

Planning

The Planning Committee has had another busy year with a large volume of applications to consider and has continued holding two meetings each month.

Where appropriate we will endeavour to take the views of the applicant and neighbouring properties into account before deciding on our comments to the District Council, who will make the final decision on the application.

We would encourage residents who comment directly to the District Council to copy us in on any emails (clerk@gerrardscross.gov.uk) so that we can take their views into account when the application is discussed at Committee meetings.

This year we have seen a continuation of the trend in applications for converting office and retail premises to residential use, partly due to government legislation which eases the requirements for doing this.

While the increase in housing capacity is required, we have been concerned that it may come at the cost of the vitality of the village centre. We have made these concerns known to the District Council and hope that a balance will be kept.

The District Council has also informed us that it will no longer provide us with hard copies of planning applications due to the high cost of doing so. While we understand the decision, we do feel that having hard copies was useful when discussing applications at meetings and also to show residents if necessary.

We have now devised a new system under which members of the Committee will be allocated plans to look at for each meeting online through the District Council website and will then give a report at the meeting. It will take some time to get used to going 'paperless' but the aim is for the Committee to still be able to comment on applications in an efficient manner.

Councillor Jaspal Chhokar