

Pixley and District Parish Council

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Notes from a public meeting held on Tuesday 17th May 2016 at The Nest, Munsley

Present: 42 local residents

Welcome from David Hewitt Chairman of Pixley & District Parish Council

Cllr Hewitt welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Presentation from Lynda Wilcox – Herefordshire Association of Local Councils

Mrs Wilcox thanked the councillors for inviting her to the meeting. She explained that a Neighbourhood Plan is the most important thing a parish can produce being a lawful document. Neighbourhood Planning came about after the Localism Act 2011, introduced by the government to try to take some of the conflict and confrontation out of the planning process. It gives communities the opportunity to shape the place where they live, preparing the planning policy for their area – unlike a Parish Plan which deals with all local issues, a Neighbourhood Plan only deals with land use issues so communities can decide where houses and businesses go. A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of Herefordshire Councils planning policy. Neighbourhood Plans are not compulsory and cannot be used to stop development. A Neighbourhood Plan can only be instigated by parish councils, although the whole community should be involved in putting it together. A plan can cover a whole parish, part of a parish or more than one parish, but only one plan is allowed for each parish. It must generally conform with Herefordshire Councils Core Strategy 2011-2031 policies. The Core Strategy was adopted in 2015.

What do you put in a Neighbourhood Plan? – settlement boundaries, sites allocated for affordable housing, suitable housing for the ageing population, sites for business, protected buildings and open spaces, design of buildings.

How do you do a Neighbourhood Plan? – decide if a Neighbourhood Plan is wanted and if it would be useful. Engage with residents, land owners, businesses, school, church and village hall. A survey questionnaire needs to be compiled to find out community issues. Hold a number of open meetings. The community must be involved from the start so that most vote favourably at the referendum. Define the area covered.

Herefordshire Council can help with the plan. Once an area is designated for the plan it becomes lawful for a steering group to be set up comprising of councilors and anyone in the community. The Neighbourhood Planning Team have a team of four and can provide a case officer to help and advise on legal requirements, parish information and technical advice. Get professional advice on putting the plan together and putting the document into “planning speak” and policies. Prepare the Plan and submit it to Herefordshire Council. It is then subject to an independent examination and if agreed there is a referendum of all electors in the Neighbourhood Plan area, if more than 50% of those voting are in favour, Herefordshire Council adopt the plan.

There are pros and cons when doing a joint plan with other parishes. You can share the workload and expertise but need to get it right or you could get one parish voting against another when it goes to the referendum. The government has offered financial assistance in the form of a grant which will be available in April to apply for. Herefordshire Council would pay for the external examination and the referendum. If a parish holds a Neighbourhood Plan it would receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy payments compared to only 15% to a parish without a Neighbourhood Plan.

Mrs Wilcox closed by saying that further information is available on the councils website under a number of guidance notes, with links to government news releases and an area to sign up to a forum to exchange questions.

The chairman thanked Mrs Wilcox for attending and after a short break to digest what they had heard asked residents to vote by a show of hands whether the parish council should proceed with producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. A vast majority wanted to proceed so this will be formalized at the next parish council meeting on Monday 23rd May.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm.

