

Vale of the White Horse Local Plan 2031
Examination Stage 2: Written Response from
Keep Cumnor Green



Matter 12

The Historic Environment

January 2016

This page is blank for printing purposes

This statement is submitted on behalf of the following individuals:

- Dr Robert Amess
- A Anson
- Mr Ian Bannerman
- Mr Kingsmill Bond
- Miss Rosemary Brown
- Mr Christopher Bryan
- Mr Keith Bushnell
- Mrs Maria Bushnell
- Prof Joe Cartwright
- Mr David Charlesworth
- Mrs Norah Charlesworth
- Clair Chinnery
- Mr Roger Clarkson-Webb
- Mrs Sheila Clarkson-Webb
- Dr Gina Copp
- Dr Charles Cottrill
- Ms Stephanie Cottrill
- Mr Derek Davies
- Mrs Elizabeth Davies
- Mrs Margaret Davies
- Keith Eddey
- Margaret Eddey
- Ms Joyce Ender
- Prof Francis Frascina
- Dr Brian Gasser
- John Grimshaw
- Jane Guest
- Mr Matthew Hall
- Dr Rosamond Hall
- Mr Nic Hallam

- Mrs Rose Hallam
- Mr Anthony Harris
- Dr Philip Hawtin
- Ms Linda Hill
- Mr Michael John Hodder
- Dr Edward Impey
- Dr Jane Impey
- Mrs Julie Irving
- Mr Russell Irving
- Mr P Jones
- Mrs Jacqueline Jones
- Mrs Valerie Kroll
- Mr James Kroll
- Dr Elizabeth Matthews
- Dr Guy Matthews
- Mrs Patricia Meadows
- Mr Rogan Meadows
- Mr Alex Money
- Mrs Catherine Mott
- Mr Edward Mott
- Mrs Fiona Newton
- Mrs Lilian Norridge
- Mr Kevin North
- Mr David Novakowski
- Mrs Lucille Peel
- Mr Richard Peel
- Dr Nicholas Perkins
- Mr Bernard Pottle
- Mrs Janet Pottle
- Mrs Julie Pottle
- Mr Tim Pottle
- Dr Christopher Prior

- Mrs Hilary Prior
- Mr Philip Pullman
- Ms Sarah Redston
- Prof Peter Renton
- Mrs Joyce Robinson
- Mr John Ross
- Ms Clare Saunders
- Mr Mark Selinger
- Dr Margaret Selinger
- Mrs Colette Selwood
- Mrs Judy Sissons
- Mr Peter Sissons
- Mr Edward Smith
- Mrs Edda Smith
- Mr Peter Snow
- Mr Gordon Stokes
- Dr Derwent Swaine
- Mr John Szulc
- Mrs Shelley Szulc
- Mr Martin Townsend
- Mrs Wendy Vezey
- Mr Peter Vezey
- Mrs Catherine Warren
- Mr Simon Warren
- Mrs Sarah Wimbourne
- Mr Robin Wimbourne
- Mr David Woodford

Each of the signatories named above are Local Plan Part 1 consultees, and fully support the following Written Statement. We kindly request that the Planning Inspector also takes note of the petition attached.

Word Count : 967 (excluding appendices)

This page is blank for printing purposes

Matter 12 : The Historic Environment

The Local Plan's hierarchy of settlements (DLP01 Section 4, *Spatial Strategy*, page 37) defines Cumnor as "a larger village", one where development should only take place to meet a village's "local needs". It states (in *Core Policy 13*, page 63) that future development in GB villages like Cumnor should be allocated only "within the existing built area of the village". It is unsound to proceed with extensive releases of GB land that (a) lie *outside* the village and (b) where the village has no need to expand for its own purposes.

The Parish Council is embarking on a Neighbourhood Plan to identify other sites that might be suitable for development in due course. It should be noted that in Stage 1 Written Statements JPPC, acting on behalf of South Cumnor Landowners, stated that the "identification of smaller site allocations...would ensure housing delivery" (Matter 1, paragraph 16¹). Rather than unrealistic wholesale removals from the GB, a more targeted and incremental approach would be more democratic, achievable and deliverable.

Matter 12.3 (c): The Historic Environment

The Conservation area in Cumnor exists to protect the historic heritage and special character of Cumnor. Release of the sites 5, 6 and 24 from the GB would result in the destruction of the special character of this important historical settlement.

Area 6 covers most of the area of the medieval deer park, attached to the Abbot of Abingdon's country house, which stood to the west of the church until 1810 (and of which fragments survive): although much altered, the planned medieval landscape and arrangement of church, manor house, park, garden, barn and fishponds remains entirely legible. This is a very rare and very interesting survival, not least in what it tells us and may yet tell us about life and environment in Cumnor during the last millennium, and which retains buildings and specific features offering very real contact with our communal past.

1

http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=476077806&CODE=8A17919F6634D69B2A1A52214A976D73

The same holds for the land within Area 6 to the north of the High Street, very probably a survival of the medieval village green, and as such never previously built on, and which retains a fragment of real rural landscape in the very heart of the village.

The whole area surrounding Cumnor is steeped in associations that are intrinsic to the historic and literary character of Oxford and Oxfordshire. It is, for example, the site of Matthew Arnold's famous poem 'The Scholar Gypsy' which is a landmark in English literature studied throughout the world.

Matthew Arnold's famous poem 'The Scholar Gypsy'. Arnold is one of the most significant cultural figures of the Victorian period, and this poem is studied throughout the world. Arnold pointedly celebrates the essence of this area's special position as rural and green, despite its close proximity to Oxford, as in this extract:

"Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,

And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.

Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,

And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see

Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;

And air-swept lindens yield

Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers

Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,

And bower me from the August sun with shade;

And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers."

In addition, Thomas Hardy used various Cumnor scenes in his descriptions of the fictional 'Lumsdon' in his great novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895), and much of the action of Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* (1821) takes place in Cumnor, in and around the manor house, its grounds and park, which formed the core of the village and are now part of the Vale's area 6.