

YDNPA Planning Committee 2010

Defining what is a caravan – This question was also raised by the Association of Rural Communities (ARC) at the August meeting. In a statement to the committee prior to the discussion about the Westholme site at Aysgarth, ARC's president, Tom Knowles, asked: "Has the YDNPA taken any action to query the "notoriously wide" definition of caravans which has made it possible for the owners of the Westholme site at Aysgarth to replace static caravans with much larger luxury chalets?"

The members did approve an application from Westholme Estate to make it possible for that site to be open for holiday purposes only for 12 months each year. The head of planning, Peter Watson, pointed out that as the appeal inspector had approved all-year opening for Hawkswick Cote Caravan site in accordance with the government's Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism 2006 it would be difficult to refuse a similar application.

Mr Knowles said: "It is sad that the government has made it possible for site operators to extend the open season for static caravan sites. This could be the thin edge of the wedge to making it possible that luxury chalets like those at Westholme will become the main residences of those who have spent over £200,000 to buy one.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING MEETINGS

At the December meeting Peter Watson, the head of planning, presented a review of the way the public is allowed to address planning committee meetings to present arguments for and against specific planning applications. Coun Blackie successfully argued that the order of speakers should be reversed with the applicant coming after any objectors so that he or she could respond to arguments against the application. Some of the members wanted to increase the time that each speaker was allowed from three minutes to five, whereas others felt this would make the meetings even longer. The majority opted for continuing to allow just three minutes.

Enforcement issues are not currently covered by the Authority's scheme of public speaking and this was questioned by Coun Blackie. He said it was against natural justice for those involved in an enforcement issue not to be able to address the committee. Others members felt that there were some who would use any ploy to extend the process and that by the time it came to enforcement those involved would have had many opportunities to present their case to the committee. If a retrospective planning application was made both the applicant and the objectors could speak at a committee meeting. The majority of the members did not support Coun Blackie's proposal.

AUSTWICK

November meeting: Seven members voted to accept the planning officer's recommendation that the application to convert a barn which was outside the development boundary should be refused. Six voted to approve the application and there were two abstentions. It had been explained to the members that there had to be exceptional circumstances to go against planning policy. The applicant, Mr Taylor who lives at Airton, had argued that the conversion would be in accord with those policies which permitted local needs affordable housing and the provision of suitable accommodation for the disabled. The ground floor would have been made suitable for him and his wife (who has Alzheimers) and the first floor would have provided accommodation for his son and grand daughter. The conversion would also have saved the barn from becoming derelict. The parish

council opposed the application mainly because the barn was outside the village development boundary. The parish council chairman, Mr Smith, told members that some affordable housing that was suitable for the disabled would soon be available in the village. Several members said that in time permission would be given for the barn to be converted.

Kevin Lancaster commented that the Authority's policy regarding barn conversions was one of the most unpopular. He added: "I don't think this is a good policy and I don't think it will be in existence in five years." Chris Armitage said that the YDNPA was trying to protect areas that were outside the development boundaries. The head of planning, Peter Watson, added that the Authority's policy was in line with national policy regarding providing new housing in open countryside and barn conversions. He said that on the occasions the YDNPA had given permission for new houses to accommodate those who were disabled the applicants had family living locally.

ARNCLIFFE

October: Members were very concerned to hear that Arncliffe CP School might be closed. At present it has only nine students. It was pointed out that the school would fail an Ofsted examination if it could not provide an all-weather outdoor play area. Members therefore agreed with the planning officer that permission should be given for the erection of a wooden canopy covering a play area. This will replace a pergola and fence to the north side of the school.

ASKRIGG

October: The artist, Piers Browne, was one of those who objected to a new dwelling being built in the garden of Coleshouse in Askrigg, owned until 2006 by the author Marie Hartley. He with Dr Christine Hallas and the chairman of the local parish council, Allen Kirkbride, said that the conversion of the bovey and especially the construction of an extension would destroy the iconic and quintessential Wensleydale view from Moor Lane. Dr Hallas told the planning committee she accepted that the applicant, Mrs Bernie Kershaw, intended to try and maintain that view but added: "The problem is – there should be no house on this site". Mrs Kershaw said she had sought to retain and safeguard the building so that it could be viewed by many in years to come. The proposed dwelling was described as unusual by the planning officer in that there would be a sedum roofed link between the converted bothy and the two-storey bedroom extension. Part of the bedroom extension would be incorporated into the hillside.

Local residents were also concerned about the proposal to remove part of the dry stone wall so as to provide access for two cars. The planning officer had recommended approving Mrs Kershaw's application but the majority of members voted for refusal. Under the referral back system this application will be discussed again at the November meeting.

November: The majority of the members again voted to refuse planning permission for the conversion of the bothy at Coleshouse at Askrigg. The planning application included a bedroom extension. They therefore confirmed their decision last month not to accept the officer's recommendation that it should be approved. The reasons given were: the impact of the proposal on the Askrigg Conservation Area including the loss of a section of wall, and the detrimental impact upon public views into and out of the village. The proposed design was also considered to be inappropriate. Mr Bingham used the phrase "alien intrusion" to explain why he saw the design,

materials, fenestration, and the range of gables as not being in keeping with the Askrigg conservation area. He said he was disappointed that it was not possible to take into consideration the historical association with the artist and writing team of Marie Hartley, Ella Pontefract and Joan Ingleby especially as they had done so much for the area. Several residents including artist Piers Browne spoke against the application at the October meeting.

CONISTONE

September meeting: The YDNPA Ranger service had asked permission to construct a bridleway bridge to provide a new river crossing at Mossdale, Conistone. Although this was approved some members requested that it would be constructed in such a way that it fitted in with the surrounding landscape.

GARSDALE

At the September meeting planning permission was granted for the Pinfold Leisure Park at Garsdale to extend its existing holiday season. It will now be closed from January 5 to February 5 each year.

GAYLE

October: Christine Cloughton told the planning committee that many residents along Little Ings had created hard standings for their cars in their gardens along with openings onto the highway. If she was able to park her car in her garden buses would be able to stop alongside the kerb and so use the low floor facility for those with pushchairs or using wheelchairs. Currently buses stop in the middle of the road. The planning officer recommended refusal mainly because the county council's highways department had found there wasn't sufficient visibility onto the highway. County Coun John Blackie proposed, against officer recommendation, that the committee should approve her application and this was upheld by eight votes to five with one abstention. This was ratified at the November meeting even though committee member Chris Armitage warned that it would be reckless to approve this application when there was so little visibility when backing out onto the road.

HAWES

September meeting: GTEC Training did get permission for a large training centre at Bruntacres Trading Estate in Hawes even though there was a lot of opposition from local residents and Hawes and High Abbotside parish council. The chairman of the planning committee, Graham Dalton summed up the views of the majority of members when he stated: "I think there is a good chance this will become a centre of excellence. It may become of national significance." The company applied for full planning permission to erect a two-storey building to house a renewable technology centre, business start up units, a training centre with residential facilities and office space. The building would provide a base to research multi-technology integration and control systems as it would be purpose built to include solar and ground source heating, a rain harvesting system, a wood pellet boiler and ridgeblades (wind turbines) It had informed the Authority that the provision of supervised accommodation on the site for six to eight-day courses was an important and integral part of its training programme without which the project could not go ahead. Stephen Plant of National Electrotechnical Training (NET) stated: "This facility will not just provide a 'state of the art'

training centre in Electrotechnical Engineering but will also champion renewable technologies which are essential to the UK for meeting our climate change targets and providing a reliable and sustainable energy supply.”

N Yorks County Coun John Blackie, who is chairman of Hawes and High Abbotside Parish Council, said that although he would like to support GTEC, he could not do so because of the provision of accommodation on the site. Local residents had objected because they had been promised in the past that there would be no living accommodation on the trading estate. They pointed out that if accommodation was not provided there would be no need to construct a building that was so much higher than any of the other units at Bruntacres. A resident had carried out a survey to show that there was sufficient accommodation in the town plus facilities for laundering clothes and all the meals the trainees would require. Over 20 residents signed this survey which stated that the height and mass of the new building “would have a very overbearing appearance.”

October meeting: Some members commented that the planning officer had been put in a very difficult position regarding the application to provide access for the YHA hostel at Turfey Hill in Hawes. The majority felt she had little choice but to recommend that planning permission should be granted even though the applicant was not connected with the YHA and the parish council had strongly objected. The latter told the planning committee: “The Parish Council finds it bizarre and overtly suspicious that the YHA has not applied for the planning approval the application seeks as it appears the use for which the new access will be put is for the sole benefit of its Youth Hostel. Approval for this application will facilitate planning creep towards a housing application on a site already opposed by the Parish Council and the YDNPA housing working group.” County Coun John Blackie, who is chairman of Hawes and High Abbotside parish council, told the planning committee that he had taken no part in the discussion or decision at the parish council.

At the planning committee he proposed that the planning application should be refused but the majority of members voted against doing that. Instead it was agreed that there should be a Section 106 agreement regarding the new car park so that it could only be used by visitors and tradesmen to the YHA. The applicant, Mr Watson, told the planning committee that this was a collaborative application by him and the YHA to improve the parking for the youth hostel. His land will be used for the new access and part of the new car park.

HAWKSWICK

October meeting: The reasons given by the parish meeting for opposing the conversion of a barn just outside of Hawkswick into accommodation for a gamekeeper included: that the tight curtilage would be difficult to maintain and would be insufficient for the needs of the gamekeeper; and that the lane up to the barn was parish land.

The YDNPA had paid for an independent report by Mouchel. This concluded there was a clearly established need for a full time gamekeeper to be living on the edge of the grouse moor. The agent for the applicant explained that the grouse moor had been neglected for a period of time and the present owner wanted to return it to its former glory. The majority of members voted to accept the planning officer’s recommendation that planning permission should be granted subject to a Section 106 agreement to tie the barn to the moorland within the applicant’s ownership, control future works and maintenance of the access and secure a tree planting scheme.

HEBDEN

September meeting: Although the committee gave approval for the present buildings at The Old Lodge in Mill Lane, Hebden, to be demolished the majority did not approve of a three-bedroom residence with two stables being built there. Members were told that the Old Lodge had been built as a temporary holiday camp about 100 years ago. A planning officer noted that the existing U shaped timber building, which had no architectural merit, was in a poor or derelict state and beyond saving. The officer was against replacing this single storey building with a two storey house. Ann Brooks said that the application for a residence should be refused because this was one of the few employment sites within the national park. "I am very concerned that this has not been marketed as an employment site," she said. She added that the committee would consider an application for residential use if it could be proved there was no interest in it as an employment site.

HETTON

The Angel Inn had applied for full planning permission for the change of use of Sycamore Bank in Fleets Lane, Hetton, from a residential dwelling to four letting rooms ancillary to the inn. Hetton parish council was concerned about residential dwellings being converted to business use. It felt the Authority should have a policy governing the loss of residential properties. It was also concerned about parking arrangements. Committee members, however, agreed with the planning officer that sufficient parking would be available. The planning officer had recommended that there should be a Section 106 agreement to tie the ownership of Sycamore Bank to the Angel Inn in perpetuity. County Coun John Blackie proposed that the application should be approved without any S106 agreement and this was agreed by the committee.

HORTON IN RIBBLESDALE

September: N Yorks County Coun Richard Welch very strongly recommended that any decision about the retrospective change of use of three bedrooms at The Willows at Horton in Ribblesdale from residential to bed and breakfast should be deferred until it was possible to submit a planning application for a new driveway. At present The Willows shares a driveway with neighbours. The neighbours felt that the increase in the number of cars passing their front windows was detracting from their privacy. Horton in Ribblesdale parish council felt that the application should be approved only if separate access to The Willows was created and that planning officers adequately addressed the concerns of neighbours. The majority of the members, however, voted to approve the application. The owners of The Willows have two bedrooms there for their own use.

The application by Manchester Anglers Association for a 30m long and 2m wide parking area in Newhouse Lane, Horton in Ribblesdale, was refused on the basis that such an overly urbanised feature was unjustified as it would alter the simple rural character of that road.

December: Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd had applied for determination of updated conditions (YDNPA application no C/44/116G) for Horton Quarry. The issues discussed at the planning meeting focused on the movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and special conservation areas. The planning officer, David Parish, explained that the company had agreed not to work the site to the south of the quarry which falls within the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) boundary and would

not claim compensation. It was, however, unable at present to make a similar agreement regarding an area to the west of the quarry which lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Following this agreement with the YDNPA the company will soon change the operating times for HGVs on Saturday from 7.30am to 11am. It has offered to move the starting time for HGVs on weekdays to 6.30am within two years and to 7am within five years or the commissioning of a rail link, whichever is sooner. The present start time of 6am means that lorries begin travelling through Settle at around 5.30am. N Yorks County. North Yorkshire County Council's highways department and Settle District Chamber of Trade had asked if the alternative route via Buck Haw Brow to and from the A65 could be considered. Coun Welch argued that this would lead to all the quarry traffic passing several schools. "It is putting the most vulnerable people in our society at risk – that is school children."

INGLETON

November: The members were unanimous in accepting the officer's recommendation that an application for a new domestic wind turbine at the farm at Crina Bottom. Some members said this was the first time that the YDNPA had given permission for a wind turbine to be erected within a triple SSSI. There was an old, bladeless turbine at the farm and one of the conditions of the planning permission was that this should be removed. The new turbine will be sited a little lower so that it is less visible. The application was approved partly because one wind turbine was a better option than power lines snaking across the countryside to provide the farm with mains electricity. The members were keen that the farm should have a more dependable source of power supply which was in line with the YDNPA's renewable energy policy.

KETTLEWELL

September: The proposed transformation of the old public toilets at Kettlewell by Yorkshire Dales Ice Cream into a kiosk selling ice creams and light refreshments was opposed by many local residents because they feared it could lead to the closure of the village shop. On the basis that the planning authority could not become involved in issues of commercial competition the majority of the members agreed with the planning officer that full planning permission should be given.

November: The members were also unanimous in approving planning permission for the creation of a parking space in the garden at Renar Cottage in Kettlewell.

KIRKBY MALHAM

October meeting – The temporary consent for an extension of two years for agricultural worker to live in a caravan at Tullochvenus Farm was agreed. The owners are trying to develop a business based on the sale of wool from llamas raised there.

LANGCLIFFE

November: Just one member voted against giving full planning permission for new outbuildings and the construction of a car port at The Farmhouse, Upper Winskill, Langcliffe. The parish council had argued that this would change the character of one of the oldest buildings in Langcliffe. Roger Bingham said that the out buildings to be demolished were a good example of traditional farmyard

buildings which had now mainly disappeared. The planning officer stated that due to the modest scale, appearance and materials of the proposed buildings they would not detract from the character and appearance of the traditional houses around them – and this was accepted.

LINTON

November meeting: Last month the majority of members voted against the officer's recommendation to approve full planning permission to convert a barn to provide five extra en-suite bedrooms for The Fountaine Inn. It was debated again at the November meeting under the reference back system. Craven Coun John Roberts said it would not be possible to park cars beside the converted barn and so these would, after being unloaded, have to be parked around the village green. He told the meeting: "Linton is a conservation area – not a car parking area."

The parish council had objected to the application because of the lack of parking facilities. It also argued that there was a lack of commercial need for more overnight accommodation at The Fountaine, but this was strongly contradicted by the owners of the inn. William Weston argued in favour of granting permission as it was necessary to protect this type of business in the Dales. He added that something should be done to provide a long term solution to the parking problem in Linton. Eight of the members, however, voted again to refuse this application on the basis that the development would result in an unacceptable level of on-street parking within the village, exacerbating parking problems already existing there and displacing existing residents' parking resulting in inconvenience and nuisance to local residents and so harming residential amenity.

LOW ROW

October –It was decided to hold a site meeting at Low Barn. The members agreed that this was a complex situation especially as in 1977 full planning permission had been given for the barn to be converted into an open market four-bedroom house. That permission is still valid as a certificate of lawfulness was granted in 2006. The planning officer said she had worked with the applicant to prepare a more sympathetic and appropriate design for the present application. She told the committee that the owner could always revert to that approved in 1977.

November: The majority of members accepted that the proposed scheme in the new application for the conversion of Low Barn was considerably better in design terms than that approved by the Authority in 1977. It was also accepted that there were several problems with converting the barn into a dwelling. The county council's highways department had recommended refusal because of the limited visibility and because the parking bays were not wholly sited on land within the applicant's control so their future presence could not be guaranteed. Now that the application had been approved the highways department will want to impose some conditions.

Alan Thorogood told members that Melbecks parish council was very concerned about the road safety issues. The parking bays were used by school buses bringing children to Hazel Brow Farm and lorries unloading agricultural supplies. Although there had been no accidents involving people, there had been several incidents in the last three years. Sheep had been killed and last year a sheep dog was killed close to the barn. The main problem for the planning committee was that as a Certificate of Lawfulness had been issued in 2006 the 1977 permission still stood, which included that the barn, once converted, could be sold on the open market. Coun John Blackie backed the request from the

parish council that the property should be subject to a local occupancy restriction as this was a new planning application. Other members felt that, in view of the prior planning permission, this would be difficult to impose. As members were equally divided on this the chairman used his casting vote against adding a local occupancy restriction. A majority of members did vote for the owner to be asked to rescind the 1977 permission in favour of that granted at the November meeting.

REETH

At the September meeting Swale View Caravan Park near Reeth was given permission to change the use of a section of the site beside the river from stationing touring caravans to the siting of up to seven “static caravans” instead. These “static caravans” will, in fact, be lodges. The owners proposed to locate all touring caravans (up to 30) near to the A6108. The full planning permission included that more trees and shrubs should be planted to reduce the environmental impact of this large caravan park.

The committee had discussed the application at the August meeting – and had not been impressed when shown photographs of the proposed lodges. The two members from Swaledale complemented the present owner of Swale View Caravan park on the improvements that had been made since he took over. There was concern, however, that not enough was being done to alleviate the impact upon the landscape of such a large site or that there was sufficient provision for touring caravans, motorhomes and tents. One member asked if the YDNPA had taken any steps to check if the government could re-define the definition of static caravans that has made it possible for them to be replaced with lodges. (See Defining what is a Caravan above)

RIBBLEHEAD

September: Even though the planning officer had recommended refusal members decided that consent should be given for the Stationmaster’s House at Ribblehead to become a residence once more. The Settle and Carlisle Trust wants to return the house externally to its original Midland Railway style and then use it as accommodation for the caretaker of the station building. There will be a S106 agreement so if the Trust should find it necessary to sell the house it would submit a scheme to the Authority detailing how the money would be spent. The Trust had offered a S106 agreement that would restrict the use of net proceeds from such a sale on the open market to the work and objectives of the Trust.

SEDBERGH

December : Members unanimously accepted the officer’s recommendation to give full planning permission for a timber footbridge to be constructed across Crosedale Beck, at Bramaskew Farm, Howgill near Sedbergh to make it safer and easier for walkers using the footpath. This application was made by the YDNPA as the beck often became impassable at times of high water. The footpath will be diverted slightly.

THORNTON RUST

November meeting – The committee voted unanimously in favour of an enforcement notice to secure the demolition of the semi-detached buildings in the Outgang at Thornton Rust. Richard Graham, the principal planning officer, explained that the owner, Peter Bowers, had submitted a

retrospective planning application to the June meeting which had included reducing the height of the buildings by 1.2m. The committee had then agreed to grant permission for the buildings so long as Mr Bowers signed agreements that the remedial works would be completed before February 27 2011 and the occupancy would be restricted to those who met the Authority's "local need" criteria. Since then Mr Bower's legal advisor had asked the Authority to accept the buildings as they were.

At Tuesday's meeting County Coun John Blackie pointed out that there were over 20 breaches of planning conditions, 11 of them being major ones. These included the incorrect orientation of the buildings and the height and angle of the roof allowing for an additional storey. Like the rest of the committee County Coun John Blackie was very concerned that if nothing was done by early 2011 these unauthorised building works would be immune from enforcement action as it would be over four years since the dwellings were substantially completed.

"If you don't recommend demolition then some applicants will feel they can play the delay game. I am extremely disappointed with what has happened," he said. He added that they needed to provide an example to those who tried to drive a coach and horses around planning permissions.

Craven District Coun John Roberts told the meeting he had planned in June to vote for the demolition of the houses because of the number of breaches of planning conditions. "It is perhaps the worst I have seen. The authority of the Yorkshire Dales National Park planning committee is being questioned and we ought to respond in the clearest terms," he said. He added that in June he was quite happy to accept the compromise of having the roofs lowered because of the people living in the houses.

In June members of the planning committee had agreed that the existing buildings and site to be extremely harmful to the character and appearance of the immediate area and the village, and to the amenities of the neighbours. At the November meeting the members were again reminded about the need to consider the Human Rights Act in relationship to those now living in the houses. Mr Graham said: "Those rights are qualified however and must be balanced against the public interest and the Authority's duty to carry out its planning function."

Aysgarth and District Parish Council had complained to the YDNPA when the buildings were at foundation level and, in June 2007 after the houses had been built, informed the Authority, that the houses did not comply with approved plans. In May this year the parish councillors had asked Peter Watson, the head of planning, why the Authority had taken so long to take action. See [YDNPA – Planning issues in Wensleydale](#).

In a report to the planning committee last month Mr Watson explained why enforcement action had not been taken since then and noted: "We should be less accommodating to 'offenders' and report slow moving enforcement cases to the planning committee at an early stage."

October: County Coun John Blackie said that the two new dwellings in the Outgang at Thornton Rust as part of the Thornton Rust Hall estate had become a "cause celebre" locally. He thanked Aysgarth and District Parish Council for pursuing the issue. There was a lengthy report from Peter Watson, head of planning, about how the YDNPA's enforcement team had handled this case. The parish council had complained in July 2007 that the semi-detached houses had not been built in accordance with approved plans – and it was found that this complaint was justified. Mr Watson explained that

reduced staff levels from May 2007 to August 2008 had led to a backlog. He added: "While staff turnover is unavoidable, the transition from one case officer to another can be smoother when each officer makes a point of recording clear case notes.... The practice had slipped as a result of workload pressures when the enforcement team was under staff. The re-structuring of the planning department in July 2009 has seen a major improvement in the way we operate." The YDNPA planning committee agreed earlier this year that the height of the two houses should be reduced. One member commented: "I was for total demolition." This was because so many conditions had been broken when the houses were built. Now the members wanted to make sure that by February 2011 the conditions of the retrospective planning permission granted this year were being complied with.

THRESHFIELD

October: The non-compliance with planning conditions imposed in October 1977 was so blatant at Wood Nook Caravan site near Threshfield that, during a site meeting, a member of the committee had seen a plot with the number 40 on it even though permission had been given for only 30 caravans at any one time. This had led to a large volume of traffic along two narrow lanes at Skirethorns. The members agreed that the YDNPA's solicitor should serve an enforcement notice and if the number of caravans was not reduced to 30 at any one time within the next two months legal action would be taken. The agents for the owners of the site had pointed out that there was evidence dating back to the 1980s that there had been over 30 caravans on the site and they were therefore applying for a certificate of lawfulness.

WEST BURTON

December – County Coun John Blackie successfully requested a deferral of any decision on the retrospective planning application for a timber building in a field at West Burton. He said that Burton cum Walden Parish Council felt let down by the planning system. This was because, as a result of a previous planning permission granted in 2009, the owner could only use the field to graze horses. At that time the Authority had been assured that "there was no intention whatsoever to erect any stabling, jumps and any other equipment on the land." The parish council pointed out that the timber building was large enough to be used in the future as boarding kennels for dogs or for stabling ponies. The owner is at present using it as a kennel for domestic dogs and household storage.

Some members of the Authority's planning committee accepted that the building might be in the most discrete location but also accepted that the parish council should have been given the opportunity to assess and comment on the application before the building was constructed. Mr Richard Johnson, the owner, did apologise to the planning committee for making a retrospective planning application.

Coun Blackie reminded the committee that in the Performance Assessment Report received by the Authority in November it had been told to engage more with the community. This Report did not accept the Authority's self assessment that it had performed well regarding the national park's wider sustainable development. This category includes planning and enforcement. Instead the assessment panel decided that the Authority had only performed adequately – the poorest result it had in the seven categories.

The report stated: “Local residents and community representatives are critical of the planning services – development control, enforcement and the Local Development Framework – and customer satisfaction has been an issue in recent years. The Authority has recognised this and carried out a review of the structure of development control in 2009 specifically to tackle this issue. Early indications show an improvement in customer satisfaction.”

The Association of Rural Communities (ARC) was one of the local groups invited to make representations to the panel. The Association pointed out that according to its own End of Year progress reports the Authority had not been successful in minimising environmental harm by regularising 60 per cent of enforcement cases within 16 weeks. As compared to 2006-7 the number of cases regularised had dropped in 2009-10 by 65 per cent. The Association also gave illustrations of how the Authority had not communicated well with residents and parish councils when dealing with planning and enforcement issues.

After the planning committee Coun Blackie said: “Local communities do have issues with the planning department and that is the reason why ‘sustainable development’ only achieved a ‘two’ (performed adequately).” About deferring the West Burton decision he added: “Local communities do need to be able to hold our planning in respect – and this is an opportunity to rectify this.”

Mr Johnson’s planning application included the construction of a dry stone wall, change of use of a strip of land to domestic curtilage and the siting of a domestic oil tank.