

Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036



Annex VIII Community Facilities November 2017

A plan for the community by the community

Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan

1. Introduction

At the start of 2016, Rob Rowe, Judith Neuhofer and Graeme Dexter undertook a review of community facility opportunities on the Garrison SDL site on behalf of Barkham Parish Council. The output of this work has naturally flowed into the Neighbourhood Plan project. The opinions of residents have been sought via a Neighbourhood Plan Survey sent to all households. Follow up was facilitated by a number of public events.

2 Key Documents

The following key documents have provided source material:

- WBC Appendix A. Shaping our New Communities (2014 – 2026) Executive Summary
- WBC Arborfield Garrison SDL. Statement on Provision of Community Facilities Reference – AGLC/HPA/DOC10. Oct 2014
- WBC Head of Terms for S106 Reference AGLC/HPA/DOC20.

3. Neighbourhood Plan Survey

The results of the 530 responses have been analysed. There are some simple messages:

Whereas responses to Q 11, 12 and 16 suggest satisfaction regarding the provision of nursery places, play facilities for children up to age of 12 and community facilities, Q13 indicates a shortfall in providing for the needs of teenagers.

These comments relate to existing communities and do not cover the needs of future residents in Arborfield Green. The need to retain what is available in the existing communities and develop opportunities in the SDL is covered in the draft narrative and aspirations.

4. Approach

The key findings below were based on discussion with a wide range of interested parties including WBC, existing providers, some current and future users of the facilities on the SDL. The need to get closer to residents was identified and was part of the reason behind Barkham Parish Council establishing an office in the current Garrison Community Centre.

5 Key Findings:

Arborfield and Barkham have limited community assets. Proposed development, in particular the SDL, have been sold to the existing community on the basis that they would benefit from new facilities on the site.

5.1 Benchmarking

Three nearby and very different community centres were visited (Finchampstead BPC, Woodley and Shinfield). It was apparent there is no fixed formula for a successful and vibrant community centre as this depends on circumstance and identifying the needs/aspirations of the community to be served

5.2 Existing Garrison Community Centre

Three groups are making good use of this facility. It was recognised there was capacity for a wider range of activities.

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5.3 S106 Commitment and the Legacy Buildings

Meetings were held with WBC to understand plans for the ongoing use of the 'Legacy Buildings'. The current view was that any broader use of the gym will be managed by a third party, there are no plans for the ongoing use of the library building and the new community centre will be a stand-alone facility. This needs continuous review.

The S106 Agreement specifies a floor area for the new Community Centre which is 50% that of the Finchampstead Baptist Church Centre - a much respected standard. Provision is required for:

- Expansion and flexibility of the internal areas to accommodate growing and changing needs.
- Location and subsequent planning to allow for easy access, good parking, outdoor play areas and pleasant setting throughout the lifetime of the asset.
- Facilities to be attractive, safe (for children) and welcoming to encourage use.
- Optimisation of operating expenses to ensure excessive charges do not discourage use.

5.4 Common Interest Groups

Several groups have been identified that could work to support and develop the Arborfield Green community. These include:

- Finchampstead Baptist Church Centre (FBCC) – Jim Gallagher and Chris Simpkin.
- Arborfield and Barkham Churches (A&BCs) – Piers Bickersteth and Julian Bidgood.
- Existing users of the Garrison Community Centre – Gail Prewett (Poperinghe Pre-School)
- Women's Institute (WI) – Pam Stubbs
- Military residents in the vicinity (MR) – no contact
- Civilian residents in the vicinity (CR) – no contact
- Other formal and informal groups may also be interested.

5.5 References

The following references were reviewed.

- i. Community Centre Models: 04 Mar 2016
- ii. Existing Garrison Community Centre – Summary of Current Users: 25 April 2016
- iii. Arborfield SDL – Review of Assets: 12 Apr 2016

In addition meetings were held with WBC on 03 May and 28 Jun 2016

6. Overview of Community Facilities

There are a number of well utilised community facilities located throughout Arborfield and Barkham Parishes providing a wide range of services to a broad cross section of the community. These work alongside other bodies such as pubs, religious organisations and local businesses and contribute to a strong, vibrant and exciting community. This diversity also reflects a wealth of experience that can be channelled to welcoming new parishioners to the Garrison SDL and community projects required to support that growth.

The Residents Survey gave some interesting insights.

- i. There is a strong sense that nursery provision is adequate (72%) and also play facilities for children up to 12 years (60%).
- ii. However a majority felt that there was a shortage of recreation facilities for teenagers (77%).
- iii. Satisfaction with local medical facilities is low (38%) but the result splits by parish. Arborfield residents have the benefit of small doctor's surgery facility which explains higher satisfaction at 45% compared with just 31% in Barkham.
- iv. Community centres were considered adequate (63%).

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7. Existing Facilities

The following facilities exist in Arborfield and Barkham.

7.1 Arborfield Village Hall

First opened in 1931, the Hall provides a venue for a wide range of clubs including: local history, gardening, WI, Brownies, keep fit, Mother & Baby groups and is available for private parties. Since being extended in 2000, it has housed a doctors' surgery with a waiting room and the Parish Council office.

7.2 Arborfield Pavilion

This is part of the Recreation Ground and provides changing facilities for the several local teams using the football pitches and by children and families enjoying the other recreational activities available. It is also used for meetings by the Parish Council, an Art Group and others.

Planning permission has been granted to redevelop the Pavilion and funds are available for the project. When complete, it will accommodate the Parish Office thereby allowing more space in the Village Hall for the doctor's surgery. Discussions are also in progress with a private nursery to provide a weekday pre-school group for some twenty 2–4 year olds.

7.3 Arborfield, Barkham & District British Legion

This includes two licensed bars, a snooker room, a TV lounge, an outdoor patio area and has excellent parking capacity. It provides a venue for many activities that complement those in the Village Halls and Pavilion such as: bingo, line dancing, skittles, car boot sales and children's activities. Since the removal of the mobile library from the Recreation Ground car park, the Legion has hosted a small 'pop-up' library for two half days every week.

7.4 Barkham Village Hall

Since opening in 1983, this has provided a venue for private parties and a regular meeting place for ramblers, gardening groups, bands to practise and a daily nursery group. The Parish Council holds its meetings here. Children attend a Sunday School as part of the nearby Church programme. There is extensive parking and an attractive outside field area that is well suited to BBQs, bouncy castles, marquees and play activities.

7.5 Existing Garrison Community Centre

This is located on the border of Arborfield and Barkham Parishes and came into being to serve Garrison families who are still significant users although, increasingly, it is open to civilian personnel. It has a high utilisation and there is a constant buzz. User groups include: Poperinghe Pre-School (charitable trust), Hazebrouck Child Care Centre (commercial venture), Youth Club (exclusively military) and a hairdresser which all have dedicated accommodation. The meeting hall and several rooms are used by a 'Mums and Tots Group' (organised by the Mums), the health visitor, other clubs and businesses on a shared basis. It has good parking and is set in a pleasant wooded environment with enclosed, safe exterior play areas. Military led activities use the facilities free of charge but those serving the wider population are increasingly being charged.

With the management of the centre transferring from the Military to Crest Nicholson in October 2017 plans for increasing the use of this valuable asset are anticipated. The longer term plan calls for the building to be demolished to make way for housing and ensuring these activities are appropriately re-housed is a vital goal. Meanwhile Barkham Parish Council is establishing an office in the building to be close to this growing community.

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8. Arborfield Green SDL Development

Some 2,000 of the 3,500 dwellings planned fall within the Arborfield and Barkham parish boundaries and most of the remaining 1,500 in the Parish of Finchampstead.

There is an S106 obligation on the developers – Crest Nicholson – to build a new Community Centre which will serve the entire SDL and be available to all in the vicinity. Work is ongoing to identify which services should be included and how these can best be delivered to meet the aspirations of the new communities. This involves all interested parties from Arborfield and Barkham Parishes, Wokingham Borough Council, developers, faith groups and surrounding parishes, especially Finchampstead.

Other plans for the Garrison site include schools and a District Centre with shops, and medical facilities were promised. The ‘Legacy Buildings’ inherited from the Army – the gym and library – will initially be used by Bohunt School to provide temporary school facilities and may become available for use by the community at large, possibly on a shared basis, but plans have yet to be developed. Although it is envisaged the ongoing management of the shops, gym and promised swimming pool will involve third party businesses and not be part of the parish organisation, ensuring their successful integration will very much be part of the overall Neighbourhood Plan.

9. Aspirations for Community Facilities in Arborfield and Barkham

There is a tremendous and exciting opportunity to continue promoting existing assets across Arborfield and Barkham and to embrace major new projects. In so doing the following aspirations are held:

- i. Sound business plans must demonstrate that Community Facilities are financially viable on a stand-alone basis.
- ii. Potential users should be involved in specifying new and upgraded facilities to ensure real and supported needs are met.
- iii. Projects, especially those in development areas, should make provision for expansion and flexible use of internal areas to accommodate increases in population and changing needs.
- iv. Location, and future planning, should ensure easy access, good parking, surrounding green areas for fêtes etc, outdoor playgrounds and a pleasant setting throughout the lifetime of the asset.
- v. Operational costs should be optimised to ensure excessive charges do not discourage use.
- vi. Facilities should be attractive, safe (for children) and welcoming to encourage use.
- vii. Every attempt should be made to make centres and activities appealing to younger generations.
- viii. Encourage shared use of facilities e.g. school/public use
- ix. Partners who bring commitment (support/funding), expertise (knowledge/track record) and customers (initial critical mass) should be encouraged.