

Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan: Wycliffe 5.3.15

Meeting with:

Amanda Bromley – Operations Director, Wycliffe

Vicky Redding

John Jeynes

Alastair Shankland

Commenced with Amanda commenting that Wycliffe often felt that the town and Council were at odds with school. That the Council had not always been supportive of school activity. JJ commented that the town, in general, often felt the same way about the stance of Wycliffe.

Working group members made it clear that the NP was a wholly separate activity from other planning or town council activities. The neighbourhood plan-working group is comprised of the community and Cllrs, as such, is independent of the council. While the plan is to guide development in Stonehouse up to 2031, if the neighbourhood plan can be used to 'reset' relationships as a result then that's an additional benefit.

We were here to see how the needs of Wycliffe could be met in the neighbourhood plan, particularly as Wycliffe was a large employer with significant land holdings.

AD responded saying the school view Stonehouse as a 'mini-university town' and those pupils made a great deal of use of the Co-Op and the fast food outlets.

Pupil profile

- 400 Senior and 350 Preparatory pupils,
- 160 day pupils at Senior level,
- 50 boarders at Preparatory Level.

The day pupils are drawn from a catchment of Gloucestershire and its boundaries including: Chepstow, Malmesbury, Tetbury, Tewkesbury.

Some of boarders do present a cultural challenge; thought has to be given to teach German and Russian pupils the appropriate behaviours in the community. Misbehaviour is viewed on very dimly and dealt with accordingly.

Development plans

The school has agreed a ten-year business development plan.

Wycliffe does not intend to develop a swimming pool in the next 5 years.

Senior School

- Willow Farm – planning permission has been commenced, development with the bell junction, however there is no intention to develop the site further in the current business plan.

It was discussed the partial release of willow Farm to assist with the creation of a larger site associate to Ship Inn site. AB commenting that Wycliffe remains uninterested in releasing land associated to the Ship Inn.

JJ raised the possibility of a petrol station being built on the site instead of a development the community were interested in. this was the first Wycliffe had heard of this site being used for this purpose. They would resist the site being for this use, primarily on the grounds of pupil safety. A development of this type could encourage pupils to cross the A419, A road they are not currently allowed to cross.

- Berryfield – no plans to release any portion for development. This is a much used sports facility for the school.
- Cornerways No. 45 – no plans to release, used as overspill examination space for pupils who require reasonable adjustments.
- Beach Leaves – Brown's Lane
- Pearcroft Field – 3.5 shares owned. School have retained shares from the historic ownership of properties on Pearcroft Road. No plans to alter this. Wycliffe is aware of Pearcroft being regarded as having potential for housing.

Prep School

- Tiley's Field – although this had been promoted there was no plan for development. It was currently too valuable an asset as sports fields.
- Old Garden centre – likely to be developed as a sports facility in the next 10 years to maximise use of land. Development could be sooner if Wycliffe was to receive a windfall legacy received.

Wycliffe issues for consideration

Are there any plans to reopen the bottom of Regents Street, this would greatly assist the school and parents? Town Council and neighbourhood plan was not aware of any alteration proposed and the NP had not considered it.

What are the current plans to improve the A419 AB was concerned that any additional traffic from large-scale development had the potential to damage the school attracting pupils and day-to-day business? Town Council and others were involved in an active campaign relating to West of Stonehouse development.

Staff travel

In total the school has 300 staff at all levels, including part time.

Majority of the professional staff travel from Gloucester and Cheltenham, minority from Bristol and the south of Gloucestershire, Tetbury.

There is an issue with attracting and retaining cleaners as Wycliffe have to compete with the local supermarkets who pay more.

The school currently has no view on the reopening of the Bristol Road Station. This was not seen as particularly useful for pupil travel. It was acknowledged this could be of some use for staff coming from Gloucester and Cheltenham.

Facilities

The school day is structured so that the seniors finish around 8.30 pm. Thursday afternoon is games day, which allows greater free time. There is also school on a Saturday morning.

The school view Stonehouse as a 'mini-university town' and that pupils made a great deal of use of the Co-Op and the fast food outlets – there appeared to be some regret regarding the latter.

The school has strict rules for students regarding use of facilities in the town and where they are allowed to go. As such, the development of the night time economy could be a potential issue the school may resist.

The school would welcome the reopening of a stationers in the town.

While the school is amenable to the use of its facilities, with the astro-turf well used by local teams – rates set below SDC leisure centre. The school perceives the use of other facilities as complex, particularly in term time, because of safeguarding. All people who had the potential to come into contact with children have to be DBS checked. It is the view of the school this would make the public opening of the gym and other facilities very difficult.

The senior school is used by British Study Centres during the summer as an international school for 5 weeks in the summer catering for 1500-200 per week.

There may be opportunities to develop non-term time use of facilities at Easter and October by other groups in the town. Following this meeting JJ has put AB in touch with Will Mansell of Stroud Food bank that through his Project Grace has DBS sport tutors available to run an event on behalf of the town.

School integration with community

The school is open to suggestions of senior pupils being involved in running the library and befriending opportunities. The school would like to be kept up to date with any community or social issues that it could become involved with.

The school has new Head, Nick Gregory, starting September.

There are recurring issues of low level bullying and intimidation by Maidenhill pupils of Wycliffe pupils.

There have also been reports of drugs being offered to pupils outside of the boarding houses. This has been reported to the police.

School ask to be delivered a copy of Stonehouse News to the facilities office on Regent Street.

AD was generally positive toward the plan-working group speaking to pupils and gaining their view towards Stonehouse. This would need to be decided by other management.

For all liaison Amanda should remain, at this stage, as contact.

Questions used in Interview

Spatial

- What are your intentions for land and buildings?
- What are Wycliffe's aspiration for future development, including purchase of land and buildings?
- Do Wycliffe have any outstanding consents and pending applications?

Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan forms an integral part of the statutory development plan documents which will be used to decide planning applications in Stonehouse and Ryeford up to 2031. Is there any way that the neighbourhood plan can assist Wycliffe develop its business in Stonehouse, creating employment and further spending in the shops and other businesses in the town?

Social

- How many staff do you have?
- What proportion live locally? In Stonehouse or within 5 miles.
- How many pupils does the school have?
- Consultation has told us residents/businesses would like greater access to facilities. Would the school be amenable to further sharing facilities i.e. squash court, swimming pool.

As we have done, with great success, at Maidenhill School. Can we engage with the School Council to understand the views of pupils toward Stonehouse?