

# WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting  
Held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in Walford Village Hall

**Present:** Frank Myers – Chairman.

**Councillors:** Murray Alston, Dave Berry, Shane Carlson, Karen Chinn, Simeon Cole, Sophie Hurley, Angus McIntosh., Eric Drummond, Nesta Hirst.

**In attendance:** Clerk – Catherine Murray and several members of the public.  
Ward Councillor Paul Newman.

1. The Chairman gave his introduction, welcomed those present to the meeting and explained the purpose of the APM.
2. The minutes from the APM held on 13th April 2016 were approved.

### 3. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

**An introduction was given by Will Warburg – NDP Steering Group leader:**

Will explained that The NDP is a project to enable us to take more control over development; it is different from the Neighbourhood Plan, which is about all the general ideas that the Parish Council has for the local area.

**Will handed over to Cllr Shane Carlson, who gave a presentation, which is summarised below:**

#### The NDP – What is it?

- The Localism Act has reformed the planning system to enable local people to have more say in determining planning policy for their local area.
  - Give local people the opportunity to decide the future of the places where they live and work.
  - Allow the community to set out the vision for an area and the planning policies for the use and development of land.
  - It is important to note that plans should focus on guiding development rather than stopping it.
  - Give you an increased ability to influence planning within your area
- Cllr Carlson mentioned the play area at Walford Village Hall and Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch Site, as assets to be supported. He also mentioned Superfast broadband and its importance as a consistent service, as well as mobile phone coverage.

#### NDP's Can:

- Decide where and what type of development should happen within the parish
- Decide what the development should look like
- Promote development for our community in line with the Local Plan (Core Strategy)
- Include detailed planning policies for the parish

#### NDP's Can Not:

- Conflict with the policies within the Local Plan (Core Strategy)
- Be used to prevent development
- Be prepared by anyone – other than a parish or town council in Herefordshire
- Include county matters – such as minerals and waste

### **Vision – Walford Parish.**

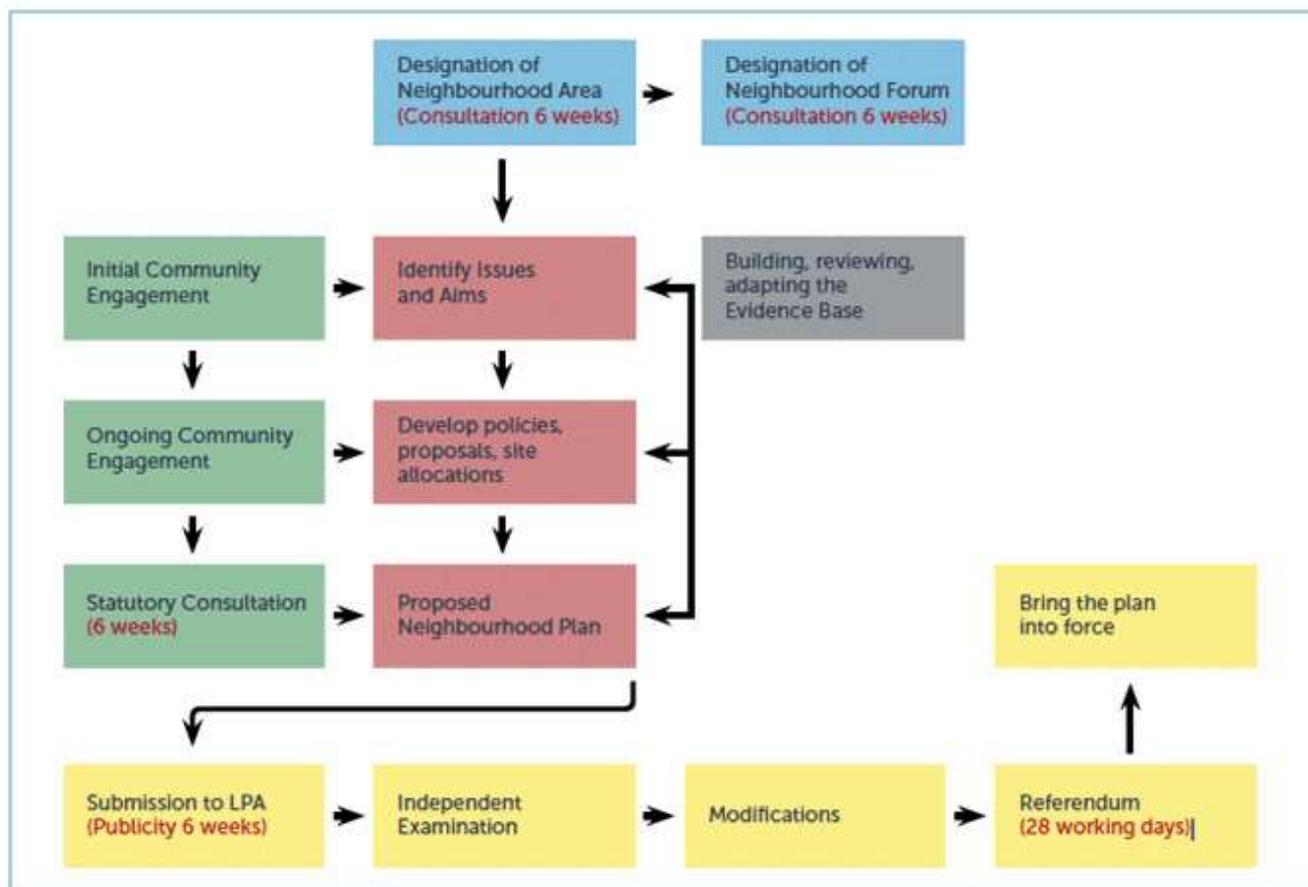
To uphold an active, vibrant, thriving and caring parish where an excellent quality of life is available to all, where people are respected and valued and where there are homes, businesses and facilities to meet the needs of a sustainable rural community.

### **Objectives.**

Walford Parish Council will work with interested parties and stakeholders to ensure wherever possible that any work or development activity within the Parish will:

- Protect the general, natural and historic environment, habitats and open spaces and, in particular, the parish's primary asset of being within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – thus continuing its strive towards being an area free of chemical, airborne, noise or light pollution.
- Support sufficient, sensitive, balanced and proportionate housing to meet the needs of local people, which is of sustainable mixed types, in keeping with our local character, suitably located and built in manageable numbers and density; thereby ensuring a consistency of design that respects, enhances and retains the rural character of our parish.
- Maintain, support and sustain the limited local facilities including; village halls, school, public houses, sport and leisure spaces.
- Provide opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and tourism by enhancing its outstanding natural environment and green infrastructure assets for the benefit of local residents and visitors from further afield.
- Safeguard and promote the development of environmentally focused agriculture as a business and ensures that the quality and quantity of agricultural land provision is given due weight, when development is considered, in order to preserve the distinctive rural landscape of Walford parish.
- Underpin local businesses and employment suitable and appropriate for a rural area within an AONB.
- Co-ordinate with the relevant external parties to continue the active rollout of high-quality super-fast broadband network services and mobile telephone coverage for those parishioners and local businesses wishing to use it.
- Maintain roads, footpaths, right of ways, cycle-ways, pavements, and other parts of the parish infrastructure in order to meet the needs of the community and ensure that they remain safe and in good condition.
- Control the future development of our parish; in particular, ensuring that the boundaries are fully respected and any future amendments will have been made with due care, consideration and consultation.
- Welcome new residents to our Parish so that people feel safe and where community involvement and spirit is actively encouraged.

## NDP – The Process



All objectives must be factually based. Over the next 18 months the PC will reach out to residents to participate in open forum discussions and put forward ideas and suggestions. We welcome input from Parishioners, but please be positive and give constructive feedback with proposals to improve what might not work in your opinion. Please spread the word to people you know locally; we hope that more and more people will get involved, every step of the process will be open and consulted upon. When we have a plan, it will be scrutinised by an independent examiner, who will come incognito to the parish and check it out. Once this has been done, and any amendments made, there will be a referendum and the public will vote on the plan.

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

- **Where do the examiners come from and what is their expertise?**

*A: They are selected by the county.*

The examiners check on compliance with the Core Strategy and the National Policy Framework.

- **Can we view where the team has got to online?**

*A: The intention is to post it on the website, either stand alone or as an addition.*

- **Will you send out a questionnaire to residents?**

*A: We have done so and don't plan to again in the near future.*

*Will Warburg explained there will be site allocations and the question is how do we best evaluate that? We are trying to identify consultants / experts to help with that, as we don't have the expertise.*

*One issue is the settlement boundaries; Walford / Coughton are the main settlements and Bishopswood and Howle Hill are minor settlements. The Authorities have less understanding of the minor settlements and we need to understand where the boundaries are; we may need to challenge Herefordshire Councils concept of where the boundaries are.*

- **Do you need settlement boundaries?**

*A: You do need a boundary, otherwise it may not work.*

- **How accurate is the map?**

*A: It is a map of the Parish boundary, within which we will choose the areas to develop. It depends on facilities and infrastructure, so you can't build where you are not connected to a settlement.*

- **What is the timescale?**

*A: Probably 18 months before the site plans are put forward.*

- **How many houses will there be?**

*A: 91, but that includes houses built between 2011 and 2031.*

- **Who defines this?**

*A: That is what we need help with. There were criteria upon which the settlements were defined originally and we are trying to establish what the new criteria are.*

- **Why not just let the planning officers get on with it?**

*A: because this is our chance to make them sit up and notice, because they are obliged to once we have a plan. We have decided to take it on board because it gives us some control on development.*

- **Should mains drainage be criteria?**

*A: yes, it should and will be part of a policy. The main sewer doesn't run through Walford Parish and extensions usually follow ribbon development; It may be a wise decision to extend the system as part of this plan.*

- **Will development include social housing / starter homes?**

*A: Yes, but it will be 'suitable' housing, we just don't know the percentage yet; but the National Policy Framework gives guidelines.*

- **How will you engage with young people?**

*A: Social media platforms.*

- **And how about with landowners / businesses, regarding business development?**

*A: That is part of our strategy, to reach out to those people in the right way.*

- **Was any consideration given to how the objectives are measured?**

*A: That is part of our strategy and they will be measured; Look on Herefordshire Council website, there are examples of completed plans, which are very useful and also look at the Core Strategy, which gives a framework.*

- **How long will the constraints last?**

*A: Until 2031.*

- **Does the Referendum stand or fall on 50%?**

*A: Yes, but with the consultations we will be doing the plan should be mainly approved by the time it comes to Referendum.*

#### 4. ANNUAL REPORTS:

The Chairman summarised the Parish Council Annual Report, which had been circulated and copies of which were available at the meeting. A copy is also available on the website and from the Clerk. The Chairman commended the councillors and the clerk and highlighted the good relationship that the PC has with our Localities Inspector – Kevin Williams. He drew attention to the main achievements of the Parish Council, including the Community Support Scheme and The Land Asset Transfer of the Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch Site.

- He explained that the funding for the Lengthsman scheme has been withdrawn to a degree, because Herefordshire Council is cutting back on expenditure.

- The PC has decided that the Lengthsman Scheme is important, as are other local schemes within the Parish, which we want to support; hence the rise in the precept by quite a substantial amount, to support the services which Herefordshire Council will no longer provide.
- HGV signs have been installed in appropriate places at the PC's expense and for considerably less than quoted by Herefordshire Council, largely as a result of voluntary effort by councillors; more are due to be installed.
- The junction with the B4234 at Leys Hill has been improved marginally, due to overgrowth being cut back.
- The PC has been asked to send representatives to speak at the HALC Annual Conference about the Community Support Scheme and the Canoe Launch Site.

**1) Walford Community Support Scheme:**

By local action and early intervention, you can affect improvements to people's wellbeing and hope to prevent some of them ending up in hospital. It is not just about health and elderly people, we try for early intervention in all areas. The help we deliver is through volunteers, of which we now have 20, as well as 20 clients who are relying on our services. The Chairman thanked Ward Cllr Paul Newman for his valued input; he explained how very proud the PC is of the scheme.

**2) Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch Site:**

Herefordshire Council couldn't make some sites in their portfolio economically viable, including the canoe launch Site and the WCs; we are lucky enough to have the canoe launch site in our county and we took it over in a community asset transfer. Thousands of canoes a week go through the site and they are being charged for, although some are not happy to be charged. We look to maintaining the site by charging a reasonable small fee per canoe. British canoeing and The Environment Agency are totally behind us.

We have appointed a development partner– Riversea Holdings Ltd (RHL) – to manage and develop the site for us; we will share in the revenue of the site and receive a fixed annual payment for it. There was unsafe practice there and Simeon Cole has worked with RHL to create, a safe one-way traffic system which can accommodate double the traffic. It is all positive. For example, vehicles don't have to reverse any more, which is both safer for the public and less noise-polluting for those who live close by.

**3) Newsletter:**

This is a very good vehicle for communication, thanks to the Clerk.

**4) Budget:**

We hope that we have demonstrated value for money.

**Ward Councillor Newman gave his Annual Report**, which had been circulated and copies of which were available at the meeting. He touched on some strategic issues and what Herefordshire Council is trying to do to improve the County. Herefordshire is applying to be the 'County of Culture' and already have £3 million to support the bid.

- There has been a launch of a new 'tourism strategy' for the County.
- There is a Rural Development programme for England and it is hoped that the canoe launch site and other parish initiatives will benefit.
- There is £8 million of funding from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, to fund a new university, which will encourage young people to live and study here. The DCLG will also be making a contribution.

**5) Open Forum:**

There were no further questions from those present.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and said we have got important work to do. The PC is working hard on your behalf and putting imagination into this. Please communicate with us over anything.

-----  
**Signed:** Frank Myers

**Date:** 04/04/18

draft