

Watlington Neighbourhood Plan

July 2014 Newsletter



Our Community - Our Plan

Watlington Neighbourhood Plan Core
Committee

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Progress

Over the last few weeks progress has been made in several areas. We now have a part-time support assistant, Rachel Gill to help organise us and handle the increasing volume of communications and documents. Rachel will be known to many in Watlington having lived on the High Street for many years and her children attending Watlington Primary School.

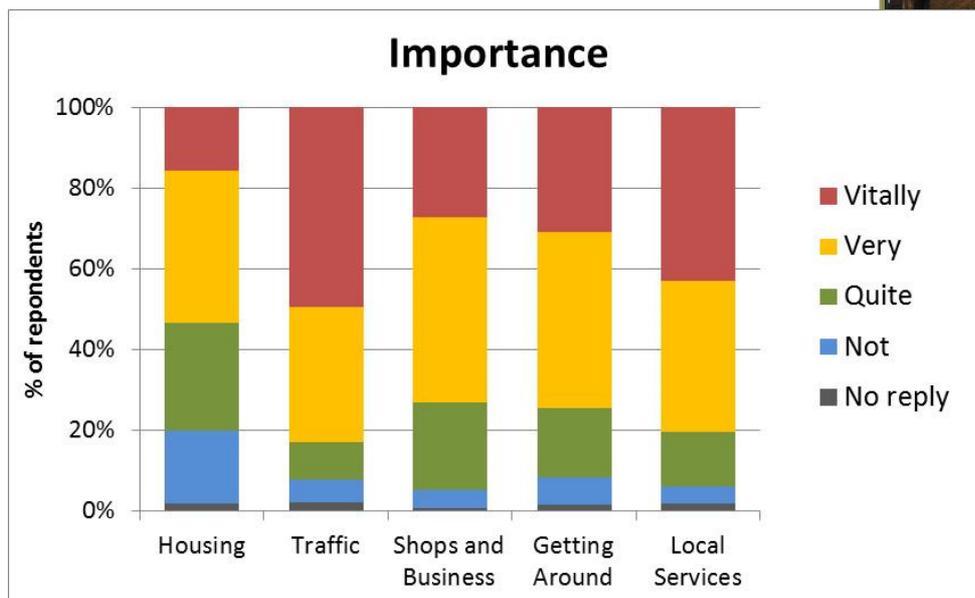
Rachel is the Parish Office Tuesday and Thursday mornings, contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

In order to produce an evidence-based (ie using real data) plan, we do of course have to, as far as we can in the time available, quantify the current situation. We are looking as the priority, not surprisingly, at traffic volumes. The intention is to do a survey after the schools return, using local people to do the count and then engaging independent experts to do the analysis and subsequent report.

You will probably know that Watlington has an allocation of an additional 79 houses to meet the district housing requirements. A recent revision of the timeline (it was 2027 and is now 2031) and the county housing market assessment means this number is very likely to increase. We have been doing work assessing the 12 sites already identified as potential development locations around the town; we have added some others to the list of possibles and have considered other types of development, aside from housing, ie retail and light industrial. It is important to note that options will be evaluated during a second consultation which we are looking to run in the town in October and will be inviting views on options. Additionally it may well be the case that residents come forward with other possibilities, at this stage, the more the better!

By way of reminder the result of the recent Consultation 1 are available on the website - see <http://www.watlingtonnp.org.uk/>.

The issues summary from Consultation 1 is shown again below



Benefits of developing the Plan

These can be summarized as:

1. Increasing community interest in the development of the Town
2. Taking control over our destiny and not leaving it largely in the hands of South Oxfordshire and Oxford County Councils
3. Financial, see below

With most new developments financial contributions are required from the developer to help secure the services needed. Traditionally this has been collected through legal agreements known as Section 106 payments. This process, however, is changing; SODC are investigating the feasibility of adopting a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which has greater potential to be shared directly with the community than was previously the case with Section 106.

Thus aside from having a duty to produce our own development plan there can be significant financial benefit in creating a Neighbourhood Plan (NP): The CIL is imposed on developers building within our parish, the value being around £50-£75/sq metre of built space (ie a 2-storey house of 100 sq metre per floor would count as 200 sq metres). The CIL can then be used to pay for supporting infrastructure and enhancement of public services.

If a Neighbourhood Plan is in existence 25% of the CIL goes direct to the parish, if there is no NP the maximum the parish can receive is 10%.



Funding the Plan

Producing our Neighbourhood Plan will cost some money. Financial help is available from various sources: the Parish Council reserves, South Oxfordshire District Council and a public body called Locality.

To date a grant of £10,000 has been received from South Oxfordshire DC and we have applied for a £7,000 grant from Locality.

Next Steps

Over the next couple of months we will: Pursue more engagement with the community; Prepare for Consultation 2; Gather the "baseline data"; Refine development options, with input from the community.

We will welcome help from anybody who has some time and energy to spare on whatever task they wish to take on, but help from anyone with specialist knowledge will be a bonus.

If you want to be involved please contact us.

Nick Hancock , Chairman NPCC

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