

Love South Leigh & High Cogges

**Important Note to Residents from the Conservation Area Steering Group following the Parish Council Agreement on 11th August 2022**

Dear Residents, 9th September 2022

**Conservation Area Status and**

**POLLING SLIP FOR COMPLETION BY NOON, FRIDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022**

Following a Village Poll in November 2020 in which residents supported the Conservation Area Steering Group’s recommendation to progress with a detailed draft application for Conservation Area (CA) status, that draft has now been completed and considered by the Parish Council (PC). On 11th August 2021, the PC passed a resolution that a further Poll would be taken on this final draft, which is based on professional research and advice. The draft application is attached.

**The story so far:** To reach this stage, we consulted both an independent heritage expert and West Oxfordshire County Council’s own adviser. In the process, we set out to include as much of the residential areas as possible. That included: Station Road, Lymbrook Close, Stanton Harcourt Road, Bond’s Lane, Chapel Road, Church End, High Cogges, and the important land in between that binds our community together. We were advised, however, that this simply would not be accepted and, with reluctance, we have had to bow to their advice.

The final result, therefore, is not as far reaching as we wanted but we are advised, and we believe, that the added protection afforded by the now proposed area would still benefit the community as a whole. In fact, it would do so without imposing the less popular restrictions of CA status on those houses that could not be included.

**The ever-increasing threats to our Parish** In dealing with Oxfordshire County Council over the Shore’s Green junction and the A40 at Barnard Gate and other major issues, the PC is constantly looking over its shoulder to identify and prevent an increase in the risk of development. It has, thus, come to the attention of the PC through our network of contacts outside the Parish, that OUR PARISH HAS NOT ESCAPED THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE, LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT. In addition to this future threat, we are under attack right now on all sides and so the need for CA status covering as much of the Parish as is possible becomes ever more necessary. The threats currently facing us and that are in the public domain, include:

* The Eynsham Park Estate’s option with Gladman Developments Ltd. that is subject to renewal.
* At least one of our District Councillors feels that Eynsham has suffered enough from housing and that it is our turn.
* The WODC Plan and our Neighbourhood Plan expire in 2031.
* The PC learnt on 11th August 2022 that the new administration at West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) is already working to ‘revise’ the Local Plan and there is also going to be a new County Plan.
* You will be aware of the plans for housing to the West of Eynsham – the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area, and housing to the East of Witney – so building is approaching us from both directions i.e., from Witney and from Eynsham.
* What happens if Cotswold Garden Village (Salt Cross Garden Village) does not happen?

**The advantages of Conservation Area status:** Of course, some restrictions within a Conservation Area are irritating, but irritation is better than being swamped by houses, more solar farms etc.

Please turn over…

We believe that advantages are clear.

* CA status would give us statutory protection independent of and superior to Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.
* CA status is enshrined in law and would provide permanent protection. It would help protect the unique ‘character’ of our Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan is not permanent and can be changed.
* CA status would help preserve the Parish’s particular rural ‘personality’.
* It would protect our landscape and history.
* It would enhance the ‘quality’ of any development.
* It would help defend our Parish from urbanisation.

As noted above, despite the reduced CA area in the application, we believe that all the Parish will benefit directly or indirectly from the proposed CA, if approved. We believe that homes that are ***not*** included will ***not*** become significantly more vulnerable. That is because we have included key areas that (our market intelligence tells us) landowners have earmarked for development.

Furthermore, we believe that our future problems will not come from individual buildings in and around the village (which we believe are reasonably unlikely to be successful), but from developments of larger size. It is these that we will have to fight off using a combination of resources including Conservation Area, proximity to Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and proximity to Listed Buildings, Neighbourhood Plan etc., depending on the location of the application.

The final draft application is not perfect. Indeed, a CA Steering Group member’s house and that of another resident who contributed to the funding, are not now included. But we all believe that it would still be of huge benefit to the community as a whole.

We have tried to address all the points raised by residents earlier and we now urge you to support the CA application and to complete the Polling Slip below as soon as you can.

Thank you,

Please don’t hesitate to contact the CA Steering Group if you have questions. We are: Gary Nicholls: 7920771897, Martin Spurrier: 07799368464, Dick Pears: 0785017592

Love South Leigh & High Cogges. Let’s preserve & enhance it.