

Wokingham Times 29/11/10

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ADDRESS Waverley Way, Frinton, Wokingham, RG40 4YD

Picture by Katie Lamb.

Education Unit

www.ukbathroomcreations.co.uk

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this stage
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...club will give them the
opportunity in a supportive envi-
ronment. We want it to be fun
and entertaining both for the
people that play and those that
come to listen."
Anyone wishing to play with
the club is asked to register when
they arrive and performing slots,

typically of two songs, will be
allocated on a first-come, first-
served basis.
The group is open to solo
artists, duos or groups, however,
members must be able to play
acoustically.
Mr Jones added: "Given the

name of the club we expect it will
attract people who want to play
modern or traditional folk or
blues music.
"But we're not going to com-
plain if someone wants to per-
form something a little different.
The most important thing is that

people enjoy playing and listen-
ing to it."
The group will meet at the pub
on the third Thursday of the
month, at 8pm.
For more information visit
www.wokinghamfolkandblues.co.
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A GROUP of 22 families including
those with children and mental
health issues could face homeles-
ness if the landowner who built
their homes without correct plan-
ning permission does not win an
appeal.
Felix Cash, owner of Pine Ridge
Farm mobile home site in Nine
Mile Ride, Crowthorne, built 22
mobile homes at the site without
the correct planning permission
and was denied retrospective per-
mission by Wokingham Borough
Council.

He said: "His mother wouldn't
let him come to me if I did not
have somewhere for him to stay.
You cannot put a child in the back
of a Mercedes van in the cold in
winter. I see him four days a week
now. The council has nowhere else
for us to move to and we would be
in big trouble without this place."

Mr Cash said: "I never said
that."
Matthew Green of Green
Planning Solutions, speaking as a
witness for the applicant, said the
council had shown a "callous dis-
regard" for the tenants living on
the site by failing to correctly
hand out the enforcement notices
and by failing to inquire about the
tenants.

had been disrupted by the devel-
opment.
Dr Jeff Kirby, from Just Ecology,
carried out a report looking at the
ecology of the site on behalf of Mr
Cash. He said: "The development
resulted in the removal of wood-
land. It's clear therefore that the
harm was caused simply by the
removal of that habitat."
Dr Kirby recommended a series
of bio-enhancements including
introducing an area of woodland
equivalent to or greater than that
which was removed, an artificial
badger sett and bat boxes.

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Several residents said they were
not aware of the notices, which Mr
Cash said had been left with him
by a council officer rather than
being distributed to individual
homes.
Edmund Robb, of Prospect Law,
representing Wokingham Borough
Council, put it to Mr Cash that he
refused to allow the officer to dis-
tribute the letters.

Mr Robb said no further corre-
spondence was received regarding
the situation of tenants at the
park.
At the hearing Mr Cash said he
was also willing to undertake mit-
igation issues including environ-
mental measures, which his bar-
rister, Michael Rudd, accepted

Mr Robb asked if a mitigation
strategy had been drawn up iden-
tifying specific locations for the
measures and Mr Kirby said it had
not.
The hearing continues.

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Denmark Street.
Stan Hetherington, carnival
chairman, said: "We are
delighted Santa has been invit-
ed to spend the day in the
warmth of the library."
"The children will also have
plenty of activities to keep
them occupied while waiting to
see Santa and parents can
enjoy a hot drink."
The carnival committee also
organises an auction each year,
which will take place on
November 25, at

Even without the uncertainty
over housing targets, the Core
Strategy has been thrown into
doubt by the Government's
defence review, which could see
the Army remain at Arborfield
Garrison rather than selling it for
development under existing
plans. The results of the defence
review are due in the autumn.

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Dream
Wedding Fair
Wokingham Town Hall
Sunday 3rd October
www.wokingham-sc.gov.com
Sonning Golf Club
Sunday 10th October
www.sonning-golf-club.co.uk

SIXTH FORM INFORMATION EVENING
Garth Hill College
A Specialist Technology College
Sixth Form Information Evening
Monday 4 October 2010 at 6.30pm
Garth Hill College
GARTH HILL COLLEGE
Bull Lane, Bracknell,
Berkshire RG42 2AD
T: 01344 421122

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Homes battle families are facing eviction

● Mobile home site appeal decision due

By CAROLINE COOK

MORE than 20 families face an anxious wait to find out if they will become homeless after the end of a planning appeal to decide whether their homes must be torn down.

A report from the planning inspector overseeing the appeal for retrospective planning permission for the 22 homes at Pine Ridge Farm mobile home site in Nine Mile Ride will not be published for several weeks.

Last Friday at the hearing at Shute End, Wokingham Borough Council was accused of taking a "mechanistic and inhumane" approach to the families facing homelessness.

Michael Rudd, representing Felix Cash who owns Pine Ridge Farm, told the hearing that the council's approach would "serve to cause deep and serious trauma to the occupiers of the site", who face eviction within six months if the appeal is refused.

During the five-day hearing, which began on Monday, September 27, tenants raised concerns about losing access to their children if they were forced to leave the site and many said they would have nowhere else to go if they were evicted.

The council issued two enforcement notices on the site after refusing Mr Cash's application, advising tenants they may have to leave if an appeal is unsuccessful.

Edmund Robb of Prospect law, representing Wokingham Borough Council, said: "The council of course recognises from the evidence that has been heard at the inquiry that individuals living at the appeal site enjoy living there."

"However the appellants have deliberately flouted planning law in laying down hard standings and

services at the appeal site. "The appellants has pressed on with that deliberate conduct despite the service of enforcement notice one to bring mobile homes to the site.

"The appellants has even deliberately continued to advertise for and to attract tenants after service of enforcement notice two and seven new tenants have arrived at the appeal site since May.

"In the authority's view it is clear Mr Cash is cynically using the vulnerability of his tenants in an attempt to gain retrospective planning permission."

During his closing speech on Friday, Mr Rudd urged the council to accept the appeal as he said the development met a serious need for affordable housing in the borough. Existing tenants who gave evidence at the hearing said they had been told they would have to wait up to seven years for council accommodation.

Mr Rudd said: "The mobile homes provide accommodation for people who would otherwise be homeless."

"Evidence was heard from occupiers who had previously lived in tents, cars and vans on farms, such is their level of need. Evidence was heard from those fleeing violence.

"There is clearly a pressing and outstanding need in the borough for additional housing or accommodation of the nature provided on the appeal site.

"This should carry significant weight in favour of allowing the appeal."

During the appeal Mr Cash offered to meet the need for housing by providing accommodation only to those on the council's housing list.

Speaking on behalf of the council in his closing speech, Mr Robb

said the site did not meet the definition of affordable housing as the mobile homes are neither social rented or intermediate housing and instead are classified as low-cost market rental accommodation.

He said: "Any occupancy condition would not be appropriate in this case since the authority would find this very hard to enforce."

Mr Robb said there had been "clear, multiple breaches" of planning policy, but Mr Rudd argued most problems at the site could be dealt with by mitigation, compensation and financial contributions.

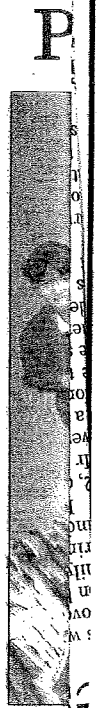
Mr Rudd said: "The appellants accepts that the presence of mobile homes on the appeal site is a departure from policy. However the appellants asserts that the material considerations relied upon in this case are sufficient to outweigh the limited harm caused by the development."

Earlier in the week the hearing heard how plans for bat boxes and an artificial badger sett were proposed to mitigate against any environmental damage.

But Mr Robb said there had been "clear harm to woodland which is UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat" and asked the inspector to note that "no organised plan of mitigation or compensation has been submitted".

Mr Cash applied to the borough council for retrospective permission for the 22 homes in December last year. This was refused, and the appeal was lodged.

The appeal hearing closed on Friday, October 1, and the inspector will return his verdict in around two months.



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