

10th June 2015

PIGGOTTS
CHURCH END
BLEDLOW
PRINCES RISBOROUGH
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
HP27 9PD

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Dear Mrs Tollitt,

Planning Policy for Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish

I am writing to you to summarise discussions the Parish Council has had since you attended our council meeting in April (apologies for my absence I not only had a heavy cold but had completely lost my voice).

We have received various representations from the Molins Action Group and others regarding the approach the District Council are taking to the planning of the area. As the Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning matters, but consists of lay members of the public, it would be inappropriate for us to question the legality or otherwise of the current approach, but we have the following reservations:

Area Action Plans

The Area Action Plan you are proposing seems inappropriate. From a review of a score or so Area Action Plans available on the internet, they all appear to address how best to manage development, rather than to address whether to develop or not and where. This planning mechanism also appears to be used almost exclusively in urban contexts, not rural ones such as Saunderton. None that we could find covered Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Parish's Need for a Planning Policy

The current proposals for Saunderton illustrate the need for a planning policy, but the requirement is wider. The built environment is one concern, but the preservation of the landscape and rural character of the Parish is also of greater concern.

Last year we faced the prospect of a solar farm in Bledlow. A wind farm, since dropped, was proposed just across the county border in Henton, and we have seen one or two applications for so far acceptably small wind turbines.

We are not against alternative energy, but it needs to be implemented in a manner which respects the beauty of the local landscape, and the character of the many listed buildings and conservation areas. A positive policy respecting these concerns would help.

There is a slow but relentless drift from conventional agriculture to 'horsiculture' and small marginally viable 'hobby' farms. We have seen houses being released from their agricultural ties, while new farms have been established within the AONB leading to inappropriate industrial-scale buildings followed by a well-trodden path of static mobile homes and then new housing which otherwise would not be allowed.

We are also seeing an erosion of the character of villages; householders seeking to erect barriers in the form of high walls and gates often seen in suburban areas, thus destroying the traditionally more open street scene of typical English villages.

Meanwhile, we understand the pressure for new housing. While local opinion is definitely against large scale development, I am confident that a well reasoned plan identifying suitable sites for incremental infill would help alleviate some of the pressure. I can recall at least two such applications in recent years which have been turned down, which would have had minimal impact on the character of the Parish.

On the commercial side we have seen the loss of accommodation at Wests Yard and now possibly at Molins (before you were appointed Molins was let in multiple office and light industrial units). This has a very real impact on the local economy as there is no low priced accommodation for those seeking to start new businesses. This is exacerbated by the proposed replacement of at least two light industrial sites just across the border in Chinnor. The continued trend of the area towards dormitory villages dominated by commuters seems likely to continue unless we make adequate provision for commerce and industry.

The Parish Council has long supported a dark skies policy, this seems likely to come into direct conflict with any plans for a 'Greater Saunderton' and may quite easily have a knock on effect on the rest of the parish.

The Way Forward

The council would like your help and support in invoking a Parish-wide plan to address the concerns I have outlined. There are no doubt others which would be identified during public consultation. We need something which supports:

- The development of the local economy.
- The preservation of the character of the landscape both within and outside the AONB.
- The preservation of the character of the villages and hamlets within the Parish.
- A sensitive approach to increasing the housing stock.

Request for Neighbourhood Plan

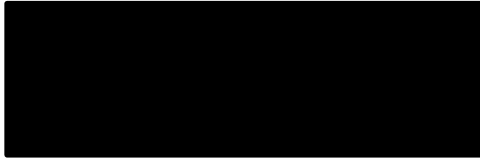
Finally, because we understand that tight timescales are being imposed by St Congar, the Parish Council wish to formally request that a neighbourhood plan be prepared for the Parish of Bledlow-cum-Saunderton.

I have outlined above the reasons a plan is needed for the Parish and not just for Saunderton, and I believe Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council is the relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

As is required I attach a map of the Parish Boundaries overleaf.

I suggest we arrange to meet at the earliest opportunity to discuss how we might implement this request to meet the Parish's needs.

Yours sincerely,

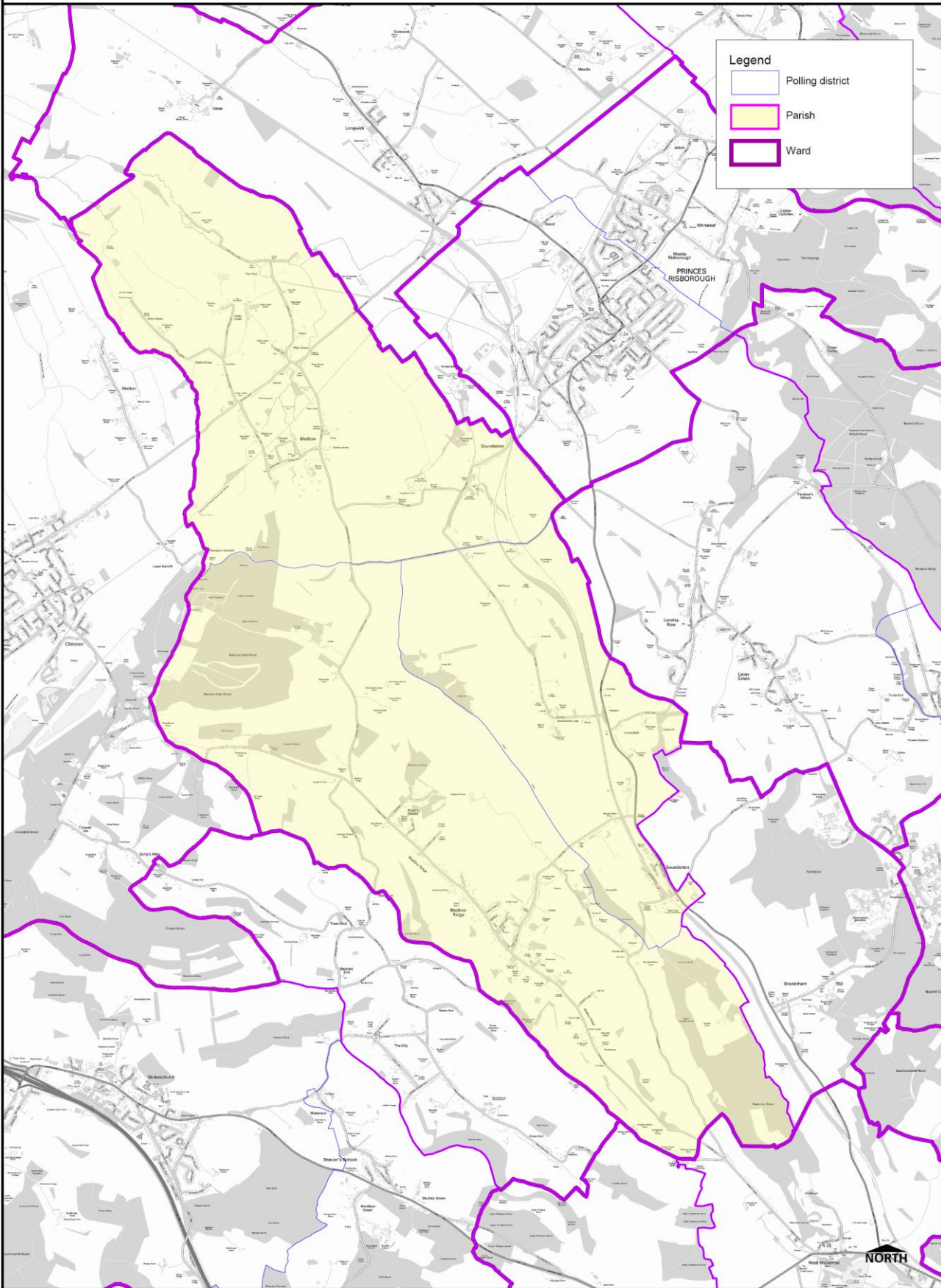


Simon Breese.

Chairman, Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council

cc David Johncock, Cabinet Member for Planning , Carl Etholen, Wycombe District Councillor,
Clerk and all Councillors Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council

Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council



Statement of Purpose:
 Site Plan for Council Business Use Only

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Map produced in Mapinfo GIS by: GIS Team	Scale: 1:34000	Date: 04/03/2015
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