AMERSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE PLANNING AND FOOTPATHS WORKING GROUP
HELD ON 10th Aug 2026

PRESENT: Councillor K Thornton (Chair)
Councillor J Brown
Councillor M Brady
Councillor D Pinkney
Councillor J Wilkinson
Councillor S Woodhead
Councillor A Vyas

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Warren – Administration Officer
Councillor M Roberts
8 members of the public

30. APOLOGIES: Councillor M Day
Councillor H Amarshi (Deputy Chair)

31. ABSENT NO APOLOGIES:
Councillor J Noaman

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:
None

33. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHILTERN MATTERS:
There were no Buckinghamshire Chiltern Matters arising

34. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: LIST DATED 10th Aug 2026
(Please see attached Appendix I)

35. LICENSES:
There were no licenses to discuss.

36. MATTERS FOR REPORT:
The members discussed arranging a meeting of the local plan working group to form a response to the proposed Bucks local plan.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm

…… Chairman 10th Aug 2026

PLANNING

Appendix I

PL/26/05412/FA	Barclays 4 Sycamore Road Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6 5DT	Mansard roof extension, forming second storey to create 2-bed dwelling including associated rear roof terrace	No Objection (11/08/26)
PL/26/05853/FA	25 Batchelors Way Amersham Buckinghamshire HP7 9AH	Partial hip to gable loft extension/conversion and rear extension to detached garage.	No objection (11/08/26)
PL/26/06042/OA	Quill Hall Farm Quill Hall Lane Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6 6LL	Outline planning application with some matters reserved for erection of up to 190 dwellings and a community building (Class F2), including associated car parking, open space, drainage and associated works (matter to be considered at this stage: access)	ATC requests that application PL/26/06042/OA is refused and that an extension of time is granted to allow residents to read all of the application documents and comment on the application. ATC is in favour of affordable, sustainable housing and is aware that housing is very much needed in Amersham and Chesham Bois, however ATC believes this is the wrong site for housing on the following grounds: **1.Green Belt and Grey Belt status** The applicant contends that the land is Grey Belt. That is a material but contested planning judgment, not a status established merely by assertion. Under the NPPF definition, land is Grey Belt only if it is previously developed land and/or does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d), and it is excluded where policies relating to a footnote 7 area or asset (other than Green Belt) provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development. The

PLANNING

			site is open countryside beyond the eastern edge of Amersham. The Committee should assess, on the evidence, whether it strongly contributes to: • purpose (a): checking the unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area, including the site's role in containing the outward expansion of Amersham; and • purpose (b): preventing neighbouring towns from merging, including whether development would materially erode the visual and perceived separation between Amersham and Chesham across the Chess Valley. Buckinghamshire Council's evidence for assessment area AM005 reportedly records the site's Green Belt contribution and concludes that it is not Grey Belt because of the National Landscape constraint. The site's earlier promotion through the HELAA call for sites (OPUS ref. 3671) was also reportedly assessed as unsuitable. Those plan-making assessments do not determine this application, and the applicant relies on a more detailed application-specific assessment and recent decisions. They are nevertheless relevant evidence which should be reconciled transparently in the officer report and tested by Committee. **2. Chilterns National Landscape** The site lies wholly within the Chilterns National Landscape. NPPF paragraph 189 requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty, and paragraph 190 provides that permission for major development in a National Landscape should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it is demonstrated to be in the public interest. The central issue is not simply whether planting can screen individual buildings from selected viewpoints. It is

PLANNING

			whether a development of up to 190 dwellings, together with access, lighting, movement and associated infrastructure, would conserve and enhance the character and scenic beauty of this part of the National Landscape. The Committee should consider the permanence and seasonal effectiveness of mitigation, effects on the valley landform and settlement edge, tranquillity and dark skies, and cumulative effects. Appeal decisions relating to land adjacent to the A4155 Marlow Road and Westhorpe Farm Lane and the Wrotham Water Farm litigation establish that a National Landscape designation is not an automatic bar to Grey Belt status but they do not automatically mean that all National Landscape sites are grey belt and they do not remove the need for a robust, site-specific application of the footnote 7 exclusion and NPPF paragraphs 189-190. The relationship between the two policy regimes is a significant matter of planning judgment suitable for Committee determination. **3. Transport, highway safety and parking** The applicant states that the access, visibility splays and other technical requirements are policy compliant and that pre-application highway concerns have been addressed. It also proposes additional on-site parking and guaranteed spaces for residents who currently depend on informal on-street parking. Those measures should be assessed positively, but they do not by themselves resolve whether the network operates safely and acceptably in practice. NPPF paragraphs 115-118 require safe and suitable access for all users, acceptable mitigation of significant network and highway-safety impacts, and a transport assessment for development generating significant movement. The Committee should

PLANNING

			examine whether the Transport Assessment accurately represents: • Chestnut Lane, including approximately 100 metres affected by on-street parking, sections functioning as a single lane, school-related activity and peak congestion; • Park Road, including the reported carriageway width of approximately 3.5-4.1 metres over a substantial length and its effective single-lane operation; • service, refuse, delivery and emergency vehicle access, including opposing-vehicle and pedestrian/cycle interactions; • displacement or loss of informal on-street parking and whether any proposed replacement allocation can be secured, managed and retained; and • cumulative traffic effects on Raans Road, Woodside Road, the Black Horse junction area and local school routes. The NPPF paragraph 116 refusal threshold should be applied to verified real-world conditions and reasonable future scenarios, not only the geometry of the proposed access or modelled junction capacity. We also note that if residents' parking on Chestnut Lane was located in the new development they would have to walk potentially with children, disability scooters and other vulnerable pedestrians down narrow Chestnut lane potentially in the dark during early mornings and evenings and in adverse weather conditions. **4. Public benefits and the planning balance** We were glad to see that the application would provide some material public benefits, including housing and affordable housing, a community building, open space and infrastructure contributions.

PLANNING

			But the existence of benefits does not predetermine the outcome. The decision-maker must identify the weight attributable to each benefit and then assess whether the relevant Grey Belt tests are met; whether the exceptional-circumstances and public-interest tests for major development in the National Landscape are satisfied; and whether the benefits outweigh the identified Green Belt, landscape, transport and other harms under the correct planning balance. We do not believe there are exceptional circumstances that justify building on this green belt National Landscape site. **5. Other matters requiring scrutiny** The officer report and Committee should also address, so far as supported by the submitted evidence and consultation responses: • effects on landscape features, ancient woodland, biodiversity and protected habitats; • effects on nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings; • flood risk, surface-water drainage, foul drainage and water-supply capacity; and • the capacity and timely delivery of physical and social infrastructure. We ask that the application be called in so that the Committee can determine: 1. whether the site falls within the NPPF definition of Grey Belt, including the footnote 7 exclusion; 2. whether the land strongly contributes to Green Belt purposes (a) and/or (b), and whether the remaining requirements of NPPF paragraph 155 are met;

PLANNING

			3. whether the proposal conserves and enhances the Chilterns National Landscape and satisfies NPPF paragraphs 189-190; 4. whether the Transport Assessment and mitigation adequately reflect conditions on Chestnut Lane, Park Road and the wider network; 5. whether the Sunnyside and other public benefits are deliverable, enforceable and afforded appropriate weight; and 6. whether, applying the development plan and national policy as a whole, the benefits are sufficient to outweigh the identified harms. 7. Site visit. We also request a Committee site visit. A visit would enable members to understand the settlement edge and valley setting, intervisibility with the surrounding landscape, the constrained sections of Chestnut Lane and Park Road, on-street parking conditions and school-route pressures.
PL/26/05232/FA	41 The Drive Amersham Buckinghamshire HP7 9AD	Replacement of existing windows. Garage conversion. New velux windows to side elevation. New electric car charging point. New external insulation	No comment (10/08/26)
PL/26/05334/FA	Meadow Barn Rectory Hill Amersham Buckinghamshire HP7 0BT	Construction of swim spa and conversion of car port into gym/games room	No comment (10/08/26)
PL/26/05341/FA	4 Sycamore Road Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6	Widening and replacement of 1no. front elevation window	No comment (10/08/26)

PLANNING

	5DT		
PL/26/05426/TP	1 Winchester Close Amersham Buckinghamshire HP7 9HT	T1 Horse Chestnut - Crown Reduction - reduce height by up to 3m and lateral spread on all sides by up to 2.5m to contain the overall size of the tree, T2 Horse Chestnut - Crown Reduction - reduce height by up to 2.5m and lateral spread on all sides by up to 2m. Sever and remove ivy to contain the overall size of the tree	No comment (10/08/26)
PL/26/05411/FA	The Bungalow Mansil House Hervines Road Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6 5HS	Change of use from an office to a residential dwelling with parking and gardens.	No comment (10/08/26)
PL/26/05553/FA	8 Lollards Close Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6 5JL	Demolition of existing rear conservatory and construction of single storey side and rear extension	No comment (10/08/26)
PL/26/05602/TP	32 Hazell Park Amersham Buckinghamshire HP7 9AB	Prune the Hornbeam x5 and Ash (ID# G2) - Reduce the height of the tree to around 3 metres to maintain as a hedge. Pruning is recommended to maintain clearance to the garden.	No comment (10/08/26)

PLANNING

PL/26/05568/FA	2 Chestnut Close Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6 6EQ	Conversion of garage to habitable space and new storm porch	No comment (10/08/26)
PL/26/05671/FA	7 Orchard Lane Amersham Buckinghamshire HP6 5AB	Single storey rear extension, garage conversion to habitable space and infill to recessed front entrance.	No comment (10/08/26)

PLANNING