

## Your Neighbourhood Plan 14th May 2024

Your opportunity as residents, businesses and farmers to influence development in the Designated Area of the Parishes of Ardington and Lockinge

I am sure that you are all aware that a village plan for Ardington and Lockinge was originally prepared in the 1990's. Neighbourhood Plans, which we are talking about tonight, are a more recent statutory way for communities to have a say in the future development of the place where they live and work. It gives the community the power to produce a plan with real legal weight which can influence development in a way acceptable to the community. Importantly it helps:

- Indicate where the local community might want homes, shops and offices to be built
- Gives the community the opportunity to say what the new buildings should look like
- Gives the community the power to advise the Local Planning Authority (Vale and South) on which planning applications the community would be happy to see going ahead.
- Strengthens the position of the Parish Council when responding to Planning Applications.

Our two Parishes are unique. They lie within an area of outstanding national beauty, now known as part of the National Landscape, containing prime agricultural land, a conservation area, chalk streams and historic sites. The Downland villages and hamlets are 'estate villages' mostly built towards the end of the 19th century, a connection to England's rural past. Our population may be modest ~500, but we are an enterprise hub with many businesses both small and large offering rural employment, operating in harmony with the local residents and the farming community.

A Neighbourhood Plan must go through multiple independent reviews eventually being put to a referendum of the local community. To come into force it must be supported by more than 50% of those voting. Only then does it have legal standing after which there is a statutory requirement for its views to be considered by the Planning Authority when assessing planning and development within the designated area.

It must meet certain conditions:

- Ensure plans contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- It should have regard to national policy and legislative requirements
- It should not promote less development than proposed in the local plan
- It can specify policies on how new development should be designed, orientated and located.

- It should be sensitive to the local environment
- It is broader than simply housing development and includes policies such as access to the countryside, availability of local amenities and climate change action.

### Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Parish Council have formed a steering group to engage with the residents and businesses within the two Parishes to get their perspective on what would be a reasonable approach to development in the future. It provides progress reports to the Parish Council on a two monthly cycle. In addition it puts out announcements via its web page on the Parish Council web site, the Trumpeter, local notice boards, and if appropriate by hand. The membership and Terms of Reference for the steering group are also available on the Parish Council, Neighbourhood Plan web page.

This short presentation at Parish Council AGM is an important step in presenting the sequence of steps we need to go through and our progress to date.

### Evidence and community engagement

While the Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared by the Steering Group, this must be supported by evidence drawn from the local community. It is critical that all reasonable steps are taken to capture the views of the local community and that this can be demonstrated to the independent reviewers. We circulate information via the Parish Council web site/village notice boards, posters at the village shop, notices in the Trumpeter and village WhatsApp group and when appropriate at the Boars Head, and our two churches.

### Staged Response and review

Our first step in this process was a village flier allowing the community to feed back their areas of concern regarding future development, local requirements and amenities.

A formal questionnaire has now been circulated, with questions set to ensure compliance with the Vale and South Local Plan (2041) draft policies, in part guided by the responses to the earlier flyer. This will set the framework of the Neighbourhood Plan. Once we have analysed the results we need members of the community to join us in focus groups to delve deeper into issues that have been raised. Only when we have sufficient information will we be able to put our Neighbourhood Plan together.

Most residents in the village as well as the businesses will have received a copy of our flyer on the questionnaire, but if not there are a few hard copies for those who want them. For those who are happy to respond digitally the url to the questionnaire is [tinyurl.com/Ardington-Lockinge-Plan](https://tinyurl.com/Ardington-Lockinge-Plan). **Please note that all responses are anonymous.**

We will be holding presentations to keep you informed as we go through the process. For those who wish to participate in the focus groups please contact myself or any member of the steering group, preferably before the 9th June which is our present cut off date for responding to the the questionnaire.

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Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:

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The designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan:

