

MINUTES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP for
ALMELEY PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN ALMELEY VILLAGE HALL ON 22nd March 2017

Present:

Mrs Liz Tucker – (Chair) , Mr Barry Hall, Paul & Sandra Charles, Alan Tucker, John Crippin, Dave McAndrew

Apologies:

Jon Argent, Lynn & Mike Entwisle, Frances Crippin

Also Present

11 members of the public.

The meeting commenced at 6pm

1. Approval of minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed.

2. Declaration of interests.

No members of the group had any interests to declare.

3.0 Finance.

Cheques for Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) expenditure were approved at the last Almeley Parish Council (APC) meeting. These payments were for Data Orchard's invoice and an allowance of up to £300 for small payments including bespoke maps of the two main settlements.

3.1 Grant update

Liz and Barry can authorise these small payments. Payments for use of the village hall to be agreed with Parish Clerk as APC receives a combined invoice for APC and NDP meetings. The grant for £2500 received from Groundworks has to be used by the end of March, any unspent funds have to be repaid to the awarding body. Data Orchard (DO) to produce their estimate for the next six months work, this will go to the next APC meeting for approval.

3.2 Accounts summary

AT commented on the lack of a summary. It was explained that since the last APC meeting it had not been possible to get a definitive statement. A spreadsheet will be available for future meetings.

4.0 NDP Update.

4.1 Clarify the Vision and Objectives of the NDP within Herefordshire Council directives (JC)

John took us through the history of the reason for producing an NDP, from the government's Localism Act where they delegated powers to local authorities, through to APC's decision to produce an NDP. It was explained that an NDP enables the creation of policies that reflect the wishes of the population, meaning that the types and design of housing can be decided by the local public. However, the government in recognising a shortage in housing, added a further aspect which meant that parishes have to contribute to the overall housing needs. APC is already well on the way to achieving the target set for 2011-2031. Given that this is the third working party, the NDP team at Herefordshire Council (HC) is happy with our progress, they will remain fully involved with our working draft of the NDP document through to our final submission. Identification of potential building land has been put to the public in a "Call for Land", this closes in a few days. It is up to landowners to come forward. Any sites will be evaluated by our planning consultant using criteria set by the planning authority and comply with HC planning policy. HC policy is to direct development

towards Almeley village, the current settlement boundary may have to be reviewed if the opportunity arose. In a planning exercise, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), HC gave indication of where the boundary could extend to, however, the local people could show their preference for their own areas and boundaries. HC identified Woonton as a secondary area for development, however, given recent planning approvals there, Woonton may have already achieved, even exceeded its proportional growth. Housing stock in Herefordshire is skewed towards executive style homes and there is a feeling that there are not enough homes for local people. Developments above a certain size will need to include an element of affordable housing. Housing is required that meets the needs of local working people. Not completing the NDP is an option to be avoided at all costs as it would hand HC total control over the parish. It is important that the parish gets behind and gives support to the NDP. We need to be positive in the production of the NDP to ensure that Almeley Parish remains a sustainable, growing community.

4.2 Update on Call for Land and Influence on the Settlement Plan (LT)

HC want any development to focus on Almeley and Woonton. The Call for Land has been running for six weeks, there are three days left to go. Our planning consultant will assess any forthcoming sites to see if they are suitable, available and achievable and will contact each landowner for fuller information. To date, eight responses have been submitted, two of these appear to have potential for inclusion in the NDP. Some of the submissions are outside the settlement boundary but may be seen as “windfall” (e.g. may be a conversion or live/work unit).

If we are unable to reach the target, we demonstrate to HC that we have done a call for land, HC may then look at neighbouring parishes where there is an oversupply of land.

The NDP covers more than housing, it covers the environment, economy and rural aspects and it will protect and preserve our community while developing it in a sustainable way.

Once adopted through the referendum the onus will be on APC to do two things: review the NDP periodically (at least annually) and treat it as material evidence when reviewing planning application submissions.

4.3 Discuss the issue of Settlement Boundaries for Almeley and Woonton (SC)

Almeley, which has a range of community facilities, has had a SHLAA assessment and there has been a settlement boundary in place for some years, however, this may be extended in response to the call for land. There will be the opportunity for members of the public to give an indication of their preferred sites and this could lead to a review of the settlement boundary.

Woonton has not had a SHLAA assessment and has never been a settlement boundary. There are options as to what styles of a boundary are available, this could be shaped by recent planning approvals. The choices are a settlement boundary like Almeley's, a linear boundary along the main roadway or a specific defined development area. There is a further option of having no settlement boundary. Woonton residents will have a brief report showing examples of the different styles of boundary in preparation for the public display.

4.4 Areas to be conserved including existing Conservation Area, views and green spaces

The Almeley Conservation Area was created in 1986 and the preservation of the area is well supported, indeed there is scope to extend the Conservation area. There has been a general feeling that people do not want any more development in the Conservation area. Green Spaces can be designated within the NDP. HC is shortly going to be disposing of land, including the commons which are being offered to APC at £1 each. At the last APC meeting this matter was discussed and the PC agreed to investigate taking the commons on, these will be included in the Green Spaces. There are three additional areas included in the land to be sold which are giving some concern: The Batch (HC and private ownership), Holywell Dingle and Cokes Yeld Dingle, these areas are parcelled with other land. There is a local group expressing concern at the possible outcome of the sale of these areas and members of the public were encouraged to support this. It is a widely held view that these areas need to be preserved for wildlife and public use, so it is proposed that all of these will be designated Statutory Green Areas.

5.0 Review of Current Status.

5.1 Timescale for 2017

This is an indication of possible timescales for the process but each stage is dependant on the preceding one:

May 2017 – Public Consultation

Summer 2017 – NDP presented to APC for submission to HC for Regulation 14

Autumn 2017 – comments and feedback from Reg 14 incorporated into NDP

Late Autumn 2017 – Regulation 16

Dec 17/Jan 18 – NDP with external adjudicator

Spring 2018 – Parish Referendum

The Draft NDP document will be available online once feedback from the public consultation has been incorporated.

5.2 List and number of units already achieved.

All possible units are being included in the count, this will include all planning approvals granted since 2011, properties built or commenced since 2011 and buildings where there has been a change of use.

There are several current planning applications which, if approved, will take the total to around the mid twenties. Bill Bloxsome(DO) is liaising with HC planning officers to produce a definitive up to date list.

5.3 Update on NDP document

Data Orchard have produced an outline draft NDP currently running to 48 pages although this will increase as a greater level of detail is added. A sub committee has met with Bill to review the first half of the draft document, there will be a further meeting next week to go through the remainder of the document and scrutinise the suggested policies.

Bill is doing a very professional job and has taken on board our issues.

6.0 Action Plan

6.1 Finalise the draft

There will be a meeting with DO next week to go through outstanding queries.

6.2 Finalise Call for Land

Bill is handling all issues with the call for land.

6.3 Prepare for public event

See point 7

7.0 Arrangements for Public Display and Next Public Session

The Public Display will be held in the Village Hall on 24th May 2017 from 5:00 – 7:30pm.

This will be followed by a brief formal NDP meeting.

8.0 Public Comments

There were questions and comments from a number of members of the public on various matters including the Statutory Green Areas. It was stated that as Herefordshire Wildlife Trust (HWT) lease Holywell Dingle for ecological reasons, it should be recognised by HC as being special and should therefore be protected.

A member of the public is concerned about their land boundaries with the HC land to be sold. It was suggested that they should speak to Land Registries to clarify their situation.

There were questions about the call for land but no comment could be made as that is with the planning consultant.

A member of the public asked if APC will respect their own NDP.

In response to a further question, it was confirmed that landowners can continue to submit planning applications.

The meeting ended at 8:30pm