



Taking control of new development

**PLEASE READ THIS —
IT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU**

A Neighbourhood Plan for Nether Stowey

**Nether Stowey Parish
Council have decided to
undertake a
Neighbourhood Plan for
the Parish.**

This will ensure that local people have control over new development that will happen in the parish over the coming years, whether it is new houses, new buildings for local businesses or changes to the local road network.

We need your help!

The Neighbourhood Plan will reflect the views of the community. So we need to know what you think about your parish and how you want to see it develop.

We also need people to help with producing the plan. There are many tasks to be done, from research and writing documents, to leaflet drops and welcoming people at consultation events.

**Read on for more information, and check our website
at www.netherstowey-pc.gov.uk/np**

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan sets out planning policy for the area which it covers.

When completed it becomes a formal part of the planning system and is used by the Local Planning Authority (Sedgemoor DC) to help determine planning applications in the area.

Anything that can be affected by the planning system can be a topic for a neighbourhood plan.

It can, for example:

- give protection to existing community facilities;
- say where new houses should go and what they should look like;
- say what infrastructure and facilities should be paid for by new development, such as footpaths, play areas, community and health facilities, improvements to roads and junctions etc;
- safeguard community green spaces;
- protect locally important landscapes and heritage;
- support local businesses and encourage the tourism economy.

Neighbourhood plans must conform with national and district policy. They can't say no to all development, or overturn existing planning rules. They must be based on sound evidence and they must follow a prescribed process before becoming part of district policy, including:

- thorough consultation with local residents;
- approval by the Local Planning Authority (Sedgemoor District Council);
- examination by an independent inspector;
- gaining a majority of votes cast in a local referendum.

Any town, village or neighbourhood can choose to make a neighbourhood plan. It is the responsibility of the Town or Parish Council to oversee production of the plan, but we want everyone in the community to get involved.

Space to Grow

We are constantly reminded by politicians and the media that there is a huge shortage of housing across the country. House prices continue to rise, and young people find it increasingly difficult to get on the housing ladder.

Many of our older people want or need to change their property but do not want to leave the village and their social network – perhaps moving to a more convenient-sized property, a more convenient location or one that is easier to maintain or has no stairs or can be adapted so that they can continue to live independently or with some support.

Nether Stowey is no exception to this general picture, and over the coming years, we will need to make space for housing that caters to these needs so that our young and older people can stay in the village. Starter homes, retirement properties, sheltered accommodation - for sale on the open market, shared ownership or affordable homes – there are many permutations and we need you to tell us what we should try to plan for.

It will also be important to allow our businesses to expand and diversify to provide local employment, and to encourage the tourism which adds a vital boost to our local economy. All this helps to make

sure that we keep the local facilities that we value such as the school, shops and doctors surgery.

Keeping Control

District planning policy identifies Nether Stowey as an important rural centre where growth to meet the needs of the local community should be encouraged. We recognize that some new development over the coming years is necessary to ensure that the village doesn't stagnate. However, we want to ensure that the local community has as much control over this development as possible, rather than leaving it all to the planners at Sedgemoor District Council. The Parish Council has therefore agreed to undertake a neighbourhood plan for the parish.

What needs to be done and how?

We need to:

- form a steering group
- gather facts and figures and opinions
- understand what the key issues are and consult on a suitable policy approach
- draft the Neighbourhood Plan
- undertake formal consultation
- submit the plan to SDC who will organise the examination and referendum

Your Neighbourhood Plan needs you!

A Neighbourhood Plan should be written by the community for the community. It's a big job—we think it will take two years to complete. While the Parish Council has initiated the process and is ultimately responsible for it, day-to-day management of the process will be done by a steering group to include at least two Parish Councillors, plus other members of the community. We are looking for volunteers to join the steering group: many different skills will be required and people of all ages and backgrounds. Please contact us if you can make a commitment to at least one meeting a month plus a few hours in between.

Even if you can't commit to this but are interested in helping out from time to time, or on a particular aspect of the Plan we'd still love to hear from you.

If you don't think you have time to help with production of the plan, your input will still be important at the various stages of consultation. Please look out for the first full consultation early in 2016, and make sure you have your say. **It's your Nether Stowey—it's your Plan!**



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