

Limpsfield Parish Council – Planning Committee Chair Report

Presented by Jenny Williams – May 2025

Key Achievements This Financial Year:

- The Planning Committee reviewed approximately 85 planning applications, including those concerning listed buildings, tree preservation orders, and tree works within the conservation area. This is a slight decrease from the 114 applications considered in the previous year.
- We also provided input on larger developments near our parish borders, including:
 - Chichele Road: A proposed development of 116 houses (70 market-rate, 46 affordable) – ultimately turned down at appeal.
 - The Grasshopper Site: A care home application, highlighting the importance of involvement in proposals that impact key local services like Oxted Health Centre (which falls within Limpsfield Parish).
- We worked constructively with Tandridge District Council (TDC) to achieve fair outcomes on both residential and commercial applications.
- Our thanks go to Claire Blackwell, Ian Booth, Catherine Sayer, Cameron McIntosh (Surrey CC), and Chris Reynolds (TDC Heritage Officer) for their ongoing support and responsiveness.
- We refined our approach to application responses:
 - More proactive in suggesting conditions where approval is likely (e.g., restrictions on outbuilding usage, preservation of soft landscaping and trees).
 - Always referencing relevant sections of the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan (LNP) to guide planning officers.
- We've been involved in several enforcement cases – some ongoing – and encourage residents to report any potential planning breaches.

Key Challenges Facing Limpsfield Parish:

- Increasing uncertainty at the district level regarding planning policy and governance, which impacts our parish directly.
- The potential for more developer interest in so-called 'grey belt' land, with vague terminology already appearing in applications.
- Ongoing ambiguity in the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – we are actively challenging interpretations that appear unclear or unfair.
- The proposed move to a unitary authority model may result in more distant governance, potentially undermining the productive relationship we currently have with TDC. This could make the planning function more time-consuming and might even require external consultants in future.

- Our sincere thanks to Ted Beresford Knox, whose voluntary consultancy on planning matters has been invaluable.

Key Documents & Designations Protecting Limpsfield:

- Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan (LNP): A legally adopted planning document, currently under a 5-year review by a working group.
- Limpsfield Village Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan (LVCAAMP): Provides detailed guidance for development within the village conservation area.
- Local Green Space (LGS) Designations: These protect key green spaces (e.g., Glebe Meadow) with the same level of protection as Green Belt land.
- Submission to Local Listings: In progress with TDC, these listings help safeguard buildings, structures, and land not formally heritage listed.
- Submission to Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review: Now known as Surrey Hills National Landscape, this review is expected to bring more of our parish under national landscape designation. Further details will be presented by Catherine.

Closing Statement:

We want to be clear that the Planning Committee is not against sensitive and appropriate development by residents, businesses, or developers. However, we strongly advocate for development that aligns with our parish's adopted policies and meets the genuine needs of the local community.