

Eckington Parish Council
Minutes of the Public Meeting
Held on 12/09/14

Approximately eighty residents attended the meeting.

Cllr Glaze welcomed everyone to the Meeting. He stressed that this was a public meeting, **not** a Parish Council meeting, therefore giving the opportunity for those present to contribute throughout the meeting.

Sally Tagg of Foxley Tagg was also welcomed to the meeting and invited to give an overview of what would be involved, were Eckington to decide to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish.

The following was presented to the meeting:

- The Neighbourhood Plan enables the parish to have a direct say in the future of the village, protecting specific aspects of it (buildings, social, employment, heritage etc);
- It **cannot**, however, be used to restrict development, it must contribute towards sustainable development;
- It could be used to allocate housing, employment, encourage leisure or education facilities and protect specific areas;
- It can be used to set design policies, created by the Parish for their own specific needs;
- Having no neighbourhood Plan, leaves the Parish vulnerable to unwanted overdevelopment within the community. Having a Neighbourhood Plan ensures that only identified sites can be used for development and will protect against opportunistic development.

The following must be undertaken in order to produce a plan:

- Gather the evidence;
- Prepare the plan - this requires a dedicated core group of residents (including some Parish Councillors), working with Foxley Tagg to produce a draft plan which includes the vision and objectives of the community;
- The Plan then needs to be independently validated;
- A community referendum is then required;
- The Plan must be adopted.

Throughout each stage in the above process, it is vital that community consultation has taken place.

During a question and answer session, Sally Tagg made the following points:

- It can take up to two years to produce a plan, however it would be possible to achieve within 12 months;
- The Plan has a lifespan of 20 years;
- The Parish Plan and Village Design Statement (produced in 2004) only have limited weight, do not have the same benefits and are not recognised by the Planning Authority. They could, however, be utilised when preparing and gathering evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The Plan cannot be used to restrict development. If development sites have been identified by the Core Strategy, this cannot be ignored. However once a

plan has been adopted, its policies (which may include pace and rate of growth) must be taken into consideration by prospective developers;

- The cost of producing the Plan would be in the region of £7,000 (funding grants are available);
- The Parish Council and the community must drive the plan forward and make the decisions. Foxley Tagg would provide the necessary guidance at each stage of the process;

A brief discussion took place regarding Wychavon District Council's five year housing land supply and it was agreed that as this has not yet been adopted, there may be an opportunity for Eckington to produce a Neighbourhood Plan before the adoption date.

The meeting agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan would provide some protection for the community it serves. It was felt that it would give the opportunity for the community to be visionary, to help shape the village and provide a blueprint for now and for future generations.

Following a show of hands, the meeting agreed that they would be unanimously in favour of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Eckington.

It was requested that residents make themselves known to the Parish Council if they wish to become involved in any way with the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cala Homes – Planning Application N. W/14/01171/PN

Cllr Glaze then asked for comments/views on the proposed Cala Homes Development (following a second public consultation event). Some of the changes include; the provision of 6 affordable properties, 6 visitor car parking spaces and a wider entrance to the site. The Meeting was informed that the revised plans are now available for viewing/comment on the WDC website.

New Road – Potential Development

Following the recent public consultation, views were sought. Only four people present were in favour of the development, with approximately half agreeing that there may be a middle ground to be gained.

Mr Redfern (Stop 100 Group) informed the meeting that he would be happy to continue to circulate copies of plans and information, relating to the two potential developments (if this was proving to be helpful), to all interested residents.

The Parish Council were then asked to consider providing information on the WCC website (under the Parish Council section), as it was felt that information/copies of recent minutes etc were not easily accessible to the public.

Although all minutes are posted on the Eckington Village Website and displayed on the Parish notice board, it was agreed the matter would be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Glaze then thanked all those present for attending.

Meeting closed – 9.00pm