

Langford Parish Council



Protocol for Communication with Planning Applicants

Purpose

Langford Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications. The Council does not determine planning applications; decisions are made by West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) as the Local Planning Authority.

This protocol sets out how the Parish Council communicates with applicants to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly, consistently and transparently.

Principles

The Council will:

- consider every planning application on its planning merits;
- act impartially and without favour towards any applicant;
- treat all applicants in a consistent manner;
- conduct its business openly through properly convened Council meetings; and
- submit its observations to WODC through the official consultation process.

Communication with Applicants

Councillors and the Clerk may acknowledge planning applications or discuss procedural matters with applicants. However, they should avoid commenting on the likely views of the Council or indicating how the Council may respond before the application has been considered at a Council meeting.

Once the Council has resolved its response, it will normally submit its comments directly to WODC. The Council will not normally contact the applicant separately to explain or discuss its comments before they are published on the WODC Planning Portal.

This approach:

- ensures that every applicant receives information in the same way;
- avoids misunderstandings arising from informal conversations;
- prevents any perception that individual applicants receive advance notice or preferential treatment; and
- allows the Council's agreed response to be read in its complete and unedited form.

The Council values good relationships with parishioners and recognises that many planning applications involve their homes and families.

If approached by an applicant after the Council's comments have been formulated and submitted to WODC, councillors may explain the Council's published response but should avoid expressing personal opinions that could be interpreted as representing the Council unless those opinions reflect the Council's formally agreed position.

Exceptions

Where the Council considers that a procedural issue or factual error should be drawn to an applicant's attention, the Chairman or Clerk may communicate with the applicant provided the communication is factual, consistent with the Council's agreed position, and is not intended to negotiate or influence the planning application outside the formal planning process.

Agreed and adopted at full meeting of Langford Parish Council 15 July 2026