MINUTES of the Planning Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 26th October 2026 at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place, SN12 6ES at 7:00pm

Present: Councillors Richard Wood (Chair), Alan Baines (Vice-Chair), David Pafford (Vice-Chair of Council), John Glover (Chair of Council), Mark Harris, Peter Richardson and Martin Franks.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Fiona Dey (Parish Officer)

In attendance: Councillor Tony Hemmings (as an observer), Wiltshire Councillors Phil Alford and Nick Holder (part); Vaughan Thompson (Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) Planning Consultant - part); 4 members of the public, including a representative of Pathfinder Place Residents' Association

On Zoom: None

245/26 Welcome, Housekeeping and Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Clerk outlined the fire evacuation arrangements and advised that the meeting was being recorded for publication on YouTube, with the recording to be removed following approval of the minutes. Members of the public were advised that they did not need to give their names or addresses when speaking.

Wiltshire Council's planning application for the proposed central depot at Bowerhill had been submitted and would be considered at the next meeting.

246/26 Apologies

No apologies were received from committee members.

247/26 Declarations of Interest

a. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

b. Dispensation Requests

None received.

248/26 Consideration of Items in Closed Session

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting as required as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Agenda Item 13 Planning Enforcement: potential legal matter

Agenda Item 14b Contact with developers: preliminary developer contact not yet confirmed as being in the public domain

249/26 Public Participation

Standing Orders were suspended to allow public participation.

Wiltshire Councillor Alford - Land between Melksham Oak Community School and Eastern Way (agenda item 10a ii)

Wiltshire Councillor Alford spoke, as a resident, in support of exploring Local Green Space designation for a field owned by Wiltshire Council, crossed by the new walking route towards Melksham Oak Community School (MELW18 from Eastern Way to the school). He explained that the area was increasingly valued by walkers, families and dog walkers as development progressed nearby, and was becoming an important local green sanctuary.

Members recalled that the land might have been associated with biodiversity compensation for the school, including skylark habitat. The Clerk confirmed that it was not designated as Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan, but its existing protection and any biodiversity obligations would need to be checked. The matter was also considered under minute 249/26(a).

Wiltshire Councillor Holder - Pathfinder Place highway works (agenda item 14a i)

Wiltshire Councillor Holder reported confirmation that the Section 278 remedial works on the existing public highway at Pathfinder Way had been completed. These were separate from the outstanding Section 38 works within the residential development, which remained incomplete, with no confirmed completion date.

The outstanding matters included highway adoption, lighting, kerbs, road markings, access to utilities and encroachments into land intended for adoption. Some defects had reportedly been outstanding for at least two and a half years. Councillor Holder intended to raise the lack of a programme with the responsible Cabinet Member at the next Cabinet meeting.

MP1 described difficulties obtaining a coordinated response through the management company. Councillor Holder clarified that works within the unadopted Section 38 area remained the developer's responsibility and were being pursued by Wiltshire Council's highway officer.

MP1 - Land south of Western Way construction management (agenda item 9d)

MP1, the Pathfinder Place Residents' Association representative, commented on the developer's revised Construction Method Statement (CMS) that had been submitted for Land South of Western Way (PL/2026/01378). He welcomed the acceptance of construction access and exit from/to Western Way (A365) and the proposed exclusion of HGVs from Maitland Place. However, he felt that overall, the revised document was lacking as it still contained ambiguities and omissions.

MP1 queried why traffic controls on Western Way were proposed when the highway officer had indicated that they should not be necessary. References to HGVs did not consistently cover all construction traffic, leaving uncertainty about vans, contractors and other site movements. The large vehicle and delivery routing plan referred to in the CMS did not appear to be available publicly. The execution plan was marked draft, was unsigned and included a key for features not clearly shown on the drawing.

Further concerns related to drainage information, arrangements for communication with the Council and local community, and delivery hours. The stated delivery hours appeared inconsistent with the undertaking to avoid peak periods, without explaining how this would be managed. Members also queried where vehicles would wait before being called to the site, given the statement that HGVs would not be held on the A365. The Committee's comments are recorded at minute 248/26(d).

Standing Orders were reinstated.

250/26 Wiltshire Council Local Plan

Feedback from the Melksham Area Local Plan Round Table Meeting

Members received feedback from the meeting held earlier that evening with Wiltshire Council, Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council. Wiltshire Council's Leader, Councillor Ian Thorn, and officers from strategic planning and development management had attended. The discussion had been structured around seven questions submitted in advance, for which Wiltshire Council had provided written responses.

Vaughan Thompson (Neighbourhood Plan Planning Consultant) provided a summary of the meeting, which he considered had been positive and constructive. He highlighted the importance of the Town and Parish Councils continuing to engage constructively with Wiltshire Council on the emerging Local Plan, using the adopted Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) and its policies as the starting point.

Councillor Thorn had indicated that the meeting was intended to be the beginning of an ongoing dialogue, rather than a one-off discussion, with further engagement alongside the formal Local Plan process. This commitment was welcomed by Members.

Strategy, growth and infrastructure

Vaughan explained that Wiltshire Council faced significant challenges in preparing a new Local Plan within the Government's 30-month timetable, alongside an 83% increase in housing requirements and the need to commence work on the wider strategic development framework.

He highlighted the importance of considering the cumulative impacts of development, rather than individual proposals in isolation, particularly in relation to transport and infrastructure provision.

The Parish Council's mapping of existing, allocated and proposed developments had been particularly valuable in illustrating the scale of development around Melksham. The Clerk reported that Wiltshire Council's Head of Development Management, Gary Collins, had recognised the value of this work and indicated that Wiltshire Council was considering producing similar information.

Transport and the A350 bypass

Vaughan reported that Wiltshire Council intended to use strategic transport modelling to inform the location and scale of future development and assess its impact on the highway network. This could identify the need for a Melksham bypass or other significant transport interventions to accommodate future growth.

However, Wiltshire Council had indicated that, without a current policy framework or funding programme, it was unable to safeguard the indicative A350 bypass route, which therefore carried very little weight in current planning decisions. Members expressed concern that speculative development could prejudice the opportunity to deliver a bypass in the future.

It was reported that Councillor Thorn would discuss with colleagues whether any further action could be taken to protect the potential route.

Energy infrastructure

Vaughan highlighted the value of the Parish Council's work in identifying the cumulative impacts of renewable energy developments, including solar farms, battery storage and associated grid infrastructure.

Wiltshire Council was expected to engage with utility providers, and the locally assembled evidence could make an important contribution to those discussions, particularly given the limited resources available to the authority to undertake equivalent work.

Neighbourhood planning and cumulative impacts

Vaughan explained that discussions had considered how JMNP2 could be used to address the pressures arising from speculative development.

Although there was no immediate solution, he considered that there was an opportunity for further discussions about assessing cumulative transport impacts and taking a more strategic approach to infrastructure delivery, rather than considering developments individually.

He emphasised that the meeting had been constructive rather than confrontational and had opened the door to further engagement with Wiltshire Council.

Future engagement

Vaughan suggested that the seven questions submitted to Wiltshire Council could provide a useful basis for further topic-based discussions or workshops, allowing individual matters to be explored in greater detail.

Members welcomed Councillor Thorn's commitment to continued dialogue. When the possibility of topic-based workshops was raised, it was suggested that the outstanding subjects should first be considered before deciding on the most appropriate format for future discussions.

It was agreed to continue constructive engagement with Wiltshire Council and Melksham Town Council on the emerging Local Plan, with further consideration to be given to the format and subjects of future discussions, including the possibility of topic-based workshops.

Vaughan Thompson and Wiltshire Councillor Alford left the meeting.

251/26 New Planning Applications

a. **PL/2026/06650 – 41 Lysander Road, Bowerhill** Construction of a new industrial manufacturing and storage building with entrance office, WCs and carport.

Comments: NO OBJECTION, subject to Wiltshire Council satisfactorily addressing parking, servicing and highway safety.

The Parish Council welcomes the expansion of an existing local business and the more intensive use of previously developed employment land, consistent with JMNP2 Policy 10: Employment Sites. Members considered the proposed scale, design and materials appropriate to the industrial estate and welcomed the solar canopy, electric vehicle charging and cycle storage. Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policies 4, 11 and 20 are also relevant.

However, the information indicates an increase in employees from 41 to 46 while recording six existing and six proposed parking spaces. Wiltshire Council should

establish how parking for the whole business, including employees and visitors, is currently accommodated, whether any provision on other land is available and secured, and whether the development would displace vehicles onto already congested estate roads.

The servicing layout appears able to accommodate only one large vehicle at a time. Clarification is requested of delivery frequency, vehicle sizes and arrangements if a second vehicle arrives, so that waiting, loading and manoeuvring do not obstruct the highway or compromise pedestrian safety. These matters should be assessed against Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 60, 61 and 64, relevant parking standards and NPPF Policy TR4.

Members noted that a smaller building had previously been permitted but not constructed. That history did not resolve the parking and servicing implications of the larger proposal.

b. **PL/2026/06352 – Outmarsh Farm, Outmarsh** Retrospective retention and use of an existing static caravan as short-term holiday accommodation for a maximum of two guests, with existing parking and access arrangements.

Comments: OBJECT

The Parish Council considers that the application has not demonstrated compliance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 39: Tourist Development. In this countryside location, evidence is required of the relationship to a particular countryside attraction, the absence of suitable alternative buildings or sites for reuse, compatibility with the surroundings, adequate access and infrastructure, and reasonable access to local services and an employment base. The proposed holiday use has not been adequately justified against those criteria.

Members were particularly concerned about the relationship between the proposed parking and the caravan either side of a Bus Gate with an ANPR camera in place. The arrangements appeared to require guests carrying luggage and shopping to follow an indirect route of 50-70 metres, beside a road with a narrow footway. Wiltshire Council should establish that there is a safe, practical and clearly defined pedestrian route between parking and accommodation.
The Planning Supporting Statement says “No new highway access or alteration to the public road is proposed” and the parish council note that access off the highway was made, we understand without permission or knowledge of Wiltshire Council as the Highway Authority, when the caravan was originally installed. This was raised with Natalie Rivans, Planning Enforcement at the time.

Adequate foul drainage, sewage disposal and other services must also be demonstrated. Core Policies 61 and 68 and Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policy 11 are relevant to these concerns.

Members noted the earlier refusal and dismissed appeal relating to agricultural accommodation and that the Inspector had not identified unacceptable landscape harm from the caravan itself. The parish council’s objection to the present application therefore focuses on the justification for holiday accommodation, access and infrastructure, rather than assuming that the previous refusal automatically determines this different use.

Wiltshire Council is also requested to consider NPPF Policy DM8(2). Where the evidence establishes that unauthorised development was intentional, that fact should carry substantial weight in determining a retrospective application. The planning and enforcement history should be examined for that purpose;

retrospective status alone does not establish intentional unauthorised development.

c. **PL/2026/06409 – Land along and south of Bath Road, Bowerhill** Temporary removal of 24 metres of hedgerow in four sections to enable Wessex Water to reroute two water mains associated with the proposed Gompels warehouse development, with reinstatement following completion.

Comments: NO OBJECTION.

Members noted that the notice provided for replanting in accordance with the submitted Wessex Water standards. The reinstatement proposals are relevant to Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policy 17: Trees and Hedgerows.

d. **PL/2026/06682 – 6 Plane Tree Close, Whitley** Works to the protected London plane tree, comprising reduction of overextended lateral branches and pruning to balance its shape.

Comments: NO OBJECTION.

Members considered the proposed pruning appropriate. The tree's size and previous pruning history were noted, together with its long-standing Tree Preservation Order. Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policy 17 is relevant to retaining the tree while allowing appropriate management.

252/26 Amended Plans and Additional Information

a. **PL/2026/02458 – Land east of Eastern Way, Melksham, Lidl**

Comments:

The Parish Council welcomes the revised highway proposals, including the splitter island and widening of the existing refuge crossing on the southern arm of the Sandridge Common roundabout to three metres.

The Parish Council feel that a direct and convenient pedestrian and cycle connection to the adjoining Blackmore Farm development still remains necessary. Residents should be able to reach the store without driving around the road network or making an unnecessarily circuitous journey on foot – which would be across fields via the Right of Way (MELW27) until phase 2 of the adjacent development is built (still not at reserved matters). This should be coordinated with the adjoining developer and secured as a usable route, consistent with Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policy 11 and NPPF Policies DP3(2)(d) and TR4(1)(a)–(b).

The proposed £35,000 contribution towards two bus stops is welcomed, but the Parish council seek clarification of the specification. The Parish Council requests shelters (with protection from all weathers and a seat – not a perch), real-time passenger information and accessible boarding kerbs, rather than provision limited to poles and flags. The agreed works and funding should be sufficient to deliver those facilities. This request supports the sustainable transport objectives of JMNP2 Policy 11.

b. **PL/2025/05552 – Land south of Brockleaze, Neston, Corsham**

Battery Energy Storage System and associated infrastructure, outside Melksham Without parish.

Councillor Richardson outlined two further addenda prepared by Community Action: Whitley and Shaw (CAWS):

- Addendum 13 maintained the objection, addressing unresolved concerns about protected bats, cumulative impacts, groundwater protection, fire safety and the compatibility of the proposed mitigation measures. It also sought enforceable safeguards throughout the development's lifetime and called for Wiltshire Council to determine the application.
- Addendum 14 consolidated 57 issues which CAWS considered remained unanswered, with references to previous submissions. This provided a single schedule for Wiltshire Council to address when determining the application.

Members welcomed the consolidated evidence and supported both submissions.

Comments: Melksham Without Parish Council maintains its objection, and supports and endorses the CAWS representations in Addenda 13 and 14.

253/26 Current Planning Applications

a. **PL/2026/04916 – Land west of Semington Road, Berryfield**

Outline proposal for up to 225 dwellings, public open space and landscape buffers, including rights of way and accommodation of the proposed Melksham Link Canal route.

i. Prioritised List of Infrastructure and Community Requests

Members considered the consolidated list of infrastructure and community requests prepared from the Parish Council's representations, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (WWCT) report and other local evidence. The developer had requested priorities.

The Clerk explained that identifying priorities did not imply support for the application or replace requirements sought by statutory consultees.

Resolved: To submit the following list of priorities to the developer and to the planning portal:

Priority 1**:**

- **Highway safety:** The Walk Wheel Cycle Trust recommendations were the first priority, including traffic calming, safer crossings and improved walking and cycling routes. Wiltshire Council's transport services should coordinate their requests, avoiding duplicate studies or contributions.

Priority 2:

- **Community shop:** Seek serviced hardstanding suitable for visiting traders and a possible future shop, and investigate commercial interest with Wiltshire Council's economic development service.
- **Bus provision:** Retain the request for a service linking Berryfield and Semington Road with the railway station, town and Bowerhill employment areas, rather than simply replacing funding for the Sunday X34.
- **Rights of way:** Seek accessible, year-round routes towards the river and canal, including investigation of a diversion around Boundary Farm.

Priority 3:

- Other requests: Retain the remaining items for discussion.

Resolved: To place additional cemetery provision on the next Full Council agenda to consider whether and how the Parish Council wishes to proceed, and to seek clarification of Melksham Town Council's position to inform future requests for land and developer contributions.

ii. Developer meeting notes

Resolved: To approve the notes of the Bellway and Savills meeting held on 7th October 2026 (Appendix 1).

iii. Connectivity

Members welcomed consultee support for connections between adjoining developments but were concerned that the submitted land-use and access plan did not show direct links north to the Living Space/Sovereign rear of Townsend Farm developments (Phase 1 built with occupation in Q1 2027 and Phase 2 to commence on site), or south to the approved Martin Grant Homes Berryfield Lane development. Residents should not have to leave the developments and travel around their perimeter to reach neighbouring facilities and the future canal.

Comments: Members would like to see direct pedestrian and cycle links to the adjoining developments, both north and south, on an enforceable outline parameter plan and secured at outline stage. This request is supported by Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policies 8, 11 and 15 and NPPF Policies DP3, TR4 and HC3.

b. **PL/2025/00626 – Land north of Berryfield Lane**

The Clerk reported that Wiltshire Council had amended the draft Western Area Planning Committee minutes following correspondence and reference to the meeting recording. However, the planning application page had continued to display the previous draft minutes and the old parameter plan when last checked. Cancellation of the subsequent committee meeting had delayed formal approval of the corrected minutes.

Members stressed that both the formal committee record and the public planning file must accurately reflect the decision actually taken in relation to maximum building heights. Attendance by an appropriate representative at the meeting approving the minutes was discussed.

Resolved: To continue pursuing Wiltshire Council to ensure that the minutes, resolution and parameter plan accurately reflect the recorded decision, and that the corrected documents are placed on the planning file as well as the committee record. To seek the assistance of the relevant Wiltshire councillor and escalate the correspondence as necessary.

c. **PL/2024/10345 and PL/2025/09780 – New Road Farm**

The meeting with Bloor Homes on Tuesday 27th October at 1:00pm was noted.

d. **PL/2025/07391 and PL/2026/01378 – Land south of Western Way**

This item was brought forward following minute 246/26(a) to allow consideration while the Residents' Association representative and Pathfinder Place residents were present. Members considered the revised Construction Method Statement for discharge of Condition 18 of outline permission PL/2022/08504.

Comments: Members support and endorse the Pathfinder Place Residents' Association objection to discharge of Condition 18 in its present form.

The Parish Council welcomes the move towards construction access from the A365/Western Way. However, the wording in the Construction Method Statement must be unequivocal: all construction traffic, including cars, vans, contractors and deliveries, must use the approved Western Way construction access. Wording that vehicles "can" use that access, while only prohibiting HGV movements through Maitland Place, leaves an unacceptable ambiguity.

The need for traffic controls on Western Way must be justified and reconciled with the highway officer's advice.

A complete vehicle routing plan and final, internally consistent site execution plan should be available, showing the compounds, parking, sales facilities and separation of visitors from construction activity. Suitable off-highway holding arrangements must be identified: stating that HGVs will not wait on the A365 does not explain where they will wait or prevent displacement to local roads.

The Construction Method Statement should also adequately address the drainage and community liaison requirements of Condition 18 and explain how delivery hours will avoid peak traffic periods.

Pre-application enquiry ENQ/2026/01882

No response had been received to pre-application enquiry ENQ/2026/01882 concerning alternative permanent access arrangements.

Following this item, 3 members of the public and Wiltshire Councillor Holder left the meeting.

e. **PL/2026/01555 – Land at Blackmore Farm (Reserved Matters)**

Comments: The Parish Council welcomes the highway officer's requirements for road widths suitable for buses, improved pedestrian and cycle routes, appropriate adoptable surfaces, compliance with LTN 1/20 and confirmation that the necessary land is within the applicant's control.

A direct, accessible, year-round pedestrian and cycle connection to the proposed Lidl store must be secured. A muddy field path (MELW27) and circuitous roadside route would be inadequate. Delivery should be coordinated between adjoining sites and secured without reliance on an uncertain later phase, consistent with Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policies 8 and 11 and NPPF Policies DP3 and TR4.

Pre-application enquiry ENQ/2026/01880

No response had been received to pre-application enquiry ENQ/2026/01880 concerning alternative highway arrangements.

Councillor Pafford left the meeting

f. **PL/2026/02966 – East of Blackmore Farm (Outline)**

Members returned to the potential loss of the indicative Melksham bypass corridor. The Clerk reported correspondence from National Highways to a resident, referring to the M4 to Dorset Coast Connectivity Strategic Study. The response indicated continuing support for progression of a Melksham bypass and

the importance of improvements around Melksham in bringing the A350 corridor to the standard envisaged for the recommended strategic route.

Members considered that this evidence should be drawn specifically to the attention of Wiltshire Council's planning and highway officers, its Leader and Head of Development Management, the MP and other relevant strategic bodies. The Council would continue pursuing all available routes for clarification and protection of the corridor.

Councillor Richardson suggested examining whether JMNP2 Priority Statement 1, considered alongside the strategic studies and investment proposals, could provide a stronger basis for further action. Members recognised that it was a priority statement rather than an operative safeguarding policy. It should not be presented as an adopted route reservation, but its community mandate and the wider strategic evidence should receive a clear response.

Resolved: To forward the National Highways correspondence to the relevant Wiltshire Council officers (Gary Collins) and Members (Ian Thorn and Martin Smith) and the MP, submit it as further evidence on the application, and continue pressing for clarification of how the future bypass opportunity could be protected. To draw explicit attention to Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Priority Statement 1 and the wider strategic transport evidence.

Councillor Pafford rejoined the meeting and Councillor Baines left the meeting.

g. **PL/2025/06749 – Land north of Bath Road, Hannick**

No further update was reported.

h. **PL/2026/03551 – Former Melksham Library, Lowbourne**

No further update was reported.

i. **PL/2025/06105 – Land at Bowerhill Lane, Old Loves Farm**

Members noted the highway officer's view that a ghost right-turn lane was not required and the assessment that the cited collision (at Bowerhill Lane) involved driver distraction rather than an access deficiency. Members remained concerned about highway safety and the cumulative effect of access points on the A365, including the arrangements required for the adjoining warehouse development.

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's earlier resolution to pursue a ghost right-turn lane would continue to be followed up. Members also identified an apparent error in a proposed condition referring to the A345 Swindon Road rather than the A365 at this location.

Resolved: To maintain the request for a ghost right-turn lane and seek correction of the erroneous road reference in the proposed condition. Highway safety and cumulative assessment are relevant to Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 61 and 62 and NPPF Policy TR6.

Councillor Baines rejoined the meeting

j. **PL/2024/09725 – Land off Corsham Road, Whitley, Middle Farm**

Members considered version 3 of the draft Section 106 Heads of Terms and noted that the requested matters were included, with 40% affordable housing retained. However, the Clerk queried the proposed £2,150 drainage contribution towards public right of way MELW85 to the north, when the principal reported flooding concerns were to the south.

Resolved: To seek clarification of the drainage contribution's location and intended works, with reference to the local flooding evidence and Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policy 3.

254/26 Planning Policy

a. Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

No further matters for a future review were identified beyond those discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

The request for possible Local Green Space designation of land between Melksham Oak and Eastern Way was considered during public participation.

Resolved: Officers to investigate ownership, existing biodiversity compensation or other protection of land between Melksham Oak and Eastern Way.

b. Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance aviation safeguarding interest

Members considered the Air Ambulance's request to register an aviation safeguarding interest to protect operations during take-off, landing and low-level flight, including in reduced visibility. Cranes, taller buildings and other development along the approach could affect operational safety.

The Clerk had sought advice from several Wiltshire Council services, but the appropriate route for recognising and applying the interest remained unresolved. She had therefore drawn the request to the attention of developers of relevant sites north-east of the airfield/site.

Resolved: To support Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance aviation safeguarding interest request, continue seeking an effective consultation arrangement through Wiltshire Council, and raise it in representations on relevant developments, including Loves Farm and the proposed Wiltshire Council depot.

c. Wiltshire Council Annual Planning Forum

The online forum would take place on Tuesday 17th November, from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. Members considered nine proposed questions covering the planning portal, consultation information, the proposed national scheme of delegation, pre-application engagement, transparency of officer assessments, planning conditions, Section 106 agreements and planning capacity.

Members were particularly concerned that Area and Strategic Planning Committee meetings had been cancelled for lack of business while applications remained undetermined and Wiltshire Council reported a substantial housing shortfall. They wished the forum to address application throughput and delays, including on allocated sites.

The loss of opportunities to review reports and correct factual inaccuracies before delegated decisions was also highlighted. Members sought clarity about the promised protocol for parish and town council involvement in conditions, Heads of Terms and agreements, especially where local councils might acquire assets or liabilities.

Resolved: To approve the proposed questions for submission, reordered to give priority to planning capacity and housing delivery, followed by the substantive planning-process and engagement issues, with operational portal questions placed later.

255/26 Proposed Energy Installations

a. Lime Down Solar

The examination was scheduled to close on 21st October, with the examining authority's report due within three months and a Secretary of State decision expected in early 2027. No further update was reported.

b. Norrington Spring Park and Studley Solar cable routes

No further update was reported.

c. National Grid Community Benefit Scheme

The Clerk reported difficulties interpreting the scheme's eligibility correspondence. Further clarification had been requested about eligibility, whether it remained worthwhile bringing local community organisations together to apply, the next funding round and the project timetable. Members wished to avoid raising expectations before the position was clear.

d. Wiltshire Council response to the Parish Council's twelve recommendations

No response was reported. The outstanding position was noted.

256/26 Appeals

No new appeal decisions were reported.

257/26 Planning Enforcement

The confidential enforcement update was deferred to the end of the meeting and is recorded at minute 254/26.

258/26 Section 106 Agreements and Developer Meetings

a. Ongoing agreements

The Pathfinder Place Section 278 and Section 38 position was noted as reported during public participation at minute 244/26.

No further Buckley Gardens update or decisions under delegated powers were reported.

b. **Woodstock Homes – Loves Farm, Bath Road**

Resolved: To approve the meeting notes of the meeting with Woodstock Homes on Wednesday 21st October 2026 (appendix 2)

Comments: In addition to the submitted notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21st October and the comments and requests contained within, the Parish Council makes the following additional points:

1. **Air Ambulance safeguarding:** Members noted that Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance wished to register the airfield as an Aviation Safeguarding Interest, with a proposed notification area extending approximately one mile from its operational base at Outmarsh on Semington Road. Particular concern related to the eastern approach corridor, immediately south of Bowerhill Industrial Estate, where buildings, temporary cranes and other tall construction equipment could present obstacles.

The Air Ambulance was developing a Point in Space approach which, subject to approval, would enable aircraft to return to base in marginal weather conditions. The developer should therefore consult the operator at an early stage to ensure that the development and construction arrangements protect safe operations. This should also include consideration of bird-strike risks and appropriate bird mitigation measures to prevent roosting.

2. **Ghost right-turn lane and A365 safety:** Members requested a ghost right-turn lane on the A365 to provide space for vehicles waiting to enter the development without obstructing through traffic. This reflected significant concerns about speeding, inappropriate overtaking, the safety of turning into and out of Melksham Oak Community School and Bowerhill Lane, and the cumulative effect of new access points along Bath Road. The parish council have sought improvements to the Bowerhill Lane junction following a serious collision, in 2025, in which a vehicle waiting to turn right was struck from behind leading to the driver receiving life-changing injuries. Additionally covert-camera evidence showed vehicles overtaking traffic waiting in the ghost lane to turn into Hornchurch Road which has led to the insulation of traffic islands. Members considered that a similar measure may be required for this development and that its access should form part of a proposed holistic review of the A365 Bath Road, from Bowerhill Roundabout to east of Turnpike Garage taking account of neighbouring housing and employment proposals.
3. **Previous site assessment:** The Clerk reported that the site had not been assessed through the Neighbourhood Plan site-selection process because it was outside the scope of that exercise as not adjacent to the settlement boundary. However, Wiltshire Council's earlier Local Plan assessment (site 3704) identified its peripheral location, potential landscape impacts arising from its openness and a possible contribution to a listed building's setting as potential issues. Members acknowledged that nearby development applications might change the context but considered that these findings should still be explicitly addressed through updated, proportionate evidence. Relevant policies include Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 (JMNP2) Policies 18 and 21, Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 51 and 58, and NPPF Policies HE5 and HE6.

c. Transparency of draft Section 106 agreements

A substantive response from Wiltshire Council remained outstanding. Members reiterated the importance of seeing draft obligations and conditions before they became legal commitments, particularly where the Parish Council might acquire responsibilities. The matter was included in the approved Annual Planning Forum questions.

Councillor Hemmings and 1 member of the public left the meeting.

259/26 Planning Enforcement Update

Held in closed session

The Clerk reported contact with planning enforcement and Building Control concerning works at the New Inn, Berryfield. Members noted that the matter was being followed up by the relevant services.

260/26 Preliminary Developer Contact

Held in closed session

The Clerk reported preliminary contact from a representative of Roseate Hotels and Resorts about proposed alterations at Beechfield House. As direct discussions had not yet taken place and the public status of the proposals was unclear.

Resolved: To arrange a pre-application meeting with representatives of Roseate Hotels and Resorts to discuss proposed alterations at Beechfield House.

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Chairman, 9th November 2026

Appendix 1

NOTES OF MEETING WITH BELLWAY AND SAVILLS
ON WEDNESDAY 7th OCTOBER 2026 at 3:00 PM
RE: Land west of Semington Road, Berryfield

Present

Councillor Alan Baines (Vice Chair of Planning, chairing the meeting)
Councillor David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council)
Councillor Mark Harris (Planning Committee Member)
Wiltshire Councillor Andrew Griffin (Wiltshire Council and Melksham Town Council)

Teresa Strange (Clerk, Melksham Without)
Fiona Dey (Parish Officer, Melksham Without)

Robert James, National Projects Director, Bellway Homes
Jon Gately, Planning Director, Savills

Summary

The meeting reviewed Bellway's outline proposal for up to 225 homes west of Semington Road. Members maintained their concerns about further development in Berryfield while discussing improvements and contributions that should be secured if permission is granted.

- Scale and cumulative impact: Members reiterated that recent and proposed housing growth was overwhelming Berryfield's limited facilities. Positive aspects of the design did not overcome their objection to the location and scale of development.
- Design and building heights: Members raised concerns about taller buildings affecting existing homes and bungalows. Bellway explained that most of the site would allow up to two storeys, with selected internal areas allowing up to three.
- Canal safeguarding: Bellway would protect the canal corridor and design drainage features for possible future adaptation but would not construct the canal or bridges as part of this development.
- Walking and cycling: Members questioned Wiltshire Highways' request for £50,000 towards a feasibility study when the Parish Council had already commissioned a Semington Road study. A joint meeting with Highways, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and Bellway's transport consultant was proposed.
- Schools and healthcare: Members highlighted uncertainty over the Pathfinder Way school, access to school places and cumulative pressure on GP services. No healthcare facility or contribution was agreed.
- Community contributions: Bellway requested a prioritised list of specific projects and offered help with costing. Potential requests included Berryfield Village Hall improvements, burial provision and playing pitch improvements.
- Play provision: Members sought meaningful equipment on both proposed play areas, appropriate specifications and first refusal on responsibility for equipped play provision.

- Bus services: Further scrutiny was needed of the proposed £1,400 per dwelling contribution to the X34, including what additional services it would secure and its effect on funding for other priorities.
- Affordable housing: Bellway confirmed 30% affordable housing. Members sought a mix reflecting Melksham's needs and stronger priority for people with a local connection; no local priority arrangement was agreed.
- Information sharing and next steps: Bellway and Savills were willing to share draft Section 106 information and proposed conditions. The Parish Council would prepare its priority list, review outstanding consultee responses and consider a further meeting in November or December.

Discussion of mitigation did not indicate support for the application; it concerned what should be delivered if permission is granted.

The following follow-up work was identified:

- The Parish Council to prepare a specific, prioritised list of infrastructure and community requests for Bellway and Savills to consider and assist with costing.
- Review the new highways response and seek a joint discussion involving Wiltshire Highways, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and Bellway's transport consultant.
- Bellway and Savills to provide the running list of proposed conditions and progress discussions about sharing draft Section 106 heads of terms.
- The Parish Council to identify relevant play specifications and suggested condition wording and review outstanding consultee responses at its next Planning Committee meeting.
- Consider a further meeting in November or December, following discussions with the planning officer and clarification of the determination route. Specialist discussions on transport or landscaping could also be arranged if needed.

Introduction

The meeting followed the presentation on 24 June 2026 and the subsequent public consultation and submission of the outline planning application (PL/2026/04916). Members reviewed the proposals and the Parish Council's submitted comments with Bellway and Savills, particularly the scale of development, infrastructure requirements and potential planning obligations.

Bellway reported that approximately 50–60 people had attended the July consultation at Berryfield Village Hall. Although there had been opposition to further housing, they considered that some attendees had responded positively to the proposed design and canalside character. The Design and Access Statement had been developed to explain the vision in greater detail.

Proposed Development

The outline application sought permission for up to 225 dwellings, an increase from approximately 195 discussed in June. Bellway explained that the higher maximum provided flexibility over the eventual housing mix and demand at the detailed design stage. They stated that smaller homes could increase dwelling numbers without necessarily increasing building heights.

Bellway advised that they were not anticipating substantial changes to the illustrative layout at this stage, although drainage proposals might need refinement following consultee comments. No design response from Wiltshire Council had yet been received.

Scale and Cumulative Development

Members reiterated their objection to further development in Berryfield, which remained classified as a small village with limited facilities. Reference was made to Bowood View, Buckley Gardens, Townsend Farm and the recently approved Martin Grant development (PL/2025/00626 Land North of Berryfield Lane). Members stated that recent and proposed growth, including this application, would represent an increase of approximately 172% compared with the village's previous size of around 400 dwellings.

Members distinguished their concerns about the principle and cumulative scale of development from the quality of Bellway's design. Some considered the proposed layout attractive, but felt that this did not overcome the harm caused by adding further housing to an already substantially enlarged village. Discussion of mitigation was on the basis of what should be secured if permission were granted.

Bellway acknowledged that this difference of view was unlikely to be resolved through the meeting. They referred to pressure to make efficient use of land and considered the site relatively sustainable because of its proximity to Melksham and existing bus stops. Members questioned the practicality of the stated walking distance to the town centre, particularly for people with pushchairs or shopping and where crossings were required.

Building Heights and Design Quality

The parameter plans provided for buildings of up to two storeys across most of the site, with selected internal areas allowing up to three storeys. Members highlighted the potential impact of taller buildings on existing houses and bungalows, drawing on concerns about raised ground levels and building heights on the adjacent Martin Grant site.

Bellway explained that the higher parameters were intended to retain flexibility and were concentrated within the site, with lower buildings around the edges. They did not consider three-storey development necessarily appropriate throughout the site; the eventual house types and heights would be considered at reserved matters stage.

Members asked how the density compared with Bowood View, which they regarded as a positive local example. Bellway advised that the proposed density was broadly comparable, at approximately 35 dwellings per hectare within the housing parcels and approximately 20 per hectare when the wider green space was included. Members emphasised the importance of applying the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and its separate Design Guide.

Canal Corridor and Drainage

Bellway explained that the safeguarded canal corridor was central to the landscape proposals and would also form part of the drainage arrangements. They were considering further detail on drainage and planting in response to consultation comments and intended to discuss this with the planning officer. They had held discussions with the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust.

Members asked whether Bellway could construct the section of canal within the site, referring to examples in Swindon. Bellway stated that they held an option agreement rather than owning the land and would not construct the canal or bridges in advance of the wider project. They cited cost, landowner agreement, outstanding permissions and the practical difficulty of building bridges before excavating the canal.

Bellway stated that the proposals would retain sufficient corridor width, working space and provision for future crossings, with drainage features capable of adaptation when the canal was delivered. They anticipated that safeguarding and future release of the corridor would be secured through legal arrangements and planning requirements when the site was acquired and developed.

Members remained concerned about uncertainty over delivery of the canal. They nevertheless emphasised the importance of protecting the route so that the housing development would not prevent its future construction. Reference was made to the canal's protection in the Core Strategy and its inclusion as a priority statement in the Neighbourhood Plan. No specific financial request from the Canal Trust had been identified in its response, although the Parish Council had previously secured a contribution towards a canal study on another development.

Walking Cycling and Connections

Members sought better integration between the proposed development and neighbouring sites, rather than separate estates with limited connections. Bellway confirmed that they expected links to adjoining developments to the north and south and would not seek to obstruct these. The approval of the Martin Grant application provided an opportunity to formalise connecting points.

The Parish Council's holistic Semington Road study, commissioned from the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, formerly Sustrans, was discussed. Wiltshire Highways' recently published response requested £50,000 towards an active travel feasibility study. Members questioned the need for another study when the Parish Council had already commissioned work covering this development and the wider area.

A meeting was proposed between Wiltshire Council's highways officer, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and Bellway's transport consultant to review the existing study and agree priorities, delivery arrangements and appropriate triggers for improvements. Bellway indicated that reasonable contributions could be incorporated into planning obligations with Wiltshire Highways' agreement. Members also wished to review the public rights of way response when available.

Schools and Healthcare

Members raised concerns about access to schools and the uncertainty surrounding delivery of the approved primary school at Pathfinder Way. They reported that a school at Blackmore Farm was being discussed instead, which would be further from Berryfield and would not be delivered immediately. Members questioned how children from this development would reach suitable school places.

The Clerk referred to the Parish Council's unsuccessful efforts to secure healthcare and highway contributions from the Martin Grant application and its request for clearer guidance from Wiltshire Council about the evidence required. Members emphasised the cumulative pressure on GP services and the need to bring together contributions from different developments rather than consider each application in isolation.

Bellway shared the frustration about obtaining NHS support for healthcare facilities, noting difficulties experienced on other sites. Members felt that communities and developers needed to find a way to demonstrate the need for additional resources and secure appropriate funding. No healthcare contribution or new facility was agreed at this meeting.

Community Facilities and Section 106 Priorities

Bellway requested a concise, prioritised list of the Parish Council's specific infrastructure and community requests. They offered to assist with costing items so that their affordability, wider benefit and suitability for inclusion in Section 106 heads of terms could be considered. Discussion highlighted the value of funding identifiable projects and completing improvements rather than allocating small contributions across schemes which might never be delivered.

The potential improvements to Berryfield Village Hall included patio doors, covered outdoor space and furniture. The Clerk referred to an initial building estimate of approximately £50,000, with a further £10,000–£20,000 potentially required for design, specification and project management. Further drawings and detailed costings would be needed. The Parish Council owned the patio but not the adjoining grass, so any extension onto that land would require discussion with the management company.

Other requests included burial provision, given concerns about cemetery capacity, and playing pitch improvements. The Clerk highlighted the identified need for two 3G pitches in the Melksham area and work towards provision at Bowerhill Sports Field and Oakfields. Contributions towards associated works, including parking, could help unlock substantial Football Foundation funding and support growing demand for women's and girls' sport.

Play Areas and Public Art

The proposals included a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) and a Local Area for Play (LAP). The Clerk reported that Wiltshire Council's play officers supported making the LAP a meaningful play destination with equipment, rather than

leaving an unequipped grass area. The informal term “super LAP” had been used locally, although this was not an official play category.

The Parish Council wished to have first refusal on taking responsibility for the equipped play provision. Members highlighted the importance of suitable specifications, including wet-pour surfacing and fencing, and referred to concerns about wooden equipment. Bellway invited suggestions for the wording of relevant conditions before these were finalised.

Discussion also covered ensuring provision met the needs of different age groups, including teenagers and safe spaces for girls. Existing nearby play areas, outdoor gym facilities and planned improvements to the older Berryfield play area should inform what was provided.

A public art contribution of £67,500 was mentioned. Members explained how previous contributions had supported the Berryfield Village Hall mural and play-related artwork. They favoured locally meaningful provision with community involvement and a tangible benefit, rather than an isolated feature with little practical value.

Bus Services

Wiltshire Highways’ response sought £1,400 per dwelling towards the X34 service, equating to approximately £315,000 if 225 dwellings were built. Those present had only recently seen the response and had not yet reviewed it in detail.

Members wished to understand what service improvements would be secured, including evening provision and connections to destinations not currently well served. The recent introduction of a Sunday service was noted. Bellway questioned how the amount would be justified and whether it could reduce funding available for other priorities. The discussion remained subject to further review of the highways response and engagement with the bus operator.

Community Shop and Flexible Space

The lack of a local shop was discussed, including the possibility of a commercial operator or community-run provision. Bellway suggested that a relatively small area of hardstanding with electricity and water could accommodate a temporary shop, takeaway vans, stalls or other visiting services.

Members considered that this could also provide a place for neighbours to meet and support community events. Potential locations included space within the development or Parish Council land at the former village hall site. An indicative cost of £30,000–£40,000 was mentioned during the discussion. This was an idea for further consideration, rather than an agreed scheme or commitment.

Affordable Housing and Local Need

Bellway confirmed that the proposed affordable housing proportion was 30%. At the maximum of 225 dwellings this would provide approximately 68 affordable homes. Wiltshire Council’s requested tenure mix was 60% social rent and 40% shared ownership, equivalent to approximately 41 and 27 homes respectively.

Members asked that the type, size and tenure mix be considered against the Melksham housing needs evidence and Neighbourhood Plan rather than simply applying a county-wide mix. They emphasised the need for smaller homes, particularly two- and three-bedroom properties, and affordable options suited to local incomes. Bellway noted that Wiltshire Council’s requested affordable mix

was predominantly smaller homes, with only two social rented properties larger than three bedrooms and no four- or five-bedroom shared ownership homes.

Members also sought a stronger local connection requirement, including consideration of an initial three-month opportunity for local people before homes were offered more widely. They distinguished the existing Wiltshire connection from their wish to give priority to people connected to Melksham. Bellway understood the principle but raised practical and commercial considerations; no local marketing or allocation requirement was agreed.

Members reiterated the importance of tenure-blind design and expressed concern that Melksham was accommodating a disproportionate share of Wiltshire's housing growth without corresponding services and infrastructure.

Planning Process and Information Sharing

Members requested access to draft Section 106 heads of terms and proposed conditions before determination. The Clerk explained that Wiltshire Council had indicated that the applicant's written permission was required before draft heads of terms could be shared with the Parish Council. Bellway and Savills expressed willingness to share the information and to consider locally suggested wording.

Bellway and Savills offered to provide their running list of proposed conditions emerging from consultee responses. They considered that an agreed record of requests and priorities could assist both determination and any subsequent appeal, while remaining conditional on permission being granted.

Wiltshire Councillor Griffin explained that, because of the application's significant potential effect on Berryfield and the wider community, he wished it to be considered in as public a forum as possible. As a member of the Western Area Planning Committee, he was careful not to predetermine the application. Confirmation had not yet been received as to whether it had passed the gateway test for committee consideration.

Timescale and Next Steps

Members stated that, if permission were granted, they did not wish to see undue delay in delivery while further speculative applications continued to come forward. Bellway explained that reserved matters approval and construction preparations would still be required; even if outline permission were granted immediately, completed homes for sale would be approximately 21 months away.

The following follow-up work was identified:

• The Parish Council to prepare a specific, prioritised list of infrastructure and community requests for Bellway and Savills to consider and assist with costing.

• Review the new highways response and seek a joint discussion involving Wiltshire Highways, the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and Bellway's transport consultant.

• Bellway and Savills to provide the running list of proposed conditions and progress discussions about sharing draft Section 106 heads of terms.

• The Parish Council to identify relevant play specifications and suggested condition wording, and review outstanding consultee responses at its next Planning Committee meeting.

• Consider a further meeting in November or December, following discussions with the planning officer and clarification of the determination route. Specialist discussions on transport or landscaping could also be arranged if needed.

Meeting closed at 4:50pm

Appendix 2

NOTES OF MEETING WITH WOODSTOCK HOMES ON WEDNESDAY 21ST OCTOBER AT 10.30AM LAND AT LOVES FARM, BATH ROAD (pre-app)

Present: Councillor Richard Wood (Chair)

Councillor Alan Baines

Councillor Mark Harris

Councillor David Pafford

Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder

Teresa Strange, Clerk (on Zoom)

Fiona Dey, Parish Officer

Helena Taylor- Senior Planning Manager, Woodstock Homes

Harry Landers - Senior Land and Planning Manager, Woodstock Homes

1 Proposal and planning context

Woodstock outlined proposals for up to 40 homes on a 1.98-hectare site, with access from Bath Road (A365), public open space, play provision, orchard or woodland planting, ecological buffers and sustainable drainage. The initial offer was 30% affordable housing and at least 10% on-site biodiversity net gain.

It was hoped that the outline planning application would be submitted before the end of the year. The site had also been submitted to the Local Plan 'call for sites' process.

Key concern: Members wanted coordinated development and infrastructure, rather than isolated housing schemes.

Wiltshire Councillor Holder reported 12 developments under consideration around Bowerhill, including ten housing proposals, with little construction yet underway. Neighbouring proposals included Hannick's 205 homes and 47 homes at Old Loves Farm.

It was noted that developer engagement did not imply Parish Council support for the proposal.

2 Affordable housing and housing mix

Members sought 40% affordable housing and a mix (type and tenure) reflecting the Melksham Housing Needs Assessment, particularly smaller, affordable homes. Bungalows, including open market, were also requested. Woodstock had not settled the housing mix and agreed to consider the affordable housing request.

The Clerk clarified that the Neighbourhood Plan did not specify a fixed 40% requirement. This had reflected the withdrawn emerging Local Plan and remained the Parish Council's aspiration; Woodstock's 30% offer was based on the adopted Core Strategy.

3 Highway safety and access

Key concern: The combined effect of multiple accesses on the A365. Members highlighted dangerous overtaking, collisions, HGV movements and recorded speeds exceeding 100 mph in the 30 mph area, particularly leaving Melksham.

Members questioned the proposed entrance near the Old Loves Farm access opposite and effects on nearby cottages. They sought a holistic A365 review and urged Woodstock to explore access through Hannick's development using its proposed roundabout. The detailed junction design remained unresolved.

Follow up: Woodstock to refer these concerns to its transport consultant and report back on speed, visibility, collision data and scenarios involving neighbouring developments.

4 Walking links and outline controls

Members sought direct walking links to neighbouring development and the school. Without a continuous footway on the north side of Bath Road, children could otherwise need to cross the A365 twice.

Woodstock agreed to investigate links, subject to ecological and engineering constraints, including hedgerows and a brook.

Members highlighted that Hannick, the developer of the site to the west, was also promoting a site to the east. They would like links to the west also considered.

The Clerk requested outline parameter plans securing connectivity and building heights. Woodstock said heights would normally be included and agreed to consider connectivity.

5 Landscape play space and management

Woodstock proposed retaining hedgerows, ecological buffers and a dark corridor, with a drainage pond to the north. Members wanted the existing woodland and orchard strip retained as an accessible community asset; Woodstock said public access depended on ecological advice.

Key concern: Play provision must be useful and coordinated with neighbouring schemes. Members opposed token provision that would increase pressure on other play areas. The Clerk suggested enhanced informal play, such as a trim trail, and supplied the Parish Council's standard developer requests.

A management company was envisaged for open space. Members requested early involvement in Section 106 discussions. No Parish Council adoption of facilities was agreed. Woodstock was directed to the Melksham Design Guide and asked to consider the setting of listed Old Loves Farm.

6 Energy construction and delivery

Woodstock proposed air source heat pumps, solar panels, household EV charging, improved insulation and water-saving fittings. Councillor Harris sought more solar panels and battery storage as standard. Woodstock noted the request but made no battery commitment. Overheating and construction methods were also discussed.

Woodstock confirmed its intention to purchase and build the site, with Helena and Harry remaining the contacts. It targeted an outline submission before Christmas

2026; Wiltshire Council's pre-application response was outstanding. No construction start date was confirmed.

7 Consultation and formal response

Leaflets had reached approximately 280 households and nine responses had been received. The Council had promoted the consultation and directed residents to respond to Woodstock directly.

Consultation closes on 26 October. Woodstock agreed to accept the Parish Council's response by email on 27 October, following the Planning Committee meeting on the evening of 26 October 2026.

Meeting closed at 11:40am