

Relating to Item 4 of the Full Council Meeting of Aylburton Parish Council on 11th February 2020: “To discuss the option of a parish NDP and any other neighbourhood planning options with Kate Baugh of GRCC”

Kate Baugh, Rural Advisor, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council

Kate introduced herself and explained that GRCC work to support communities in Gloucestershire. She acknowledged the recent Housing Needs Survey work, in part carried out by her GRCC colleague Martin Hutchings.

In short, an Neighbourhood Development Plan is a community-led plan, made through consultation with the community, and using local knowledge.

There are three levels of planning – the national NPPF, then Local Planning Authority (FoDDC), and then NDPs can fill in a more local, detailed, specific level.

An NDP can help to address key issues for community, e.g. flooding and housing. It can be used to guide what sort of housing and where. It can also help to protect important green spaces. It can be surprising what comes out of community consultation.

Having an NDP doesn't mean any more or any less development than if you had no NDP, but it's important to remember that no development means that there is a risk of becoming a 'retirement village'.

Stages of an NDP (in short):

1. Set up a steering group
Needs to be a mix of councillors and community members, including stakeholders where possible. Without a decent number of committed volunteers, forming an NDP is all but impossible.
2. Apply to FoDDC to designate an NDP area.
3. Committee then drafts a plan through numerous community consultations, desktop research and local knowledge, and liaison with key partners such as FoDDC planning.
4. Plan is submitted to FoDDC, who have it examined and then hold a referendum to hopefully 'make' the plan, at which point it becomes a legal document.

The process takes 2 years as an absolute minimum, from start to finish, usually 3-4 years.

Locality offers funding for NDPs – £9,000 per plan. Smaller NDPs can do it within this amount, but the other cost is time – it takes lots. It can become a full-time job at times, if the committee is quite small.

Is it right for Aylburton parish? One thing to consider is are there any burning issues in the parish. Cllr Topping suggested that the A48 was a big factor, as it divides the community. There perhaps is no big solution, but the challenge could be managed. Cllr Harrison agreed. Kate suggested that while an NDP could not change the fact of the A48 it could acknowledge the issue. There was then a discussion on traffic in Chepstow.

Kate emphasised that it is possible to influence planning decisions through an NDP, but that this wasn't the only way to do so.

Kate then brought up the idea of a community consultation as a lighter, less intensive, option. This would most likely take the form of a drop-in with tea and cake, displays of Aylburton then and now. This has been done before in Aylburton and was very well attended – in fact full to capacity. Funding could be sought from Lottery Awards for All, to cover publicity, refreshments, hall hire, as well as data analysis, which could be done by GRCC. Then it would be important to identify what the parish council could/couldn't do.

END OF ITEM.