

May Update

In last month's Neighbourhood Plan Update we asked what do the following nearby villages have in common?

Aston Clinton, Buckland, Cheddington, Edlesborough, Great Horwood, Haddenham, Ivinghoe, Long Crendon, Marsh Gibbon, Pitstone, Quainton, Steeple Claydon, Slapton, Waddesdon, Wendover, Weston Turville, Wing, Wingrave, Winslow and Woringhall.

No surprises at the answer of course. They have all been through the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan, have been through a local referendum and have voted YES to adopting the final proposal. Indeed, more Buckinghamshire villages will be voting on their proposed NPs this month including Ickford.

At the start of this process the NP group had a really useful presentation from the Waddesdon group on their experiences of putting together a NP and they wholeheartedly encouraged Whitchurch to do the same. Yes, it would take time and hard work, proposals will never be greeted with universal delight, but absolutely it had been worthwhile.

Over the past month we've been speaking to other villages about their experiences. Some of the things that were said to us were:

The consultants were incredibly helpful, they helped us to see that some limited housing development that fitted our needs as a village could be a positive thing

All the work that went into creating the proposal has been a useful resource for understanding what it is about our village that matters to residents

Without a NP in place we would still be fighting off one application for development after another

The consultants we are working with also came in for high praise, having worked with one village after the adoption of their NP when developers were still trying their luck – the application in question was rejected!

We hope you can see from this that Whitchurch is not only in good company but without a plan of our own, when so many villages all around us do, we become even more vulnerable to developers.

In April we held our first Zoom meeting, updating residents on the process and answering their questions. The slides are available on the village website <https://www.whitchurch.org/>, where a dedicated section to the NP is in place, please do have a look. The feedback we had was very positive – thank you to all who joined, to those who offered to get involved and to everyone who committed to helping us to get the word out about what is going on in our village.

As we come out of lockdown slowly and safely, we hope to be able to announce dates for face-to-face meetings over the summer.

In the meantime, as ever, any queries please let us know at info.whitchurchplan@gmail.com