

History of Major Development in Warfield

The major new development in Warfield dates back to around 1976, when the then government required new development to take place in Berkshire and in particular identified Warfield, Winkfield and Binfield as the main recipients for Bracknell expansion. All the local parishes objected and this also saw the inception of a local action group – NORPAG Northern Parishes Action Group, supported by all three parishes. Expert consultants were hired and although the Structure Plan was approved, the outline planning application made by the developers with the support of the Parish Councils and NORPAG was refused by the local authority. The developers took their plan to Appeal where the refusal was overturned by the Secretary of State and 3500 dwellings were approved for Warfield (by far the largest development of the three parishes).

Normally when a planning application is made, the local authority and the applicant will enter into negotiations for both financial and other contributions towards facilities for the benefit of the residents. When an application is won on Appeal the developer is only obliged to supply the statutory minimum facilities. This is why there are few play areas, no open spaces, community halls, pubs etc within Whitegrove or Quelm Park - it also resulted in more houses as no significant open space had to be provided in the development area.

Scroll forward to 1997 and again major development is required by government. An unelected quango was set up in the form of the Government Office of the South East (GOSE). It was from here that the government's proposed housing numbers were distributed. Bracknell Borough was given 11 – 13000 dwellings to accommodate.

As one of the major development areas, the Whitegrove/Quelm Park Urban extension was identified. (Others include Staff College, Amen Corner and Jennetts Park).

The development process required the local authority to publish numerous development plan documents which made up the Local Development Framework. The chief document amongst these was the Core Strategy published in 2005/6. In this was the proposal to erect 2200 dwellings in a mixed use sustainable community bounded by Forest road and Harvest Ride – the Urban Extension.

Warfield Parish Council and other interested parties in Warfield strongly objected to the urban extension proposal. Public meetings were held, Borough Officers faced residents at open forums. Ultimately, as the Parish Council had known from the start, the urban extension remained in the Core Strategy, unchanged, 2200 dwellings. Councillors and residents who had seen the permissions for Whitegrove and Quelm Park allowed in the 1970s reasoned that at this stage co-operation would bring the most benefits to Warfield residents rather than confrontation.

It is with this in mind that your Parish Council has chosen to work with Borough Officers, Councillors and the Developers in order to try to achieve as much open space

and community facilities and where possible influence the distribution of the housing, schools and other facilities sympathetically across the site to reflect the existing settlements and the geography of this part of Warfield.

Which brings us back to the Changing face of Warfield article as below:

The changing face of Warfield

New homes are coming to the neighbourhood. Public consultation is closed. As early as September 2005 we informed residents of plans to build 2500 new homes in Warfield, through The Wren, a leaflet, public meetings, exhibitions and consultations. Since then, with submissions to the Borough Council and face to face meetings with Council Officers, Borough Councillors and developers, the Parish Council has been working to mitigate the effects of the new development.

The total number of new homes has yet to be confirmed given the size of the area to be developed and the physical constraints including the flood plain, topography and the proposed average housing density. Bracknell Forest Council has proposed 2,200, with developers appearing to lean towards 2,000, while the Parish Council believes 1523 homes to be more appropriate.

The land to be developed will stretch from Forest Road in the north to Harvest Ride in the south, from Binfield Road in the west to Jigs Lane North (as far as the stream) in the east.

The Parish Council is working to influence the distribution and density of housing, the location of a new neighbourhood centre, primary school(s) and long awaited allotments, as well as the routing and purpose of the link road which could move traffic away from Newell Green and Warfield Street. We are trying to preserve the semi-rural nature of Cabbage Hill, an area of special landscape importance, and this is now adopted Borough Council policy, reinforcing its significance in the local area. We are promoting the protection of historic byways including Avery Lane and Quelm Lane and green corridors including Hedge Lane. We are encouraging the extension of the footpath bridleway

network to the north and west of the new development. Larks Hill and our community orchard, Priory Field, the Memorial Ground and Garth Meadows will be protected.

The forthcoming sequence of events will be:

- The Borough considers all consultation responses
- The Borough produces the final plan (this is the final version of Warfield Supplementary Planning Document which will provide the starting point for a detailed master plan of the area providing a set of rules to be followed by developers when submitting planning applications).
- The Borough Council adopts the final plan in the second half of 2011.
- The plan goes to the Secretary of State
- The plan is examined by an independent planning inspector
- Formal approval of the plan is anticipated in 2012

While this is happening we will continue to have formal and informal discussions with Officers, Borough Councillors, developers and others to ensure as far as possible we influence the development to the benefit of residents.

It is anticipated that the first outline planning application is likely to be submitted by house builders later this year or early next year.

The Parish Council surgery takes place at the Parish Office on the first Saturday of each month. If you have any concerns, questions or suggestions please do drop by to speak to a Borough or Parish Councillor. For more background information about the development of Warfield visit the Parish Council website.