

Item for Deddington News for October 2013

Good neighbours

The Deddington Neighbourhood Plan is under way. The steering group is now meeting and a rolling programme of events is beginning to take shape.

The first step is to draw up a questionnaire to be distributed throughout the parish - probably on paper and online - from mid-November. This will be a curtain-raiser to a three-day workshop at the church coinciding with the November farmer's market on the 24th. Everyone is invited to drop in. Steering group members and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions, show plans and photographs, and take note of your views.

Housing will necessarily be one of the main focuses. If the parish is to accommodate new housing, the Neighbourhood Planners' aim is to ensure that parishioners decide where and of what kind development will be.

A range of other issues will be explored, too. Should more use be made of the parish's outstanding asset – the Castle Grounds? Is parking manageable within Deddington – and can anything be done about it anyway? Do we need better facilities for sport and other community activities? Could transport be improved? Is there any chance we could find a suitable piece of land for a children's playground in Hempton?

Over the past 20 years, there have been two parish plans, both capturing a fair slice of public opinion, and the same themes recur. Vandalism, speeding and lack of parking were all seen as a problem in 1994 and 2007. And a concern that there was not enough for young people to do kept cropping up - as does the cheering sense that Deddington and the adjoining villages are, all in all, great places to live.

Deddington may never have a swimming pool – a popular request in 2007 - but some more modest wishes have been realized: a path from Clifton to Deddington, a florist's, a baker (well, we have three shops selling bread).

In 1994, 48% of those answering the survey reckoned there was no need for any new housing in the parish. Among those prepared to contemplate some development there was one constant - in 1994, then 2007 and again in a housing needs survey carried out in 2012 – small-scale “affordable” housing was preferred to five-bedroom villas.

What is the view in 2013?

The Pegasus appeal against planning refusal for an 85-house development north of Gaveston Gardens begins on October 29. Before that, there is likely be another planning application on the table - this one for 26 houses on The Poplars, the field between the Clifton Road and the Castle Grounds.

* If you want to pitch in right away, take a look at the Neighbourhood Plan's website – not much on it so far, but it will grow and everyone can use it to make comments, volunteer and provide information.

www.deddingtonneighbourhoodplan.org

Update on the neighbourhood plan for Deddington News November 2013

 All together now . . .

Everyone in the parish is invited to the public launch of Deddington's neighbourhood plan – a three-day event at the church from November 21-23. There'll be a drop-in session from 1pm-7pm on Thursday 21st, 3pm-9pm on Friday 22nd and 9am-1pm on Saturday 23rd, which will coincide with the farmer's market. Visitors can stop by for as long or as briefly as they wish – tea, coffee and maybe biscuits and cake will be available; we're hoping hundreds from every corner of the three villages will turn out and find it interesting when they get there..

The various topic groups – focusing on housing, transport, business, community and environment – have been plotting what they should display at the sessions to inspire the most varied and useful responses from parishioners. A flurry of photography is going on around the parish capturing key locations, views, buildings, highways and byways. We're also seeking out the clearest maps and drawing up posters listing (hopefully provocative) discussion points.

The task of visitors to the sessions will be to give us your ideas, your likes, your dislikes – whether with a Post-it slapped on the display boards or in conversation with a volunteer. Originally the steering group intended to circulate a detailed questionnaire *before* the drop-in sessions; now the order has been reversed to give parishioners more of a chance to set the agenda.

At this stage we want blue sky thinking; practical considerations such as funds available (or more likely unavailable) for prized projects and the detail of what Cherwell District Council's Local Plan requires of us can come later. The steering group has also been looking further afield, notably at neighbourhood plans being created by villages all over the country, picking up tips on what to copy and what to avoid (at least one neighbourhood plan has been rejected by the authorities).

Close to home, Adderbury have racked up an impressive response, 59%, to their neighbourhood plan consultation. Their secret seems to be street captains – volunteers who deliver and collect flyers and questionnaires in their immediate locality and keep their neighbours informed. We'd like to try this too. Clearly the greater the involvement of people in Deddington, Hempton and Clifton, the more representative the final plan will be. And for this we need yet more volunteers, so if you'd like to join in please go to <http://www.deddingtonneighbourhoodplan.org/>

Item for December edition of Deddington News

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The Neighbourhood Plan drop-in sessions held at the church in November were generally considered a success. Three hundred or more parishioners attended and each day the topic boards (Housing, Environment, Community, Transport, Business) were covered with innumerable sticky scraps of paper expressing opinions and aspirations – some wildly contrasting and some offering innovative suggestions for improvements to the villages.

Saturday was the busiest, coinciding as it did with the Farmers' Market and a visit from our MP, Sir Tony Baldry. Some of the more contentious issues provoked lively conversations – including, unexpectedly, the choice of photographs displayed. A list of all the comments will be available soon on the Neighbourhood Plan website and will form the basis of a questionnaire to be distributed to everyone in the parish in the new year.

Earlier in November, Banner Homes held an open evening at the Holly Tree to explain their plans for The Poplars field on Clifton Road. By no means everyone had an invitation, even among near neighbours of the site, whom Banner were supposedly targetting. However, a fair number turned up to grill the developers, many of them opposed to housing on the site which runs alongside the Castle Grounds.

The layout Banner are now proposing has 26 two-, three- and four-bedroom houses arranged around a circular road. Previously they proposed rather larger houses grouped round a horseshoe-shaped road.

Both plans included a car park for the public of 20 to 40 places in addition to the residents' own parking provision. And this highlights one of the key questions that needs to be resolved in the Neighbourhood Plan: do parishioners want to see more use made of the Castle Grounds for leisure and sporting purposes? Do we need a children's playground on the Clifton Road side of Deddington? The answers to these questions may provide the answer to another question – is a car park needed for people visiting the Castle Grounds?

Looming over all talk of new development is the result of the Pegasus appeal – expected in December. One issue that attracted widespread agreement at the drop-in sessions was the need for small and affordable housing. If approved, the Pegasus development would create 30 “affordable” homes, and the Banner development nine. In both cases 50% would be earmarked for people with a Deddington connection. “Exception” sites, namely plots unlikely to achieve approval for commercial development, accommodating 10 to 12 houses, would offer a higher proportion of affordable – none are mooted at the moment.

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