

# **Wardington Parish Council Response to Cherwell Local Plan Review**

## **REF: LPR-A-175**

### **Introduction**

Our response focuses on the potential effect of the Local Plan on Wardington, specifically a substantial increase in the number of houses in the village.

The inclusion in the Plan of the offer of two parcels of land for housing totalling 15.4 hectares (38 acres), Reference LPR-A-175, is of great concern to the Parish Council. If developed intensively it has the potential to increase the number of houses in Wardington by 300% and for the parish as a whole by 200%. It would also increase pressure on the A361, the side roads to Cropredy and Chacombe and the congested Junction 11 of the M40.

As will be shown from the results of the earlier Wardington Community Led Plan and the Open Village Meeting held on October 27, the people of Wardington are overwhelmingly against this potential development and the change of use of the land it involves.

### **The Parish of Wardington**

The Parish comprises the village of Wardington and the hamlets of Williamscot (one mile south west on the road to Cropredy) and Coton (one and a half miles south on the road to Chacombe). It is an historic conservation village of charm and character with many listed buildings. It is in Category B for housing development (only minor, infilling and conversions allowed). It has defined boundaries with building not permitted outside them. There are 189 dwellings in Wardington itself, 33 in Williamscot and 8 in Coton. A total of 230. The population is 600.

The centre of Wardington is three and a half miles from Junction 11 of the M40 and the outskirts of Banbury. The A361 passes close to Williamscot and goes right through Lower Wardington. The Parish overlooks Banbury and the new commercial area of Banbury 15. The rural countryside between these and the village is a welcome and environmentally important green space.

### **The Views of the People of Wardington**

The Parish Community Led Plan resulted in the following findings on Traffic and Housing:

- People were very concerned about the volume of traffic on the A361
- People were concerned about the use of unsuitable side roads as rat runs at peak times
- 98% were against any large scale, intensive, developer led housing projects in the village

Close to 100 residents attended the October 27 Open Meeting. It was explained that although the LPR-A-175 proposal only mentions 25 new houses, Cherwell District Council are likely to insist on between 20 and 30 new houses per hectare if it is to be accepted. A total of 300 to 450 new houses.

No one spoke in favour. A show of hands was unanimously against. There was great concern about the permanent harm such a development would do to the village and its character.

## **Amenities and Utilities**

Wardington lacks amenities. There is no school, no shop, no sub post office and just one pub.

The village is at the end of the line for water and power. There are frequent problems and losses of service for both. The capacity of the sewerage system is limited. The control of surface water, particularly on the A361, gives constant problems.

## **The A361**

The A361 runs through the centre of Lower Wardington. It is narrow with blind corners. Lorries struggle to pass by each other. From time to time they fail to do so. The pavement is narrower than legally required.

There are frequent accidents on the A361 close to Wardington. When these occur emergency services have difficulty getting through the village. For other vehicles there are no convenient diversions and none which heavy lorries can use.

The A361 is used as a main route between the M1 and the north and the M40 north and south. Despite being an A road it is, in reality, more like a dangerous country lane. Traffic on it is increasing by 6% a year (that is doubling every 12 years) without taking account of HS2 construction vehicles.

## **M40 Junction 11**

The junction is already a problem at busy times and one of the most air polluted locations in Oxfordshire. These problems will get worse because of the commercial developments at Banbury 15 and in the event of any major new housing in Wardington.

## **The Natural Environment**

Wardington is surrounded by attractive rolling countryside crisscrossed by footpaths. These include the Jurassic Way and the Battlefields Trail. Hedges and streams are a feature and make a major contribution to the support of wildlife. It is encouraging that several local farmers and landowners take an active interest in nature conservation. Areas like this will become increasingly important.

## **The Responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities for Conservation Areas**

By way of a reminder, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas.

## **The Potential Housing Development in the Local Plan (Reference LPR-A-175)**

### **Wardington Parish Council Objections**

1. The amount of land offered in LPR-A-175, with the potential for 300 to 450 new houses, is massively disproportionate to the present village.
2. It would destroy the character of this historic, Category B, conservation village
3. Our view is that this proposal within the Cherwell Local Plan Review does not meet the requirement of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Planning Areas) Act 1990
4. The land is outside the village boundaries for housing development
5. The lack of services means it is not sustainable
6. The extra pressure a development such as this would put on the A361 would make a bad situation worse and is likely to lead to an increase in fatal accidents
7. The only feasible route for a bypass round Wardington in the future is threatened by this development
8. The combination of this proposed development, with that of the development of Banbury 15, will have a further negative effect on the already congested and polluted M40 Junction 11
9. If this development is accepted delays and congestion will worsen. The local side roads, which are virtually single line in places, will be increasingly used as rat runs. This will adversely affect the quality of life of other communities and increase the dangers to other road users, cyclists, walkers and horse riders.
10. The quality of the local natural environment is a feature of the parish and the area. It is threatened by this substantial new housing development.

These concerns and objections have the overwhelming support of residents of the Parish of Wardington as confirmed by the Open Village Meeting held on October 27 2021 and demonstrated by the findings of the Community Led Plan.

The Council requests that the proposal is rejected and not included in the Local Plan.

Wardington Parish Council

November 8 2021

The Locations of the Land Being Offered under the Reference LPR-A-175 are Hatched

