

# **SAVE OUR STOCKBRIDGE**

## **SOS**

### **UPDATE**

We know that our last update was not long ago but we wanted to keep you abreast of what we have been doing.

#### **The Government White Paper on Planning for the Future**

You will all be aware of the controversial Government White Paper on Planning for the Future and we decided that even our small voice should be heard, as planning affects us all. The Government is proposing a major housebuilding strategy with far less stringent requirements to obtain planning permission. It is said that they wish to make the whole planning system much simpler.

What particularly caught our eye was the Government's references to the protection of (i) environmental and heritage assets, (ii) 'our treasured countryside', and (iii) biodiversity. The White Paper also stresses the importance of addressing (iv) the challenges of climate change. We felt that all these matters were dear to the heart of SOS and that Stockbridge is an excellent example of what needs to be preserved and what needs to be addressed.

Our response relied on the fact that Stockbridge is built on a floodplain so that whenever there is heavy and persistent rain, or we get a sudden deluge, we are at risk of flooding. We have all seen events where houses and shops in Stockbridge are at risk or even sadly flooded. Although steps were taken in about 2017 to mitigate the risk of flooding in Stockbridge there remains a real risk, and any development outside the settlement boundary is bound to exacerbate that risk; with climate change that risk becomes ever greater. In addition we emphasised the importance of preserving our precious and historic water meadows as well as the rich biodiversity which Stockbridge enjoys, particularly along the river Test and the water meadows.

In the White Paper the Government proposes three categories of land for development: *growth* areas, *renewal* areas, and *protected* areas. It seemed to us that we should support the idea of protected areas and we went on to suggest that within such areas there should be 'non development areas'. We advocated that once such 'non development areas' were defined and delineated no development at all would be permitted within those areas. This would protect

such areas once and for all and, at a stroke, would stop costly and time - consuming applications for planning permission. Potential developers would no longer seek to develop those non development areas and local councils and members of the public would not have to spend time and money dealing with them. We felt that such non development areas could be defined in many areas across England for the enhancement of the environment and our countryside, which would benefit us and future generations forever.

It was a bold submission but we hope you approve and we shall see if the Government responds. Our environment becomes ever more important to us all and SOS will do all it can to preserve and protect our precious Stockbridge countryside.

### **The Greyhound application for 3 offices**

You may recall that the Greyhound on the Test made an application for permission to change a fishing hut into three self contained offices, which we opposed mainly on the grounds that it was outside the settlement boundary, in the countryside, on the floodplain, adjacent to the river Test and opposite water meadows. Others also objected to the proposal and we are pleased to say that TVBC have refused the application.

But we are not complacent and the risk of other applications for development on the countryside outside the Stockbridge settlement boundary remains. So we remain ever vigilant!

### **Christmas**

On any view Christmas will be rather different this year but we do wish you a happy one and in particular a happy and healthy New Year. Thank you as always for your support.

Jean Boney

Chair SOS

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