



NETHER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP

Dear Parishioner

I thought it was time to bring you up to date on the progress being made and a little insight into the work involved.

A working group was formed and the various tasks required were shared out by the volunteers.

One of the first tasks was to formulate a survey form, which, whilst sounding simple, is not as easy as one would think. Nevertheless, time consuming as it was, the job was completed and as you are aware, was circulated to every household in the village, asking for a 'tick box' response but leaving room for brief comments.

The response to the survey, whilst not exactly what we had hoped, was reasonable by measures of other villages which have taken on the task of Neighbourhood Planning.

Our task now is the arduous job of collating the information and presenting it in an evidence based format to add to the other information required to enable submission to Sedgemoor (SDC).

Going cross-eyed and becoming more adept at 'hieroglyphics' (some people should have been doctors) we have just about completed the task of transferring the information to spreadsheets for the computer experts to use the data.

As I have been reading through the sheets, I would like to make a few observations:

Based on the partial collation of the questionnaires we have so far noticed the following themes emerging: the safety of the A39 ie. the need for a crossing at Cricketer/Church junction, and a variety of suggestions for traffic calming measures in the village. Many of you have mentioned the building of a bigger school, the need for an elderly persons' residential home.

These are wonderful ideas and we could make a terrific 'wish list'. If only it were in the Parish Council's power to provide them life would be great. Unfortunately we don't have either the legal power, or the financial means, to move the school or build and run a retirement home, though we can, of course, continue to lobby the appropriate authority (Somerset County Council) and include our support for them in our Neighbourhood Plan policies.



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I would say that unless you make your views and wishes known – eg through the questionnaire and later consultations we will not have the formal evidence we need to push the authorities to make these things happen. This is the reason that everyone should be interested in this Plan, and if you have not already completed a questionnaire, it is not too late to do so. Forms are available from the Parish Office.

I would also like to make clear that the sites for building are not proposals but examples of areas that may become available or where interest in developing has already been expressed. I would remind you, that the Parish Council cannot instruct property owners what to do with their property, we can only indicate what we would encourage and only decide to support/object within planning legislation.

More shops, food outlets, I hear. Many of the existing shops are on the limits of existence and badly need more support. Restaurants, tea shops have come – and then gone through lack of support. A measured amount of growth is the only way the existing and any new service businesses are going to be, dare I say it? SUSTAINABLE!

It is good to know what people want and this will allow the Parish Council to set priorities. I would caution however that everyone's thoughts should be realistic. All these things have to be paid for, and how much money is really available to the Parish Council and to the District and County Councils who are responsible for providing these services in difficult financial times .

We could still do with a bit more help. If you feel that you can be of assistance and have some spare time, please give Mel a bell !!! on 733779. Thank you.

Malcolm Hogg
Chairman