

Date	30 th July 2019
Time	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Venue	The Grange Church Road Old Newton Stowmarket IP14 4ED (Mike Helliwell)
Attendees	Heather Thomas Janet Pearson Libby Brooks Michael Helliwell (Parish Councillor) Tony Arnold
Apologies for absence	Andy Perkowski (Parish Councillor) Sekhar Pillai Jon Miller (who has expressed a wish to attend meetings whenever possible) (Parish Council Chair)
Apologies for late arrival!	Janet Pearson
Support	Keith Welham (District Councillor)

1. It was agreed that the group will be known as “The Advisory Working Group of the Parish Council” (“AWG”) for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (“NP”). It was also agreed that at this stage a Chairman would not be appointed.
2. Janet said that she had spoken with Jon Miller and agreed that minutes of AWG meetings would be submitted to the Parish Council. Jon had said that they would then be included in the published Parish Council minutes.
3. Keith gave some information about the nature of an NP:-
 - Any building development taking place in Suffolk carries a Community Infrastructure Levy (“CIL”). The levy is a fixed amount per unit area and applies whether it is the building of one property or many. Not all boroughs have adopted the CIL method but, for those who have, it replaces the previous section 106 contribution in respect of developments.
 - An NP can set out the community view and wishes on matters such as:-
 - Where new developments should be sited
 - The total number of new houses or developments
 - Plot sizes to be similar to those in the surrounding area (although housing density is actually a matter set by central government)
 - Infrastructure and amenities
 - Environment factors, such as sustainable energy, rainwater harvesting etc to be taken into consideration when new building takes place
 - Preserving or enhancing existing landscapes
 - An NP cannot dictate the rate of development (for example by saying that a development of 200 houses should be built at the rate of 50 per year). However a developer is unlikely to build more than 40 houses a year because they would not be able to sell them.

- An NP runs for 20 years. However new planning documents such as the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Plan, currently under consultation, take priority and therefore an NP prepared before new planning documents are issued may need to be revised.
 - It is quite possible that the current Joint Plan under consultation will take two years to finalise and therefore we should hopefully be able to prepare our NP to be in line with it.
 - There are grants available to support the work of preparing an NP. Grant funding awarded is paid to the Parish Council and must be ring-fenced for the purpose. At any meeting of the AWG where finance is to be discussed the Clerk to the Parish Council should be present.
4. The reasons each member of the group wants to participate in the preparation of an NP were put forward and discussed. These are summarised as:-
- The Parish currently has no Parish Plan and therefore no document representing the wishes of the community as regards development in the Parish. There is nothing therefore to which the Parish Council can look for information or support when reviewing Planning Applications or infrastructure proposals. However as a first step a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (“PiiP”), setting out intentions for use of CIL funding, has been drawn up and is currently out for consultation with community groups.
 - Having an NP in place gives the Parish the right to request 25% of any CIL rather than the 15% which is available if there is no NP.
 - Protection of the existing environment (e.g. wildlife and habitat, maintaining wildlife corridors), biodiversity and environmental enhancements.
 - Protecting and retaining the Parish as a community, not as a dormitory village, so looking at local employment opportunities.
 - Maintaining the diversity of human habitats within Suffolk. These are recognised by the Joint Plan Consultation document (towns, core villages, hinterland villages etc). Old Newton is defined as a hinterland village in the Joint Plan and villages contribute to the attraction of Suffolk as a holiday destination.
5. Having heard the information provided by Keith and discussed the reasons for preparing an NP, all agreed that they wished to take the work forward. It was understood that the core group of 6 or 7 people would be augmented by others with particular skills at various times as the work progresses.
6. Keith said that there is support and guidance available from consultants at Mid Suffolk and we should contact Paul Bryant. He or one of his colleagues will come to a meeting and advise us. Also there is a presentation on Thursday (1st August) at Elmswell being given by Mid Suffolk for groups in the process of preparing NPs and the effect of the Joint Plan Consultation Document.
7. The frequency of meetings was discussed. Keith advised that while the Stowupland NP was being prepared meetings were held every three weeks. No firm conclusion was reached at the present.

8. Sekhar had put forward a suggestion that the meeting structure a discussion as an analysis of Opportunities, Threats, Strengths and Weaknesses. It was felt that the discussion which had taken place had covered Opportunities and Threats. Strengths and Weaknesses would be covered in the future when we had greater understanding of the work needed.
9. Next steps:-
 - Janet to contact Paul Bryant to ask him to come to our next meeting. Therefore the next meeting date will be arranged once Paul's availability is known.
 - Tony and Janet will try to attend the presentation on 1st August.
 - Each member will review a couple of adopted NPs for areas similar to Old Newton (although not necessarily in Suffolk) to get a feel for the kind of document we will be producing.