

Boames Farm planning application 20/02322/FUL

Written Submission to 16-12-2020 Planning Committee from Enborne Parish Council

Enborne Parish Council strongly supported this very well-designed planning application at its special planning meeting on Monday 2nd November 2020 noting widespread resident support.

The Tree Officer has visited the site and confirms no existing trees would be damaged and planned new woodland and hedgerow planting is welcomed. The proposed development links Little Copse with Redding's Copse which, unlike Little Copse, is designated ancient woodland, thus creating a linked landscape promoting increasing biodiversity.

The Arboricultural Report with recommendations incorporated in the plan strengthens woodland protections and creates a sheltered area behind the barns for undisturbed exploitation by wildlife.

The nearby mature (over 100 years old) oaks within the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) bordering the proposed development area show no sign of competition for light from that direction for well beyond the 20 years conjectured elsewhere, so woodland absence. The photo on page 16 (Public Document Pack – Photographs) shows a typical woodland edge growth pattern. The foreground shows the area for development is not woodland and a Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) survey in 2004 (Design and Access Statement (DAS) Appendix 5) suggested that area could be removed from LWS designation as it was not woodland. The photographs presented of aerial views taken in 2010 and 2018 therefore do not show woodland and the shot from 1999 is of even less quality. The pond was a short-lived feature which dried out naturally. The shot on page 8 showing the proposed barns in their setting is copied from Plate 4 of the DAS and must be seen in the context of Plate 1 showing the area today without the barns.

The application demonstrates continued pursuit by this farmer of sensitive management of his farmland environment well summarised in the conclusion, Section 5, of the DAS and includes active encouragement of increased biodiversity within Little Copse itself. In a wider context this farmer also carefully maintains areas of locally rare 'Lowland Meadow Priority Habitat' helped by Higher-Level Stewardship status. The role of browsing animals in the maintenance of such habitats is well understood and the nationally important rare breed herd to be supported by the development is key to that ongoing management.

The fundamental problem with objections raised to this development is that they rely entirely on alleged loss of historic woodland and ancient woodland indicators. The development loses no historic woodland and the ancient woodland indicators are a feature of Little Copse as a whole. The ecological appraisal found no species of concern within the proposed development site.

Photographs of the street scene on pages 9-12 and 30 indicate what would be lost from the rural appeal of the street scene if the suggested alternative site was implemented. The local community would object and the loss of a large area of prime grazing land would be uneconomic in a farm struggling to be sustainable while maintaining high animal and environmental standards. The farmer seeks 'Farm Assured' status to promote his high-quality grass fed produce.

Enborne Parish Council 14/12/2020