

Owslebury concerns regarding SDNP Local Plan

Background

Owslebury Parish is mainly an agricultural area, quite large geographically area, but sparsely populated except in the Village itself. There are just over 300 dwellings in the parish, the majority occupied by people and their families working in the Solent, Winchester and Basingstoke areas. There is a demand for housing for agricultural workers which cannot be met, mostly on affordability grounds. Owslebury Parish Council (OPC) is the Parish body.

It should be noted that SDNP twice failed in its communication with OPC on the matter of the Settlement Boundary. The first time it asked us to keep the proposals confidential, which we did, only to discover that they had published them on their website! Giving significant communication problems with concerned villagers. In the second instance early this year SDNA failed to tell OPC about the plan consultation period. We found about after closure and were told the way forward was to bring the matter to the Planning Inspector's review.

Settlement Boundary

OPC is happy to manage Planning Applications as there are not that many and most refer to house conversions/small extensions, very few are of an industrial nature. We are also happy to accept the principal of a settlement boundary focussed around the Village street (Main Road) and the three cul-de-sacs (Pitcot Lane, Hilly Lane and Beech Grove) attached to it. This area and the rest of the Parish are currently covered by the Winchester District Plan, and in the future by the new Winchester plan, and the SDNP plan where appropriate and when they are approved.

Our concern is regarding the details contained in the proposal from SDNP, as well as the lack of consultation on these details, and the treatment of our concerns when they were communicated.

Our view of the detailed proposals is this-

1. They appear to be quite arbitrary, no obvious consistent logic
2. Some garden curtilages are left outside the boundary, some are completely inside, some are partially inside.
3. Residents are most concerned that their rights have been ignored

The way forward

We ask the Planning Inspector not to accept the proposal in Appendix 2 and instead direct SDNP to work with OPC come up with new proposals. We would be happy for our local District/County Councillors to arbitrate if necessary.

Appendix 1 contains the correspondence between OPC and SDNP on this matter up to November 2018.

Appendix 2 is the SDNP Settlement Boundary proposal for Owslebury

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Appendix 1



localplanpo645131
7.pdf

From: **Michael Cleary** <owsleburyparishcouncil@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Feb 2, 2017 at 10:42 AM
Subject: Owslebury proposed settlement boudary
To: <lucy.howard@southdowns.gov.uk>

Good morning Lucy,

Chris Patterson suggest I contact you about a practical problem the parish council has in relation to the publication of the proposed settlement boundary.

Just to re-cap, the council discussed the proposed settlement boundary in closed session as 'confidential matters' within the meaning of the relevant legislation. However, the December update on the SDNP local plan included a paragraph stating '....this update includes for the first time proposed revisions to the boundaries of Steep, Findon and Washington, and new boundaries for Slindon and Owslebury.'

Parishioners have asked the Council whether the matter was discussed by the Council, have questioned whether, if it has been discussed, it does indeed fall with the definition of 'confidential' within the meaning of the Act and asked for the Council papers to be released.

When I spoke to Chris (and subsequently in emails) he noted the issue and stated that SDNP would be issuing a draft or something similar by early January. I stress throughout this and on many other issues Chris has been of great help to us and a credit to SDNP.

I now understand that nothing will be made available until March, and Chris suggested I contact you.

Whilst the council is keen to support SDNP, this puts us in an awkward position and I would appreciate your comments in order I can advise the council on its next steps.

Yours

Michael Cleary Clerk and RFO

Owslebury Parish Council

01962 777313

From: **Michael Cleary** <owsleburyparishcouncil@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Dec 15, 2016 at 1:48 PM
Subject: Proposed parish settlement bounday
To: Chris Paterson <Chris.Paterson@southdowns.gov.uk>

Chris

The parish council discussed the draft proposal for the parish settlement boundary at its December meeting. There were a couple of questions where your input would be appreciated:

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a) the boundary line to far end (right hand side of the map), of the village (known as Gorse Down) includes the houses and parts of the back gardens within the settlement area. However the boundary line then has a sudden deviation such that the houses and the gardens on the Main Road, essentially, in the middle of the village are outside the settlement boundary. This seems most odd and discriminatory. Both sets of homes are set back from the main road, and there seems little reason why some are within the settlement boundary and others are not. It would probably attract a lot of negative comment in the public consultation late next year. The council would prefer a consistent approach with all the homes and gardens (or part thereof) within the settlement boundary;

b) the school (by the parish hall) is outside the settlement boundary. The school is one of the best in Hampshire but the council understands it nonetheless has to work hard to maintain school numbers at a viable level. If the worst came to the worst and the school had to close, the Council would not wish to see the development of the site being made more complex by it being outside the settlement boundary ie the council would prefer it to be within the boundary;

c) just for clarification, presumably there would be no change in the conversion, subject to planning permission as to design and access etc, of redundant agricultural buildings outside the settlement boundary? ie same as at present.

I look forward to your comments, and in the meanwhile I trust you have a good Christmas and successful New Year.

Regards

Michael Cleary Clerk and RFO

OUR LETTER:

Dear Chris,

Owslebury Parish Council (OPC) is very disappointed with the lack of consultation provided by SDNP on its proposals for the Owslebury settlement boundary. This proposal as part of the SNDP Local Plan has now been submitted to a Planning Inspector without any indication that it is rejected by the local community!!

The OPC has not received any correspondence from SDNP on their Local Plan for months as it is now admitted there was an error in the email address that SDNP held for OPC. Although we had indicated our disquiet on the matter we were not formally asked to comment on the new settlement boundaries within the specified timescales, we were only informed in recent weeks. As the plan has now been sent to the Inspector SDNP will not incorporate our objections.

We feel it incredible that SDNP Planning did not notice that the emails they were sending were not getting through and did not contact us to check our details. We did get other communications from other parts of SDNP!

Would you please investigate for us

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- a) What has gone wrong here and why
- b) How we can present our concerns to the planning inspector at the November inquiry

I am copying this letter to the SDNP Director of Planning and our local City and County Councillors so that they are aware of the matter

Yours faithfully

John G Chapman (Chairman of Owslebury Parish Council)

RESPONSE:

Dear Mr Chapman,

Thank you for your email.

Firstly I am sorry you feel that there was insufficient public consultation on the South Downs Local Plan. I appreciate that the Owslebury Settlement Boundary appeared in the South Downs Local Plan after the Preferred options consultation, and therefore was only subject to one formal round of public consultation. However, I feel that the SDNPA have worked hard to ensure that the Parish Council and wider community of Owslebury were aware of this matter and able to respond to the Pre Submission consultation which took place between 26 September 2017 and 21 November 2017.

I will try to pick up each point raised in your email in turn, I would be happy to discuss any of these matters further if that would help.

The inspector will be fully aware of the concerns regarding the proposal to include a settlement policy boundary in Owslebury as the Parish Council and indeed members of the Owslebury community have made comments during the Pre Submission consultation which have been sent to the inspector for his consideration as part of the Examination of the Local Plan. You can see all the comments from Owslebury Parish Council [here](#).

The SDNPA identified an error with the email address for Owslebury Parish Council. As soon as this error had been identified it was rectified. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that you have not missed any correspondence from the SDNPA. Since the submission of the South Downs Local Plan, in April 2018. The SDNPA have not communicated directly with any of the Town and Parish Councils. Correspondence relating to the Examination of the South Downs Local Plan has come directly from the Programme Officer, Mr Chris Banks. As I stated above Owslebury Parish Council were formally notified and asked to comment on the Pre Submission South Downs Local Plan when the consultation was launched in September 2017. There has not been any further public consultation since that pre submission consultation. I would also take this opportunity to highlight the Parish Councils workshops the SDNPA held on 27th September 2017. At these workshops Town and Parish Councils were presented with any allocations or designations which would affect their Parish. The Hampshire Parishes workshop was attended by two representatives from Owslebury Parish Council and the SDNPA presented the draft proposals for the settlement Policy Boundary for

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Owslebury. The Parish Council were offered the opportunity to provide comments on these proposals by 9 January 2018.

As I stated above the correspondence sent out to parish councils relating to the examination of the South Downs Local Plan, and the upcoming public hearings was sent directly from the Programme Officer. Unfortunately the software used by the programme officer has not highlighted the failure to deliver the message to Owslebury Parish Council, therefore we were not aware that the message had not reached the Parish Council. As soon as we identified the issue we updated our records and asked the programme officer to update their records and resend the correspondence to Owslebury Parish Council, I understand that this information was received.

In response to your two direct questions:

a) **What has gone wrong here and why**

Unfortunately there was a misspelling of the parish name in the email address. Normally this would be identified through a bounce-back email which would alert the sender to the fact that an email had not been delivered to a recipient successfully. However, the software used to send out information relating to the hearings has not identified this failed delivery. We identified the problem, updated the email address and requested that the correspondence was sent out to the Parish Council ASAP

b) **How we can present our concerns to the planning inspector at the November inquiry**

The Parish Council can request to make an oral representation at the hearings in November / December. I would suggest the Parish Council signal their intention to make an oral representation to the programme officer. The deadline to request attendance at the hearing is 11th September, so there is still time for the Parish Council to inform the programme officer of their desire to attend. I would ask the Parish Council to review the correspondence from the programme officer before confirming their intention to attend the hearing, that correspondence has been sent to the Parish Council, but you can also find it on our webpage [here](#)

I hope this clarifies matters, I would be happy to discuss any of this further if necessary

Kind Regards
Chris

Chris Paterson
Communities Lead
South Downs National Park Authority
Tel: 01730 819286

OUR RESPONSE:

Dear Mr Patterson

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Thank you for your letter of Sept 7th. Following your suggestion we have instructed our clerk to request an oral hearing for Owslebury Parish Council at the upcoming SDNP Local Plan inquiry.

However I would like to re-state our concern regarding the proposed Owslebury Parish settlement boundaries made in our letter in November 2017. Our concerns still stand, and they are supported by a majority of our parishioners. SDNP appears to have ignored the points made in the letter, and has made no attempt to meaningfully engage with Owslebury to understand our feelings. Why? We find it amazing that this now has to go to a Planning Inquiry without any further attempt to sort out the problem.

I hope that in the future SDNP will ensure that concerns raised by Parishes like Owslebury are responded to with sensible discussion.

Regards
John Chapman

SDNP RESPONSE:

Dear Mr Chapman,

Thank you for your email.

I appreciate that the Parish Council remain concerned about the designation of a Settlement Boundary for the settlement of Owslebury. I can assure you that we have not ignored the contents of your letter of November 2017, indeed this letter was sent in response to the information we presented to the parish council at the Parish workshop in September 2017 and as part of the Pre Submission consultation on the Local Plan. Following the response from Owslebury Parish Council, and many other comments received, the SDNPA assessed all representations and considered whether modifications were required. The SDNPA has published a Schedule of Changes which sets out the SDNPA position in relation to any modifications required. This does not propose the changing or deletion of the Owslebury Settlement Boundary, as the SDNPA consider that it is appropriate to apply a boundary to the settlement of Owslebury. The Parish Council will of course have an opportunity to raise their concerns at the hearing, if the Inspector considers this appropriate. I would also highlight that the inspector has copies of all representations which were made during the South Downs Local Plan Pre Submission consultation, including those representations from Owslebury Parish Council, so he is aware of the concerns of Owslebury Parish Council and residents of Owslebury.

Kind regards
chris

Chris Paterson

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Appendix 2



TSF-05-Settlement-
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