



# DOGMSERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

## **Draft Minutes of the Meeting held at Dogmersfield Primary School 3rd August 2023 at 7.00 p.m.**

| <b>Councillors</b>           | <b>In Attendance</b> |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Clr Graham Leach (Chair)     | Yes                  |
| Clr Anne Fillis (Vice-chair) | Yes                  |
| Clr Graham Chisnall          | Yes                  |
| Clr Sarah Miles              | No                   |
| Clr Andrew Simonds           | Yes                  |

**Clerk: Sam Rowe**

**In attendance:**

Members of the public 49

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| 23/069 | <p><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed the members of the public to this extraordinary meeting to discuss two planning applications. As this was an extraordinary meeting there would be no public session. The Clerk had asked those who wished to speak on either of the applications to register prior to the meeting. Five people had asked to speak on the second item. Each speaker would be limited to 3 minutes.</p> <p>The Chair reminded people that DPC was not the decision maker on planning applications but was a statutory consultee. This DPC meeting in public was to decide DPC's response to Hart District Council on each application. Individuals could also submit their own responses.</p> <p>Apologies received from Clr Miles – absent abroad on annual holiday.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that none of the councillors present had any pecuniary interests in the applications to be considered.</p> |
| 23/070 | <p><b>To consider Planning Application – 23/01569/HOU – (Sunray, Chatter Alley)</b></p> <p>Erection of a single storey front infill extension, single storey side link extension between house and detached garage and conversion of garage into habitable accommodation. Alterations to windows and doors.</p> <p>Clr Simonds explained the detail of the application.</p> <p>After a brief discussion amongst the councillors, they saw no reason to object, but supported Clr Simonds recommendations to make the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There should be consultation with Basingstoke Canal Authority since the property sits in the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area.</li></ul>  |



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|        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roof light blackout screens are required regardless of bat activity to comply with DNP 11 - Dark Skies Policy.</li><li>• Construction vehicles should not be parked on the road.</li></ul> <p><b>Proposal: No objection but to make the 3 comments recommended above.</b></p> <p><b>AS Proposed, GC Seconded all in favour</b></p>  |
| 23/071 | <p><b>To consider Planning Application – 23/01502/FUL and 23/01503/LBC – (Pilcot Mill, Pilcot Hill)</b></p> <p>Refurbishment and change of use of Pilcot Mill to provide ancillary rooms in associated use with the main house, retaining the heritage assets and mills working mechanisms. Ground floor to comprise a boot room, utility space and cloakroom. The first floor to comprise living space and home office. The installation of a new staircase serving all floors including a new attic guest suite</p> <p><b>The Chair</b> made two points for the record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hart planning portal indicated that an opinion had been issued on the associated pre-application, but one was not available. DPC has followed this up.</li><li>• The applicants requested to meet with Cllr Leach and Cllr Fillis to explain the application. This meeting took place at Cllr Leach’s residence on 25<sup>th</sup> July.</li></ul> <p><b>Cllr Simonds</b> explained the detail of the applications. He included:</p> <p>A pre-application was submitted - DPC raised concerns over the change of use of the building and that since the living accommodation will be on floors that were once part of the operating Mill parts of an important heritage asset will be lost and parts of the machinery may be removed as well as asking Hart to check that this application does not breach any restrictive covenants. It is DPC’s understanding that the pre-application was closed without Hart issuing a written opinion.</p> <p>Restrictive covenants protect private rights and benefits of the owners or occupiers of the land specified in them. Covenants are privately negotiated and agreed. If a covenant is breached , it would be for those affected to see if enforcement would be possible. Private rights are quite separate from planning considerations.</p> <p>The mill is an important heritage asset in the Dogmersfield conservation area. The following parties have been involved in the concept discussions during the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hart conservation officer.</li><li>• Hart building control</li><li>• Hampshire Mill Group (“HMG”)</li><li>• South East Rivers Trust</li></ul> |



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Hampshire Mill Group have provided initial advice on the restoration and display of the mill machinery. The engineers to be contracted for the restoration of the Mill machinery are G&H Spender recommended by HMG and who have been involved in other mill restorations.

## *The Mill building - external*

The mill is timber framed with brick infill and the overall external appearance of the building is to remain intact with brickwork and weatherboard retained or replaced like for like. Existing door and window openings are to be mostly retained and doors and windows replaced with grey or white timber double glazed purpose built units (similar to the Bereco heritage range).

One ground floor door (facing the river and neighbours - not the road ) will be removed and replaced with a vertical window and on the first floor a stable door (on the opposite side - not facing the road) will be retained as a shutter and the opening sealed with a glass window. Two pairs of roof windows will be fitted on the roof.

## *The waterwheel*

The waterwheel is in a poor state of repair and urgent work has recently been completed to temporarily secure it and make it safe. The proposal is to rebuild the wheel in traditional form including a new timber axle and authentic buckets.

## *The Mill internal - ground floor*

To be a cloakroom, utility space and boot room. The wooden floor will be removed and replaced with flagstones set on a concrete slab fitted with underfloor heating designed to withstand flooding. Any existing brick flooring will be retained. The wooden staircase will be removed and replaced with a contemporary cantilevered stairway. The mechanism linking the waterwheel to the mill machinery will be retained, refurbished and painted dark grey. The opening to the waterwheel will be closed. There is no mention of kitchen facilities.

## *The Mill internal - first floor (the stone floor)*

To be a living area and office. The workings of the mill including ancillary drives will be retained, cleaned, repaired and metal elements painted dark grey. There will be a toughened glass floor providing viewing of the wheel pit. A single set of stones will be retained - the remaining stones removed to architectural salvage. The wooden staircase will be removed and replaced with a contemporary cantilevered stairway.

## *The Mill internal - second floor (the bin loft)*

To be a guest bedroom with ensuite shower room. The hoist equipment and hopper will be retained. Some of the grain bins and hoppers will be removed. Existing internal walls will be removed.

## *The Mill internal - third floor*

Floor to be removed to create headroom on floor below.

## *The Mill - roof*

The roof timbers will be repaired and strengthened as necessary. Two pairs of roof windows will be fitted on the eastern facing roof - facing the river not the road. New internal cladding will be



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added and the roof repaired reusing existing tiles or new matching tiles. The roof height will increase by 150mm to accommodate the cladding.”

Cllr Simonds then confirmed that relevant policies/extracts from the Dogmersfield Neighbourhood Plan, the Dogmersfield Conservation Area Character Appraisal, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Hart Local Plan which should be considered when assessing the application had been made available to the other councillors.”

**The Chair** invited those who had registered to speak. The applicants first and then in the order the requests had been received. *(Note: Following usual protocol at DPC meetings, the names of members of the public who speak have not been included but have been recorded by the Clerk).*

**The Applicant** (This is a joint application – one applicant spoke).

The applicant gave a history of the Mill and its place in the heritage of Dogmersfield.

At the moment the Mill is just a storage facility, and the space is not being used to its best potential. The applicants see this as a waste of a great building.

The applicants intend to restore the building, which is in disrepair, and renovate it to make it useful and preserve it for the future.

The applicants plan to restore and repair the equipment at the Mill and have and will seek advice from qualified people including the Hampshire Mill Group.

The applicants don't want to do anything that will harm the village and will address the covenants.

**Near Neighbour 1** – The neighbour addressed the room with some history about Dogmersfield, stating that once there were no cars and only farm cottages and that over time Dogmersfield has changed. The neighbour said change is inevitable and good can come from change. They felt that the plans the applicants have for the Mill will give it a new purpose and lease for life.

**Near Neighbour 2 (Covenant Holder)** *(Note this speaker asked for their full statement which they read out to be included in the minutes).*

Pilcot Mill was built circa 1750 & is a Grade 2 Listed Building in a conservation area and as such it should not be altered in any manner which would affect its character & appearance of a building of special or historic interest.

The planning applications are detailed, comprehensive & extensive & cover both the restoration of The Mill & an application for a change of use to convert the Mill to domestic accommodation.

The report from G&H Spender engineering states that the building & Mill workings are 'mostly intact' & The Hampshire Mill Group state in their report that the Mill Building has been 'well maintained'. There is no evidence that the Mill is in danger of collapsing.

The planning submissions indicate that some work is required to some areas of the fabric of the Mill and to the machinery & workings and we understand & support the current owners wish to



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renovate the Mill. Most certainly we would not wish for the Mill to fall into disrepair to the extent that it is not a viable building. However, we strongly believe that renovation of the Mill is both possible & preferable if the scope of the work is restricted to 'renovation' to retain its authenticity rather than to include the additional 'refurbishment' work that encompasses a change of use to provide a domestic dwelling. Work to provide an office space would be feasible without much of the proposed refurbishment which includes adding a boot room, cloakroom & en-suite bedroom.

The Mill 'restoration' work in the planning applications focuses primarily on the internal working mechanisms and works to the waterwheel, axle & replacement of buckets.

However the works to 'refurbish' the Mill are significant & are so fundamental that will completely change both the interior & exterior resulting in the character, appearance & architectural structure as a building of special and historic interest being lost.

The roof will be removed & raised & 4 new double glazed windows inserted in the new roof, the upper most third floor removed entirely, the wooden door at ground level will be replaced with glass extending over two floors, the window on the ground floor north east elevation will be removed and a new doubled glazed window will be re sited, the staircase will be replaced with a modern cantilevering stairway & the floors & interior walls will all be altered.

In addition to the limitations imposed by the Listed Building classification, there is an existing restrictive covenant registered on Pilcot Mill prohibiting many elements of the proposed refurbishment work, including its use as a residence or sleeping purposes & altering or inserting any windows or apertures. This restrictive covenant has been in place for many years & the current owners were aware of the restrictions contained in the covenant when they purchased Pilcot Mill and yet it has been totally disregarded in the scope of the planning applications.

We urge the Parish Council to protect the building by ensuring the Listed Building & Conservation Area planning requirements are used to limit any work to 'renovation' rather than 'refurbishment' of the Mill and to honour & uphold the intent of the covenant so as to preserve the character & appearance of this key heritage asset within the conservation area.

**Previous Owner** (*Note this speaker asked for the full statement which they read out to be included in the minutes*).

I thought you should know that I was called by the applicant yesterday – they wanted to know why I wanted to attend the meeting today, especially as I am not a resident of Dogmersfield!

The water mill was purchased by my parents in 1978 and I lived at the mill cottage until 2018. During this period, much sympathetic restoration was undertaken. Most of the interior remains unchanged for over 100 years with grain chutes, hoppers, grinding stones with their wooden casings.

A recent survey has reported that apart from a few minor exceptions the mill fabric is structurally sound. There are signs of internal woodworm damage. But this is not a serious issue and further damage could be prevented using the appropriate treatment. I tell you these facts to illustrate that the water mill is not about to fall down. In fact in 2017, 30 Dogmersfield residents were shown round the mill & no- one felt unsafe!!



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So we next come to the current plan for 'refurbishment and change of use'. The beautiful Grade 2 listed Mill is a 3 storey timber frame building with brick infill, wood weather boards and wooden framed windows. The interior is wood throughout.

The plan before you, will radically alter the outside of the building with grey or white double glazed windows, one of which is bricked up and moved on the north, rear elevation. Glass spy holes in the brick work, a double glass door at the entrance, grey cladding and 4 new windows in the roof will all change the building forever.

Inside, the wooden ground floor is replaced with flagstones & underfloor heating and the top floor is removed altogether 'to make headroom for the 'guest bedroom'.

If the Mill were to be used as an office only and not 'a dwelling with a bedroom', much of the radical alterations would not be necessary. For example, the removal & elevation of the roof is to fit insulation that is simply required by planning regs 'for dwellings'.

Finally, there is a restrictive covenant on the property. It states: '..the water mill building should not....at any time be used as a residence or for any dwelling or sleeping purposes.'

My parents adhered to this Covenant as did I. It was part of the sale documents when the applicants purchased the water mill, it is valid and is lodged with land registry.

So .. to conclude: 'The Mill is not falling down. The plan as submitted is unsympathetic in every way and a restrictive Covenant should preclude this development'.

**Near Neighbour 3** – The family had moved to Dogmersfield 2 years ago. They see Dogmersfield as a pretty picture postcard village that has not changed over the years. They feel that the renovation of the Mill will preserve the Mills history, and this is a good opportunity for the Mill to stand for another 1000 years. They support the changes and feel they are reasonable.

## **Parish Councillor's discussions**

**Cllr Fillis** – *(Note Cllr Fillis asked for her full written statement to the Council, which she read out, to be included)*

The current condition of the Mill is not relevant to DPC determination as to whether we approve or object to a planning application and therefore should have no bearing on our decision. Furthermore, no evidence has been submitted to support the applicants comment that the Mill is falling down and therefore to even consider the condition, we would need to have a proper independent condition report which we don't have.

DPC needs to be consistent in its approach to planning applications and enforcement of both the conservation area and the DNP – There are two recent issues which I can recall which could have some bearing on this application and where I feel we need to treat this application in exactly the same way as we have treated previous applications.

Firstly, we have a recent proposal to convert a building current classification as Light Industrial to Residential. Our determination in this case was to object as we considered this at the time to be in contravention of the DNP. In order to be fair and consistent we should object to this proposal on the basis of an unsupported change of use.



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Secondly, we have a recent example of a listed building in the village and in the conservation area where original materials were removed and replaced with modern materials. Our approach was to work with Hart council to have the works removed and the building returned to an appearance consistent with the original listing. This application proposes to make significant amendments to the exterior of a Grade 2 listed building and as such should object to ensure that we are consistent in our approach to retaining the character and appearance of historic properties in the village.

Conservation area – Section 72 of the planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1970 places a statutory requirement on those assessing planning applications to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. I believe that this includes conserving the appearance of key heritage assets within the conservation area.

It is my opinion that this application does not conserve the appearance of the Mill – Specifically because: All Exterior Windows and doors are to replace, A window is to be removed and changed in size, A door is to be removed and replaced with a glass panel, Additional windows are to added, Existing flooring are to be removed and replaced with different materials, Existing staircases are to be removed and replaced with different materials, One floor of the building is to be removed, The roof height is to be increased.

I therefore consider that we should Object to this application on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the Conservation Area policy.

Dogmersfield Neighbourhood plan – I consider that this application has the potential to breach the DNP in two aspects:

Firstly DNP11- Dark Skies – the addition of four new windows in the roof of the building potentially breaches this policy and, in my view, would have detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.

Secondly, DNP15 – Sustainable Drainage- the DNP states that development in areas known to flood from any source will not be supported. We know that the Mill and surrounding properties are liable to flooding and therefore development should not be supported.

On these grounds, I believe we should Object as the application is in breach of two key policies within the DNP.

### **Cllr Chisnall –**

Cllr Chisnall said that he concurred with all the points made by Councillor Fillis. He said that there were three overarching concerns -

Firstly - There is a hole in the document trail, which is a concern. There is no independent heritage impact statement which is a requirement of the DCA.

Secondly - There are no Bat, Environment or Biodiversity reports.

Thirdly – The wonderful structure does need preserving. However, there is a balance in keeping the heritage of the Mill intact and what's required to be a habitable space. The new application is too much towards making the Mill a habitable space.



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### Cllr Simonds -

Cllr Simonds made the following points:

Changes in the use of buildings will be permitted provided that neither the proposed conversion nor its access and servicing arrangements are detrimental to the character or setting of the building or adjoining buildings.

Historic England states in its guidance that: "a listing is not a preservation order, preventing change. It does not freeze a building in time, it simply means that listed building consent must be applied for in order to make any changes to that building which might affect its special interest.

The Mill is in the Dogmersfield settlement area (which distinguishes it from change of use from agricultural to residential outside the settlement area) and the outside (in my opinion) is mostly unchanged. I will comment on the detail of the proposed changes later. Therefore from an external perspective the character of the building and the setting in the conservation area can be preserved. The interior is changed a lot but that is common for many conversions of listed buildings and retention of much of the machinery goes a lot further than others. So a change of use from this perspective would be acceptable.

Another consideration is that maintaining status quo risks further degradation - there is lots of evidence and comment from "conservation bodies" that using a building is much better than leaving it empty - and I do not see a viable alternative to residential use if it is to be used at all.

So a home office or occasional guest suite is maybe acceptable. Both may be a step too far and risks easy further development potentially into a dwelling - I will deal with this later.

That said development proposals should conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance. There is no doubt refurbishing the Mill machinery and water wheel enhances the asset although it will still not be operational. Some "machinery" will be lost to the site but this is maybe inevitable for any proposed change of use. Sufficient is kept and the rest will be preserved. However, there are significant internal changes to the fabric of the building including a floor being removed. In addition, although there are comments on the work required there's no full engineering survey the results of which might radically change the scope.

I have never seen a "special plaster finish to simulate historic brickwork" but don't like it just on the description.

It is excellent that materials will be reused or replaced like-for-like. However whilst existing window frames probably do need replacing, to maintain the character of the building natural wood should be replaced with natural wood. They should not be painted. I don't like the roof lights but these may be necessary to utilise the top floor. I like the vertical windows even less since they could appear very modern as could the doors. These aspects should be reconsidered since they are likely to detract from the character of the building.





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I don't fully understand why the roof has to be raised. There is a need for a structural engineering report in advance of planning approval and consideration should be given to retaining the roof height particularly given the interior structural work that may be required.

Technically this represents a departure from DNP 15 which states that DPC will not support development in an area known to flood. However the building already exists so there will be no additional surface water, minimal additional foul water and no additional hard standing so any increase to the risk of flooding is marginal at most. Therefore this technical breach is not sufficient to raise an objection. However we should ask that the specialists from Hart/Hampshire consider this fully (through a detailed flood survey) and also consider the siting of the new foul water drainage.

Even though there is reasonable separation between the Mill and neighbours there needs to be a proper check of sight lines.

The new roof lights might impact dark skies (DNP 11) and this has not been considered. Better not to have the roof lights but if they are necessary they need timed blinds or other mitigation measures.

The work on the river is based on recommendations from the water company and seems acceptable. It should improve biodiversity (DNP 7). Although impact on bats and trees have been mentioned in the application there needs to be a full bat and tree survey by specialists in advance of planning being granted.

There are a number of planning conditions available to protect the future by preventing development further than that proposed such as into a separate dwelling (for example an annex), a rental property (such as an AirBNB) and since the proposal is that use of the mill will solely be ancillary to Pilcot Mill House a condition preventing its sale as a separate property should be considered.

Overall the concept of refurbishing the machinery and using the mill in some way (even if it requires a change of use) is acceptable - obviously with all the provisos over no detriment to character of building or area but I think this is possible. However, the application includes detail elements that could cause detriment and these should be reconsidered. The application is also lacking important information such as a structural engineering survey, no bat survey, no tree survey, some internal detailing unclear, no consideration of dark skies and no consideration of protecting further expansion of use (which would require minimal effort) potentially converting it into a separate dwelling.

For these reasons, on the application as submitted, I would Object.

### **Chair –**

The Chair said that this application had a lot to commend it. He said that he appreciated that owning a Grade 2 listed building came with a financial commitment to maintain it, but he strongly supported the principle of restoration of the Mill. He noted that from both the documentation and what he had heard this evening, the Mill was structurally sound. He thought that DPC should support and applaud the applicant's intention to, amongst other things: restore



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and display the Mill machinery; rebuild the wheel and its mechanism; and put in place the various river enhancements; plus other refurbishment work to the Mill structure as needed to maintain it as a key part of the village heritage. However, before this is progressed to the next stage, he thought that DPC needed to see a report by Heritage England.

The Chair pointed out that there is a difference between refurbishment and development, and he believed that this application crossed a line. Specifically:

- It requests a change of use from its current use for storage and milling and, in his opinion, the proposed alterations convert it into some form of dwelling.
- The conversion towards it being a dwelling includes underfloor heating, realignment of doors and windows, the removal of a whole floor, the installation of a bedroom suite and plumbing, a sewage system and a modern staircase. These alterations are not required for refurbishment of the Mill and detract from its historical character.
- Externally there are changes to the window layout including the installation of roof windows (which would potentially contravene DNP11) and, more significantly, lifting the roof by 6" thereby altering the external appearance of the building.

The Chair said he was also aware this this application must not become a precedent, as DPC had defended the Neighbourhood Plan against other change of use applications and ensured that applications in the conservation area did not contravene the conservation area policies.

### Proposal by the Chair:

**DPC should OBJECT to the current proposal. In our objection we should say that we strongly support the applicant's proposals to refurbish the Mill including: Restoring the machinery, rebuilding the wheel, the river enhancements and other necessary structural work. But we strongly object to the change of use and development of this heritage asset towards becoming a dwelling.**

**Proposed Chair; AF seconded; GC in favour; AS against. (Majority 3:1 to Object)**

### Conclusion by the Chair

- Members of the public are free to register their own comments in support of the application for change or use or an objection.
- DPC strongly supports the refurbishment of the Mill and is ready to work with the applicants and other experts to develop a new application that achieves a better balance between preserving the Mill and providing a useful working space.
- He asked that the Village WhatsApp group now returns to being a useful community tool and not a vehicle for 'lobbying'.



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|  | <p><b>Statement from Cllr Chisnall</b> (Cllr Chisnall asked for the following statement to be recorded).</p> <p>The Parish Council is comprised of councillors who have all held senior positions in a range of companies and public bodies. They give up their time and expertise freely because they wish to contribute to the care and appropriate development of the Parish we all enjoy.</p> <p>We have built a reputation over the last few years of achieving good outcomes for and on behalf of the Parish and, in relation to this evening’s meeting, being available at the pre-app stage or even prior to this to meet with residents and external agents in order to advise on planning matters; particularly on how the Parish Council could interpret the planning ambition against the NHP.</p> <p>At no stage has the Parish Council been approached to seek such advice on the Mill application, despite the Parish Council registering a number of concerns at the pre-app stage.</p> <p>Instead, your councillors have been subjected to a campaign of misinformation and selective reporting in the run up to this meeting. Worse, there have been messages to the chair (and others) that are clear examples of bullying behaviour</p> <p>This is deplorable and unacceptable.</p> <p><b>The meeting closed at 20.17pm</b></p> |
|  | <p><b>Afternotes:</b> At 20.56 the Chair issued the following public apology on the village Whatsapp group (106 participants).</p> <p>At this evenings Council meeting a councillor made a statement that I had been subjected to bullying by a resident who made a planning application. He did this in good faith acting on information I had given him. I wish to state that at no time was I subjected to bullying in any form from the applicant(s) who has acted in a fair and honest way throughout the planning process. I unreservedly apologise to the councillor in question and, more importantly, to the resident(s) who was rightly offended by my inappropriate action.</p> <p>The Chair would also like it to be noted that Cllr Simonds wishes it to be recorded that whilst fully supporting the view that councilors should not at any time be subjected to bullying Cllr Chisnall did not speak on his behalf since Cllr Simonds has at no time been subject to intimidation or bullying in respect to this application.</p> <p>Cllr Miles was absent from the meeting and the Parish for two weeks due to her annual holiday abroad.</p>   |

Signed:

Date:

| Abbreviation | In place of                             | Abbreviation | In place of                                  |
|--------------|---|--------------|--|
| APA          | Annual Parish Assembly                  | HDC          | Hart District Council                        |
| CBF          | Community Benefit Fund                  | NALC         | National Association of Local Councils       |
| CIL          | Community Infrastructure Levy           | NPPF         | National Planning Policy Framework           |
| DPC          | Dogmersfield Parish Council             | TBHSPA       | Thames Valley Heaths Special Protection Area |
| HALC         | Hampshire Association of Local Councils | SANG         | Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace      |
| HCC          | Hampshire County Council                |              |  |