



GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

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IN COLLABORATION WITH EDGCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING 04	PROPOSED THIRD PRISON at Grendon Underwood
Held on: 16/02/2021 at: 19:00hrs	Location: REMOTE
PRISON OBJECTION MEETING	
Steering	GU Parish Council Cllr Kim Moloney (Chairman); Edgcott Parish Council, Chairman, Cllr Peter Harper
Invitees	Rt. Hon. Greg Smith MP
	There were 49 attendees in all.
P04/01	<p><u>Purpose of Meeting</u> Further to the end of a twice extended consultation period on 5th February 21, and two previous open meetings arranged by the Parish Councils of Grendon Underwood & Edgcott, this fourth meeting, to repeat one held on Monday, 15th February 2021, has been called to update residents on the work carried out in preparation for an Outline Planning Application from the MoJ expected before the end of February 21. It is also intended to advise the imminent availability of a 'tool kit' suggesting when & how best residents can integrate, to maximum effect, their objections into structured, planning oriented opposition campaign proposed by the councils.</p>
P04/02	<p><u>Introduction by the chairman</u> The Chairman, Edgcott Parish Council, welcomed & thanked all attending this next in an on-going series of meetings in opposition to MoJ proposals. It is designed to ensure local residents are kept up to date with work going on behind the scenes in preparation for a concerted campaign in opposition to the potential development of a third prison in Grendon Underwood. He also advised a 'tool kit' is in preparation designed to give residents the necessary guidance for making sure their involvement is personal to them and how best it can be integrated into & enhance this focused and planning oriented campaign of opposition. The Chairman of Grendon Underwood Parish Council had previously advised the membership of a working party carrying out extensive preparatory work to allow a rapid and focused response to any Outline Planning Application forthcoming as Cllr Kim Moloney, Chairman GUPC, Cllr Peter Harper, Chairman EPC, Cllr Andy Benfield, Cllr Paul Jackman, Roger Behagg, Rod Baker, Cllr Steph Gassor, Parish Clerks. He was at pains to gratefully acknowledge the extensive professional and qualified expertise provided to the working group from members of the community. The Chairman confirmed the meeting would be recorded and participation is taken as consent to be identified during the meeting. The recording, the presentation & chat box will be posted to council websites. He then passed the meeting to a resident to present current status and plans going forward.</p>
P04/03	<p><u>Background Overview.</u> On 3rd December 2020, the Parish Councils of Grendon Underwood (GUPC) & Edgcott (EPC) Council were forwarded a letter from Lynda Rawsthorne, Prison Infrastructure Director at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) giving notice of their intention to apply for planning permission to build a third, (Cat C, 1440, possibly 1680 bed) prison on the same site as the two existing (Cat A & Cat D) prisons in Grendon Underwood. The MoJ gave further notice of a consultation period from 3rd December to terminate on 23rd December 2020, later extended to 29th January 2021 at the request of local MP and further extended to 5th February 2021 to allow residents more time to respond to the proposal. February 2021- It is expected this exercise was an attempt to facilitate approval of an Outline Planning Application to be submitted during February 2021, which, if approved, would allow full approval by Summer 2021, work to commence early 2023 for completion in 2025. 10th December 2020 - Grendon Underwood Parish Council hold an emergency preliminary Fact Finding Meeting identifying overwhelming opposition. 19th January 2021 – Grendon Underwood Parish hold second meeting in collaboration with Edgcott Parish Council to establish the scale of what we face. 15th February 2021 the Parish Councils of Grendon Underwood and Edgcott hold third in a series of meetings to update residents on preparatory actions to date. Recording & minutes to be posted to both council web sites.</p>

16th February 2021 the Parish Councils of Grendon Underwood and Edgcott hold this the fourth in a series of meetings to update residents on preparatory actions to date. Recording & minutes to be posted to both council web sites.

P04/04 Executive Summary

A resident gave an update presentation identifying work done, and on-going, in regard to those planning principles that would be relevant to a well-focused, planning oriented opposition campaign once the MoJ submits the Outline Planning Application to the Planning Authority.

He expressed the thanks of the working party for all the support, expertise & professional advice from many in the community.

From a case study of how MoJ gained approval for Full Sutton prison, he gave an overview of the strategy the MoJ used and what we should expect for Grendon - they initially gain Outline Planning Permission, but with 25 conditions attached, which is standard practice for large developments. Subsequent to the approval of the outline planning application at Full Sutton, the MoJ submitted a further and significantly different planning application. The new application increased the number of prisoner places, the total number of buildings that would be erected and significant differences in design and layout compared to the initial application. Because outline approval had been previously granted the modified application was also approved in spite of grossly contravening the conditions placed on the outline approval.

A comparison of the Full Sutton case and the Grendon situation was shown. It was also emphasised how the Planning Authority assess planning applications in terms of weighing up the balance between advantages of the proposed development versus the potential damage.

Previous local applications taken to appeal had been studied for common themes.

A full list of dos & don'ts in how to object was provided and which will form the basis of an objection tool kit being prepared for residents.

He stressed the importance of multiple resident objections but that they must be relevant to the planning criteria and not be in the form of a petition or template letter – these will have no weight in the planning balance.

Cllr Branston was of the opinion that quality of objection is more important than quantity.

Whilst confirming objections must be related to valid planning criteria, Cllr Macpherson did suggest giving the Planning Authority some idea of the sheer scale of the personal impact this development may well have on individuals and that could have a powerful effect on planners.

It was confirmed multiple objections from within one household, including from minors, would be a positive contribution but must be individual, in their own personal language and directly related to the impact on the individual.

He gave an overview of recent activity of the working party and the extent of the expertise in sustainability, planning law, heritage, environment & ecology made available from local residents - followed by a summary of plans going forward.

It had been confirmed, from several qualified sources, that all that could be done at this stage has been done.

Greg Smith MP emphasised his ongoing commitment to oppose and advised he had tabled questions to the Minister, colleagues and local Bucks MP seeking the rationale behind site selection. He remains concerned about the cumulative impact of HS2 & EWR decimating local heritage, environment & ecology. This would be an additional burden on communities already taking a big enough 'hit'. Recent information leads him to believe the Ministry's justification for local prisoners in local prisons is not borne out by the data.

The Chairman reviewed the chat box in full addressing all comments & queries.

The full unabridged transcript of the ZOOM Chatbox is shown in Appendix 1 from which three offers emerged;

Sorting out smaller whatsapp groups is a great idea I'm happy to help;

I downloaded the current prison capacity, by prison and can share that if it helps;

We can share around planning policies to reinforce letters.

P4/05 Actions arising.

GU & Edgcott Parish Councils - A steering group, comprising the Chairmen and Clerks of both Councils, certain residents with specific skills that may be utilised from time to time such as to maximise leverage from experience & expertise resident in the community - achieved and will call the next meeting once the anticipated Outline Planning Application is forthcoming from the Ministry.

To continue ongoing dialogue directly with designated MoJ liaison personnel, our MP, Buckinghamshire Council representatives, other Parish Councils, the school, the current prison governor and the many providers of qualified, experienced advice from organisation & local residents.

To post information and meeting records to council web sites.

To collate data into an objection 'tool kit' for residents.

The Council will present their findings at further open, public meetings and publicise timing, giving good notice, on the Parish Council web site at www.gupc.org.uk and through letter boxes with flyers.

MP, Greg Smith – fully committed to oppose. Will continue to raise questions with follow ups to Ministers & colleagues in the House.

Buckinghamshire County Council [from 15th February meeting] – whilst having opposed at a Cabinet Meeting on 25th January, the Leader is reluctant to object to their Planning Committee to maintain cross department functional integrity. Cllr Macpherson will continue to support opposition as soon as the application is submitted.

Residents - Resident are asked to wait for their objection tool kit to ensure a well-co-ordinated & planning focused opposition campaign.
Then, at the right time, to input as many personalised objections as possible.

Appendix 1 – unabridged Zoom ChatBox

The following comments are transcribed directly from resident input during the meetings. There have been no amendments, corrections, modifications, abridgement, redaction or changes either by addition or omission such as to preserve inclusivity integrity.

Open meeting 16th February 2021 Anonymous version – chat box

19:28:00 host to Everyone : The chat box is now open for you to ask your questions and make comments.
19:40:16 to Everyone : don't forget their flock of rare sheep.
19:41:02 to Everyone : would the new prison not limit the current pastoral care for prisoners in looking after the animals?
19:46:25 to Everyone : Question to Greg Smith: whilst you are committed to fighting this ... what are the thoughts of your fellow MP's for Bucks? Will we have the support of the other 7 to provide some additional weight against this proposal
19:47:27 to Everyone : I believe in strength in numbers, but I didn't know about yesterday and tonights meeting, so is there a wats ap group or do you want emails so you can keep us in touch ?
19:47:43 to Everyone : have we looked into media support to raise awareness? if the planning application goes in?
19:47:46 to Everyone : you've mentioned wildlife aspect - can you expand on research that will be undertaken as my understanding is that finding a potential near extinct or protected species could be a winning objection to any planning application
19:49:21 to Everyone : The media have picked up a couple of stories albeit local press.
19:49:58 to Everyone : Suzi, we did a leaflet drop to every household in GU and Edgcott plus FB and websites.
19:51:23 to Everyone : **Sorting out smaller whatsapp groups is a great idea kind of old fashioned 'round robin' I'm happy to help.**
19:51:30 to Everyone : Rob, when the planning app goes live we do have a press release ready. We will of course tweak to align with the application.
19:52:22 to Everyone : Kim, we live in Charndon and have a Charndon Voice Facebook Page, which could be used.
19:53:06 to Everyone : Suzie I shared the info across to Charndon Voice as well last week
19:53:19 to Everyone : Am I right in thinking that the sketch of the Wellinborough prison touted is actually a lot smaller in size and scale than the one being planned near here?
19:53:40 to Everyone : Phil, yes.
19:54:22 to Everyone : Hopefully all the villages stay motivated and passionate about the fight.
19:54:45 to Everyone : **I downloaded the current prison capacity, by prison and can share that if it helps**
19:58:07 to Everyone : are the disingenuous facts purported in the consultation document grounds for a judicial review - certainly grounds for a complaint?
19:58:40 to Everyone : I've heard an argument that we've already put up with so much disruption with HS2 and East West, so we shouldn't put up with this. As much as I agree with the sentiments, can anyone confirm if this argument carries any weight at planning committee?
20:00:39 to Everyone : where can We find policy rule large car park spaces near residential area. As I understand most large car park space in town are all surrounded by it retail or business building shelter. Therefore, there must some strong rule against residential area at this case large prison.
20:00:45 to Everyone : Planning will be based on the planning merits of the application.
20:00:55 to Everyone : Do you know that we nearly had a serious accident today between horses and a cement mixer ? can you imagine what it will be like with the added traffic if it happens
20:02:06 to Everyone : Consultation was not a statutory requirement and hence no JR avenue
20:06:11 to Everyone : Greg - do you know if the Expressway is likely to be resurrected? In which case this would help with their traffic situation...
20:06:22 to Everyone : **We can share around planning policies to reinforce letters.**
20:09:13 to Everyone : Greg, does that also mean the Calvert new town will not go ahead?
20:10:31 to Everyone : Greg, thank you so much for all your help with this.