

# BANBURY RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB

Affiliated to:  
The Rugby Union and Oxfordshire Rugby Union



Ground: Bodicote Park, Oxford Road, Bodicote,  
Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 4AF.

Tel. 01295 266515

15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Robert Jolley  
Assistant Director for Planning and Economy  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
OX15 4AA

Dear Sir

## **Planning Application No. 19/01047/OUT**

We write on behalf of Banbury Rugby Club and in reply to your letter dated 24 June 2019 under the above reference.

We note the above is an outline planning application and at this stage we are wanting to raise awareness with you about some general issues associated with the proposal. We wish to ensure the Rugby Club is included in the consultation process.

We believe the existing Bodicote Park playing field and infrastructure facility should be fully reserved for the sport of rugby and community use. The major user of the Bodicote Park playing fields and infrastructure is youth rugby for players aged 6 to 18 and the Rugby Club will exert all influence to protect this busy facility already in existence and fully functional.

For a range of reasons, the Rugby Club is concerned about the outline planning application for Banbury United to be moved to an adjacent site, including the following:

1. **Location:** The location shown for Banbury United is adjacent to Bodicote Park and in particular adjacent to land already owned / retained by Cherwell District Council which is used by Banbury Rugby Club. We are very keen to protect the status quo.
2. **Shared use:** No mention is made in the outline proposal for shared or exclusive use of the Bodicote Park site by Banbury United although the plan advertised does show a new gap in the perimeter woodland where no gap currently exists. The suggestion could be for linkage of the adjacent sites.
3. **Bodicote Park fully used:** There has been significant intensification in the use of all the Rugby Club resources during the past 10 years and the Rugby Club is providing valuable sporting opportunity for all ages and particularly for youth, women's and Touch rugby. Any reduction in playing field area is a proposition the Rugby Club will resist in the strongest terms. Indeed, if football is given preference over rugby then all that Cherwell District Council are doing is moving a problem from one party to another whilst causing disruption all the way down the line.

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- Vehicles & traffic congestion: Moving Banbury United from its current site where car parking associated with football games is not such a significant issue, to an out of town site where car parking, vehicle movements and main road congestion are growing difficulties requires the closest scrutiny. The Rugby Club acknowledges the addition our own traffic contributes to the capacity of the Oxford Road: home games on a Saturday attract 200 vehicles and mini rugby on a Sunday attracts 200 to 1200 vehicles. Are traffic bottlenecks not inevitable when adjacent clubs both have home games on a Saturday? Fixture lists are outside our control.
- New entrance: It is noted there is a proposal for a new entrance to the proposed site off the Oxford Road and we presume the intention is for shared car parking with the proposed Secondary School. We support the principle that least land should be taken for access roads and parking, so that playing field area is maximised.
- Importance of playing fields: It is clear that playing fields are at a premium in the Banbury area. More particularly that playing fields with good infrastructure and organisation that people can attach themselves to for the benefit of the youth of the region are an essential element to healthy society. It should not be the case that one sports club detracts from another and that resources are simply juggled between one and another. Banbury Rugby club supports the provision of resource to football, hockey, cricket and all sports clubs in general, but the support should never be to the detriment of each other.
- Community resource & funding: The Rugby Club has obtained funding for all its needs by its own actions ensuring all the time that its resources are available to the wider community. The club is keen to promote and enhance the use of its facilities and wants to emphasise the necessity of remaining outward looking to meet the reasonable ambitions of all parties who have supported the club in a variety of ways. To achieve this the club is wanting to increase its community activity and has in place resource to see this plan carried through. These ambitions seem to us to be right and proper and we seek the continuing support of Cherwell District Council in doing so. Currently the club provides its core activity of rugby in all its forms for males and females as well as dance, jogging, Pilates, cycling, mother & toddler groups, education, dog shows, a variety of sporting tournaments and wide social activity.

In summary the Rugby Club is wanting to ensure that a holistic approach is taken in resolving the needs of Banbury United and to this end want to be certain that if change is made on an adjacent site the opportunity is taken to improve sporting infrastructure for the benefit of all.

Yours faithfully

The Officers of Banbury Rugby Club: -

P. Montanaro, Secretary  
M. Boland, Chairman  
N. Higgs, Treasurer  
N. Chapman, President