

Stoke Lacy Parish – NDP Parish Meeting at 6.30 pm 5th February 2020 – Stoke Lacy Village Hall

Notes

Attendees: Chair of the meeting, Janet Ivison (Parish Council chairman) and 60 members of the public. Jonathan Lester (Ward County Councillor) joined the meeting at 6.50pm after item 1.

Janet Ivison opened the meeting and welcomed the large audience. She introduced the guest.

Guest: Lynda Wilcox (Chief Executive of Herefordshire Association of Local Councils).

1. LW explanation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan process

- An NDP enables parishioners to work to ensure future development happens where they want it to be not where developers want it to be.
- It is the first time a parish council can compile a legal document that the planning authorities must consider when making decisions. Although there is no guarantee that the planning authorities will not contradict the terms of a parish NDP in their decision, it is the only ‘ammunition’ available to parishes in the planning process.
- It is the role of residents to identify the type of development they want to see and to define where it should and should not be.
- The parish council can apply to central government for a grant of up to £9k p/a. This enables the engagement of a planning consultant, which is essential. The consultant can frame the document in the appropriate format and language to comply with the core strategy of Hereford Council.
- Stoke Lacy parish council has already decided to go ahead with an NDP and some parishioners have already volunteered to take part in a steering group (SG). The SG is an informal sub-committee of the parish council. It is up to the parish council via the clerk to notify the parish of when steering group meetings take place. Meetings must be held in public and anyone can attend. Notes and schedules of meetings will be published on the pc website.
- Once the planning consultant is appointed, they will advise the SG and PC as to the best process. Some parishes opt for a questionnaire approach for consultation, others opt for a streamlined approach whereby a draft plan is produced first which goes out for public consultation. Following which amendments are agreed by the parish council, a defined NDP is produced by the consultant. This stage is known as Regulation 14 and the document is circulated along with an environmental report to all parishioners as well as other outside bodies, e.g. neighbouring parishes, Welsh Water, the Highways Agency etc.
- Once comments have been received amendments are made and the consultant makes a revised plan. This takes the process to Regulation 16, where the plan is submitted for inspection to Herefordshire Council. The PC can choose an inspector, who may advise some changes to the plan before the NDP is submitted to a parish referendum. Once the referendum is passed the NDP is ‘made’ and has legal weight.
- Throughout the NDP process of about 18 months the PC will hold 2 or 3 public consultations, in addition to regular steering group meetings, where views will be canvassed. The public may suggest development opportunities and express their

views. Sub-committees may be formed to assess a variety of issues such as environment, business, roads etc but all will report back to the SG and every step must be approved by the PC.

- Stoke Lacy is one of a handful of Herefordshire parishes which have not yet made their NDP.
- LW asked for a show of hands amongst the meeting as to whether they agreed that an NDP should go ahead. The majority agreed.

2. Questions and comments from the public

- **Question: How long are NDP's valid for?**

LW: Currently they are valid until 2031, although they must comply with Hereford Council's core strategy and so current NDP's are revised every two years. Hereford Council is reviewing its core strategy so changes may be made which will have to be complied with by NDPs.

- **Question: Is it possible for an NDP to specify that there can be no new development whatsoever?**

LW: An NDP defines where development should or should not take place it cannot say there is to be no development. Most NDPs exceed the target of houses set by Hereford council for the parish. Stephanie Kito, Herefordshire Council's designated officer for the Stoke Lacy NDP project, will advise exactly what the target for the parish is.

- **Question: By designating areas for development are we in effect giving developers carte blanche to ruin particular areas of the parish, as they have already done in the new development at Newlands?**

LW: Settlement areas will be defined by the NDP. Developers will want to develop why not use the NDP to protect most of the parish?

- **Question: If all the county is covered by NDPs we are no more protected than any other parish, it's a level playing field for developers, so how will it benefit us?**

LW: The NDP is about defining development not stopping it. Herefordshire Council is very supportive of NDPs. It is best to start sooner rather than later as developers start to look where no NDP exists.

- **Question: Under an NDP is it possible to define development for individual houses rather than housing 'estates'?**

LW: Smaller areas for development of a few houses can be specified rather.

- **Comment: There is no requirement for extra housing in Britain as the birth rate is lower and the population does not require more housing.**

- **Question: Will it be possible for granny annexes or extensions to existing houses to be included as development within the plan?**

LW: It would still be possible for some of this type of development to be included as a policy but subject to normal planning rules.

- **Question: Can transport be taken into account and other infrastructure limitations in NDPs as currently large estates are being built without additional infrastructure, public transport etc?**

LW: Traffic measures and transport can be taken into account in an NDP – suggest this is handled by a sub-group within the NDP SG.

- **Question: As the target for development has already been exceeded in Stoke Lacy how much more development should be included in an NDP?**

LW: Possible to say that although the target for housing has been met but to define further development in particular areas if needed in the long term. Herefordshire is playing a local part in the national planning system and the NDP allows the parish to look ahead and plan for future development.

- **Question: Does the NDP give us a say in what type of building and how it is built?**

LW: Possible For input into the type of housing: low cost/affordable. Building materials, style of building. Also, larger developers need to contribute Section 106 funds which will help with infrastructure projects. Traffic calming, signage, schools, etc.

- **Question: Could the NDP specify the requirement for facilities such as a shop?**

LW: Yes, this would be possible but it must be sustainable i.e. there would need to be someone to run it. Often these are run as community enterprises.

- **Question: Could it be said that if we had NDP earlier we could have exercised more control over the development that has recently taken place?**

LW: Yes, the parish may have had more influence on number, type etc. But the NDP only has weight once it has been made. It cannot affect developments that have already passed the planning stage.

3. Other Comments and Questions

- **Comment: It is important that new development includes genuinely affordable housing for young people. The current new development has insufficient provision.**
- **Comment: Some of the questions and comments made this evening could be seen as being unwelcoming towards member(s) of the public who have moved or are about to move into the Newlands Estate.**
- **Comment: None of the comments are meant to offend new parishioners it is the developers and the ‘system’ which has caused problems.**
- **Comment: As a newcomer to the village this person found some comments upsetting but the Newlands development had given him the opportunity to move from Birmingham into this rural area.**

- **Question to JI: When are the 30mph speed restriction signs being extended to the Bromyard side of the Newlands estate?**

Ji: The Section 106 funds from Sanctuary Housing (for the Newlands development) have only just been paid to the council, so the changes can now be implemented. But there is no specific timetable as yet.

- **Comment from Jonathan Lester: Although he is pleased that Stoke Lacy is undertaking the NDP, it is a very challenging process which involves a lot of work for the SG. He encouraged those attending and the wider community to support the SG in its work. Done well the NDP can be something very positive for the community for old neighbours and new.**
- **Question: Is the defining of the settlement boundary subject to the landowner's explicit consent?**
LW: The process should be one of discussion not dictatorship.
- **Question: At the beginning of the NDP process community engagement can be facilitated through a questionnaire or a more streamlined process. Could there be a show of hands as to preference between the two options?**

The meeting showed a majority in favour of a streamlined process.

- **Comment: The steering group has set up a specific website which is linked to the parish council website. The new site: stokelacy.co.uk is under development but will include all notes and details of meeting and have a forum element in which comments and discussions can take place.**
- **Comment: The details of the new website and details of progress of the NDP will be published in the Cider Press.**
- **Comment: As far as housing development is concerned the NDP will define the settlement boundaries around existing main settlement areas. Stoke Lacy will remain a largely rural area with small pockets of development.**
- **Comment by JL: The NDP process is to help make planning policy NOT planning decisions. It is not the community which will make the decisions. The NDP is making a part of the policy framework which a planning officer, the planning committee or after appeal a planning inspector will use to make their decision on a particular planning application.**

- **Question: What is meant by the NDP as a ‘legal document’?**

LW: It is a legal document which planners must consider when making a decision. There are many examples where NDPs have been used effectively to fight planning applications.

- **Question: How is the term ‘rural’ defined for NDP purposes?**

LW: There is no specific definition of rural in this context.

- **Comment by JL:** Planning decisions are not black and white. The key is that planning decisions are judgements based on the facts of the case in the context of the planning policies.

- **Question: How many houses need to be developed on a site to trigger Section 106 funding?**

JL: Anything over 12 properties in any one development.

4. **LW asked members of the public to identify any areas where further development should be avoided or what factors should be taken into consideration when deciding on development for the NDP – Schedule below taken from LW’s notes.**

Areas for protection:

- Protect vicinity of the Church
- Protect Netherwood
- Woodend Lane not to be considered due to access problems

Housing considerations:

- No more housing in Newlands Area
- No more ‘Town Houses’
- Suggest timber framed houses
- Suggest eco housing
- Affordable housing for young people
- Annexes, garden developments and bungalows to be supported by Parish Council even outside the NDP Settlement Boundary

General Neighbourhood considerations:

- Maintain character of the area
- Trees – re-wilding
- Bus service improvements
- Speed on main road is a problem – should we have humps and SIDS?
- More footpaths on side of road
- Protecting the night sky from light pollution

NDP process specific:

- No questionnaire (Only 1 vote)
- Dedicated website
- Ensure discussions are held with landowners

Others:

- Tourism
 - Considerations for an aging population
5. At the end of the meeting LW circulated to gather contact details of those interested in participation in the NDP. Contact details to be passed to the clerk for use in the distribution list.
 6. The next meeting of the NDP steering Group is Wednesday 12th February at 6pm at the village hall.

The formal part of the meeting closed at 7.45pm.

NDP Meetings				Parish Council Mtgs For info.
Date	Time	Location	Meeting details	
Wed 12 th Feb	18:00	Village Hall	NDP Steering Group Meeting	Wed 12 th Feb 19:30
Wed 4 th Mar	To be re- scheduled		NDP Steering Group Meeting	Wed 11 th Mar 19:30
Wed 1 st Apr	18:00	Plough	NDP Steering Group	Wed 8 th Apr 19:30

Further ahead NDP Steering Group dates: 6th May, 3rd June, 1st July, 5th August, 3rd September, 7th October, 4th November and 2nd December.