

## St. Helen Without Parish Council

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Dear

We are writing to seek your assistance on a matter of great importance to the residents of Shippon. Together with Wootton Parish Council we have spent two years preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which is currently at the stage of Independent Examination. Our consultation with our residents, initially by way of a public meeting in April 2017 and subsequently through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, has given us an unprecedented insight into their views and aspirations for their community (as, indeed, was intended by the emphasis on a greater say for residents in the development of their communities). The major issue for the residents of Shippon is that their village be retained in the Green Belt and thus receive the protection afforded by that status.

As you will be aware the Vale of White Horse have also been working on their Local Plan Part 2. Following the publication of a White Paper in November 2016 in which the Ministry of Defence announced the proposal that Dalton Barracks would be vacated by 2029 and that the adjacent airfield would also be disposed of, the Vale of White Horse designated the site of the barracks as a location for the building of 1200 new homes. Subsequently, however, they proposed that the new houses be built mainly on the airfield and not the barracks.

The Parish Council, representing the residents, attended and participated in the public examination of LPP2 conducted by Mr David Reed, on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018. We made it clear that our residents were adopting a mature attitude to the development of the Airfield, recognising both the national and local demand for housing but wanted the existing village to remain in the Green Belt to ensure that it retained its identity.

Following the public examination Mr Reed, in a letter dated 30/10/2018, (attached at appendix 1) appeared to suggest that only such land as was necessary for the building of 1200 dwellings should be removed from the Green Belt. He also indicated that some other green spaces would remain in the Green Belt for which we are extremely grateful.

However, in a subsequent letter, dated 27/11/2018 (attached at Appendix 2) he asked the Council to submit revised plans for the built-up areas of Shippon and Wootton to form an inset excluded the Green Belt. Our Neighbourhood Plan Steering group queried this with Mr Reed's office and were told that these statements were 'without prejudice' to any final decision.

Whilst we understand that the revisions to LPP2 may well trigger a further round of public consultation, we are seeking your support in trying to clarify why it may be seen as necessary to remove the whole of the built-up area of Shippon village from the Green Belt when it is clearly against the wishes of the residents as expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

We cannot make the case for the residents too strongly on this point. They have always tried to support the case for some building, although of course they would rather have retained the status quo but they value their village life and its history too much to simply accept being made part of a larger development particularly when this does not seem necessary for the building of housing on Dalton Barracks or the airfield.

We would be grateful for your views as we are extremely concerned that the intentions of Parliament to give residents a greater say in planning within their locality could be thwarted.

Yours faithfully

Caroline Parkin  
Chair, St Helen Without PC