

FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the second edition of the Pincents Hill newsletter, which focuses on open space and ecology.

Travelling around Reading, as in many other towns and cities, one can see just why we have all come to believe that development is somehow inherently hostile both to nature and to human enjoyment of the outdoors. It must not and cannot remain so.

At the Design Enquiry last September, we expressed two very clear aims: to improve local access to a variety of high-quality and productive open spaces, including the countryside; and to bring about an overall enhancement of biodiversity across and around the Pincents Hill site. Our proposals for Pincents Hill include a comprehensive green infrastructure and outdoor space network, comprising green roofs, green walls, balconies, gardens and courtyards, a new park, allotments and community farm and orchard, richly planted streets and sustainable urban drainage systems.

We also provide in this edition an update on the mix of uses that we will propose for Pincents Hill in our forthcoming outline planning application. Development in the local area, as with many other parts of the UK, has for many years been characterised by thoughtless, car-dependent, single-use sprawl with a lack of supporting infrastructure and services. Is it really so surprising in this context that people are fearful of change? By contrast, Pincents Hill will have a well considered and integrated mix of uses at the local level, enabling residents and those who already live nearby to access many everyday needs of shopping, leisure, working and learning within walking or cycling distance of home. We believe that provision of a new primary school, healthcare facility, community centre, work spaces for small and medium local businesses as well as distinctive local retail, food and drink will help to achieve this.

As always, we continue to seek your views and input into this process. You can get in touch with Blue Living directly or you can talk to a member of the Pincents Hill Liaison Panel, whose purpose is to help ensure that accurate information is exchanged between the developer and the community.

With all good wishes,

Jonathan Smales

ECOLOGY AND OPEN SPACE

The overarching aim at Pincents Hill is to create an urban setting that is unique in its connection to and integration with the natural environment.

Our ecology strategy will aim to maintain the integrity and conservation status of existing species currently on site, and bring about an overall enhancement of biodiversity in the local area. Blue Living has undertaken extensive ecological surveys of the site over a full year to gain a detailed understanding of existing habitats and species. These have included surveys for breeding birds, bats, dormice and other mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates.

Our approach follows the key principles:

1. Avoid – where possible, significant ecological impacts should be avoided

2. Mitigate – where impossible to avoid, significant ecological impacts should be mitigated for

3. Compensate – where mitigation is not possible, compensation measures for significant ecological impact should be undertaken including off-site habitat creation.

4. Enhance – opportunities to bring ecological enhancement should be taken wherever possible

In addition, where impacts are predicted to occur on species protected under law, appropriate management and mitigation strategies will be agreed with stakeholders and licences may be required from Natural England before any development works can take place. Full details will be publicly available in the... (continued overleaf)

UPDATE: MIX OF USES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Pincents Hill will provide a range of uses at the local level which will allow most daily needs, such as health and education, to be met within walking distance of home while improving provision of local services for existing residents. We want to create a place not only for people to live in, but also where people can work, learn and enjoy themselves.

The uses and facilities that we believe may contribute to making a Pincents Hill a vibrant and attractive place to live and work include:

- Local shops such as a newsagent, a butcher, a delicatessen, a grocer, a bakery, a hairdresser and florist. These would be focussed near a central square around the existing oak trees (right).
- A range of work spaces to facilitate home working and to support small local businesses
- Food and drink outlets, such as a café, restaurant and high-quality pub will provide places for people to meet and spend time, as well as a small hotel
- A new health centre capable of supporting a range of health services and treatments

- A new primary school at the heart of the development and within a short walk of all homes
- A multi-purpose centre for community facilities, meeting rooms, IT suites and shared offices.

We would still like to hear your views on the mix of uses and public facilities. Please contact us using the details overleaf.



ECOLOGY AND OPEN SPACE CONTD...

... Environmental Impact Assessment accompanying the Outline Planning Application.

Blue Living's proposals include:

- Retention and integration of the features of key ecological value throughout the site, including veteran trees, some hedgerows and woodland habitat.
- A new woodland corridor linking Harefield Copse in the northwest and Withy Copse and Oliver's Copse in the east, creating improved habitat connectivity between these ancient woodlands.
- Extensive street tree planting and wildlife-friendly landscaping throughout the development, together with green roofs and walls.
- Private gardens to be used for food and wildlife gardening through provision of information, education and materials via community growing projects.
- Incorporation of nest and roost boxes for

birds and bats, shelter and hibernation sites for invertebrates, bee hives and compost heaps for reptiles.

- Creation of new habitat areas in the AONB north of Pincents Lane for notable species of birds, bats, dormice and badgers in particular.

Improving access to the outdoors

At present, a single public footpath crosses the Pincents Hill site, with further footpaths bounding the site to the east. Some of the rest of the site is open and accessible through several entry points at the periphery of the site, although there are no other public access rights over the land.

We aim to increase public use of the area by increasing public accessibility to a range of open spaces both in Pincents Hill and in the adjoining AONB. We are proposing a series of outdoor spaces which vary in terms of size and character. These include:

- A new central public space around the existing oak trees for relaxing, sitting, playing

or outdoor eating and drinking

- Children's play areas
- A linear woodland corridor and park forming a connection between the existing woodland areas. This will be equipped with trails and facilities for nature-watching
- A more formally landscaped residential square with park benches
- A series of connected walking and cycling routes in the AONB north of Pincents Lane around a community farm, orchard and allotments

If you have any comments, questions or concerns about open space and ecology, or would like to suggest measures that you think we should consider in our proposals, please contact Blue Living or a member of the Pincents Hill Liaison Panel using the contact details below.

PINCENTS HILL LIAISON PANEL

The Pincents Hill Liaison Panel is made up of representatives from a number of local community organisations. Its purpose is to facilitate dialogue with the local community.

The Panel discusses a range of issues including ecology and open space, transport and community infrastructure.

Contacting the Panel

The members of the Panel are available for you to ask questions about the proposals and for you to pass on feedback. They may not be able to answer your questions immediately, but they will ensure that your question is passed on to Blue Living and that you receive a response.

The Panel members are:

Des Buckley PCSO

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HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

There are a number of ways for you to get more information about Blue Living's proposals for Pincents Hill and for you to share your ideas with us.

- 1 Contact a member of the Panel, who will be happy to take your comments or questions and pass them on to Blue Living.
- 2 Contact Blue Living via our website, or by emailing janstead@blueliving.co.uk. We would like to hear your views and will answer your questions clearly and accurately. You can also sign up to our mailing list for regular updates on progress, to receive our newsletter and to let you know when the Outline Planning Application is submitted.
- 3 Visit www.blueliving.co.uk – some of your questions about the project might have been answered already in the Pincents Hill FAQs section.

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