreed in the council meeting are submitted in writing by the Parish Clerk to the relevant planning authority. The Planning Authority for West Hunsbury Parish Council is **West Northamptonshire Council**.

2. What happens when we receive a planning application notification?

The first thing that happens is the Clerk receives an email from West Northants Council, the email contains details of the application, when it was submitted, when it is to be decided and who the planning officer is.

The Clerk will look at the application and, in consultation with councillors, will determine whether the application can be discussed within a normal parish council meeting or whether an extra council meeting needs to be convened. The size and type of application would be considered as well as the closing date for consultations.

Once the meeting has been agreed the Clerk posts the agenda for that meeting on the noticeboards in the parish and on the parish council website and social media. The agenda is always posted at least 3 clear days before the meeting date.

At the start of the meeting there is a 15-minute public forum, this is for all residents to offer their views on any subject on the agenda. This session can be extended with the agreement of the Chairman.

Each person is typically allowed 3 minutes to speak; however, this is at the discretion of the Chairman.

Once this session has closed the public are not allowed to speak anymore, this is so that councillors can talk about the items on the agenda without interruption. Councillors might ask questions of the public if it is thought to be useful.

Prior to the meeting councillors will study the plans, forms and details submitted with the application carefully.

Please remember that the PC is **only a consultee** and their response counts as **one submission**.

The councillors will then discuss the application and agree what they will submit to West Northants Council. There are several options, the parish council can **Object** to an application, they can **Support** an application, or they can send in **Observations**.

The parish council have to consider each application on its own merits, they can only respond based on **planning matters**. Any comments or objections made must have a genuine material planning consideration and be of relevance to the development.

Material Planning Considerations include: -

- Layout, density.
- Risk of flooding or pollution.
- Overlooking and loss of privacy.
- Overshadowing and loss light (daylight/sunlight).
- Access and traffic generation (highway safety).
- Local economy.
- Design, appearance and materials.
- Appearance, effects on street, specially designated area or building (e.g. conservation areas, listed buildings, ancient monuments, etc.).
- Adequacy of parking.
- Noise and smell.
- Landscape, contamination, loss of trees, etc.
- Cumulative impact.
- Past planning history or appeal decisions of the site.
- Central government policy and guidance (National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance).

The following are **NOT** considered to be material considerations: -

- History of applicant.
- Loss of view.
- Commercial competition.
- Change from previous scheme.
- Impact on property value.
- Restrictive covenants.
- Ownership of land, right of access.
- Noise & disturbance from construction work.

- Land & boundary disputes.
- Land ownership.
- Damage to property.
- Private rights of way.
- Deeds & covenants.
- Private issues between neighbours.
- Lots of objectors.

Once the parish councillors have agreed their response the Clerk will submit it to West Northants Council within the required timeframe. Once an application has been discussed and a response has been agreed that application cannot be discussed again within 6 months unless new information is forthcoming or a special motion is approved to revisit a decision.

3. What happens next?

Over 95% of applications are decided by Planning Officers working for West Northants Council. Occasionally an application may be 'called in'. This means that it will be decided by the Planning Committee. This usually happens to applications which are large or controversial, have generated a lot of public interest, involve decisions which maybe contrary to local planning policies or involve employees of the council.

If an application is to be decided by the West Northants Council Planning Committee, the parish council will be notified along with everyone else who responded. Planning Committee meetings are held in public, and residents can attend and register to speak.

Once a decision is reached, either by planning officer or by committee, it will be published, and all respondents will be informed. An application can be **Refused** or **Approved**, with or without conditions.

If an application is **Refused** permission the applicants can appeal to HM Planning Inspectorate within 6 months of the decision being made. The application would then be considered by the Planning Inspectorate and the decision either overturned or upheld.