

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING NEWS

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NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IS IT WORTH IT?

Many of our Spring (?) evenings have been filled providing training on neighbourhood planning.

And often on leaving these sessions we have picked up the feeling that for many neighbourhoods and parishes the key question is "is neighbourhood planning going to be worth all the effort?"

After going through the process. Long, bureaucratic, and with some odd twists and turns. After investing all that time and possibly money (the other key question, of course, is where is this going to come from?). And after being told we are "in charge", only to find this has checks and balances, one of which is you cannot "have less" - serious questions are being asked about the value of neighbourhood planning.

And valid questions they are too. Is it better to stick with the devil you know - the local planning authority and their plans? Or is it better to grasp the nettle and become masters of your own destiny, get designated, and



Neighbourhood Planning: Shaping the provision of renewable energy?

prepare a plan for your neighbourhood?

Our opinion is it has to be the latter. If you wait in the wings you lose any control you have. You also run the risk of being seen as less interested than the places that are neighbourhood planning. Will we have cases of local planning au-

thorities saying "let's put it over there, they don't seem to care"?

The other point that residents and parish councillors are making with great force is the great mismatch in resources. With developers employing vast legal and professional teams to win appeals.

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FIRST AREAS SEEK DESIGNATION

In what would appear to be a first the Norland Conservation Society in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) has applied to become the first neighbourhood forum under the Localism Act.

And hot on their heels are Faringdon in the Vale of White Horse vying to become the first parished area to be officially designated a neighbourhood planning area.

The Norland Conservation Society is also

among wave 5 of the Government's frontrunners, but unless you know better, even among this select band, this is the first fully fledged application we have come across under the new system.

FUNDING FOR HIGH STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is soon to make available £1 million to support the creation of high street neighbourhood plans.

This announcement is part of the Government's 'Portas-plus' response to the Mary Portas' High Street Review. Portas-plus goes above and beyond the recommendations of the Portas Review and includes a raft of new measures to rejuvenate the country's rundown high streets.

The financial support available from DCLG for neighbourhood planning will help support development of neighbourhood

high street plans

Announcing the funding Planning Minister Greg Clark said:

“For too long local people have been shut out of the planning process with no real voice to affect decisions about the places where they live.

“High streets are at the heart of their communities and new neighbourhood plans hand power back to communities so they can help shape the future development of this crucial part of their local economy.

“This £1 million fund will

support local people, businesses and councils coming together to provide a really positive contribution to the future vitality and viability of our high streets.”

Further information on how communities and local authorities developing high street neighbourhood plans under the Localism Act can access the £1million will be published by DCLG shortly. We will publish a news update as soon as we hear anything.

If you are concerned about your high street and are wondering if neighbourhood planning is the answer call 01282 872570.

“It is OK firing everyone up. But real support needs putting in place – financial and technical. “

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IS IT WORTH IT? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1).

But, again, the neighbourhood planning process gives communities, if they do it well, and get the all important facilitation from their local planning authority, the position of authority, the power of being in charge. The neighbourhood plan will be part of the development plan. Key local people will know it like the back of their hand and will be able to be

powerful advocates for its cause. They may also have the huge backing of a local referendum.

One final thought on the issue of being challenged by developer, or whoever.

The key to defending any challenge is going to be making sure the neighbourhood plan, as with all plans, is up to date. Regular review.

This is one Government need to give some thought to.

It is OK firing everyone up to neighbourhood plan. But real support needs putting in place – financial and technical. In the end, if this is to be a success, we have to make sure neighbourhood plans do what they are intended to do. **Put local people in charge.**

MUCH WENLOCK SURVEYS EVERYONE OVER 14

Much Wenlock Town Council like many of the Government's neighbourhood planning front runners is carrying out a survey of residents and what they want to see in the town's neighbourhood plan.

Although this survey may just be a little bit different. Why?

Because everyone over the age of 14 in the town is being encouraged to have their say.

Is this a first?

We have been involved in many neighbourhood engagement and consultation exercises that have had separate events and sessions for young people, but cannot quite remember when the

young have been encouraged to have their say along with the grown-ups. And to be honest why not? At the end of the day most of the plans we will be producing will have huge impacts on tomorrow's 20 and 30 year olds. **Today's 14 year olds!**



Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan

MILTON KEYNES CONSULTATION USES WIKIS

Much Wenlock may be seeking to consult everyone over 14 but in Central Milton Keynes they have turned to Wikis.

Using the concept that has developed the influential online encyclopedia Wikipedia Central Milton Keynes are trailblazing with their approach to writing and commenting on the development of the CMK Alliance Plan 2012.

The CMK Alliance brings together committed residents and businesses. The plan is seeking to



map out a future for the city centre.

Once you have signed up to the Wiki on the CMK Alliance web site you are free to add, edit or delete the various chapters of the neighbourhood plan.

In this way, there is huge scope and potential for any one who is interested to get involved in not just commenting on, but actually preparing and

writing the document.

Like all consultations there is a cut-off point and by the end of May this exciting way of getting people involved will close. The really interesting (frightening?) bit comes when the CMK Alliance have to decide which bits to keep and which to leave on the cutting room floor. But that is one of the responsibilities that comes with the power to neighbourhood plan. Standing up and being counted and standing up for the decisions you have made.

ANOTHER CHANCE TO BE A PORTAS' PILOT

Following the massive response to the first round of Portas' Pilots the Government have announced funding for a further 12.

The first round received 371 bids for just 12 pilot schemes. When announced in May 2012 the winners of the first round will

receive £100,000 to improve their high street. And don't forget use you can use the new neighbourhood planning powers to support the development of your high street or town centre.

You can read more about this initiative on the DCLG web site.

Are you concerned about the future of your high street? Do you need help putting together a credible plan? Or a bid for Pilot status?

Call 01282 872570 to discuss your needs or email:

michaelwellock@kirkwells.co.uk

"the winners of the first round will receive £100,000 to improve their high street"

ELECTORAL COMMISSION: REFERENDUM QUESTIONS TOO COMPLEX

The Electoral Commission has warned the Government that the proposed questions for neighbourhood planning referendums are too complex.

It is proposed that before neighbourhood plans can become part of the statutory development plan they must

be subject to a local referendum.

In their report *Referendum on Neighbourhood Planning* the Electoral Commission say the proposed questions are "too long, used technical language and were difficult for voters to understand".

The also noted that in focus groups many felt the questions were "biased towards a 'yes' vote".

The Electoral Commission has asked for the questions to be re-drafted and has put forward it's own recommendations for new questions.

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*Planning is
about
making
things
happen*

Kirkwells believe town planning is about making things happen. Whether that be redeveloping a difficult brownfield site, or protecting beautiful countryside. We only do well planned, high quality sustainable development. Development that creates great places.

Planning can often feel complex and bureaucratic. So we use our knowledge and expertise to take the strain - taking the load off you, making things clearer, and steering your neighbourhood plan through the planning system so you achieve your goal. If you need help from expert planners to make something happen call 01282 872570.

To help you further our web site provides regular, free, easy to understand updates on all the big issues - just keep an eye on our news, and Kirkwells' comment pages. When you do have an issue you need to talk about - get in touch. We provide a free, initial, consultation service - just call 01282 872570, or simply send your query to michaelwellock@kirkwells.co.uk. We are always happy to help and for all our clients provide the benefit of on-going advice and support.

NEED TO GET ON TOP OF ALL THIS?

Thinking of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan?

Not sure where to start?

Why not get help from our award winning team.

Sign up today for our special offer of low cost Neighbourhood Planning training.

Specially designed for parish and town councils - our seminars deal with all aspects of neighbourhood planning: including the neighbourhood planning process, how to work with



Not sure which way to go?
Try our training

your local council, how to engage land owners and developers, and consult the rest of your community.

Our seminars also have the added benefit that one of our award winning team will come to you - we discuss the

issues you want to discuss in your town or parish at a time and place of your choosing.

To make sure you don't miss out book now. Our Neighbourhood Planning Seminars start from just £99.00 (plus VAT).

We will be happy to discuss your needs and arrange a seminar with you and your fellow Councillors.

Just telephone Michael Wellock on 01282 872570 or email:

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