

SOMERFORD KEYNES NDP NEWS

Issue 8

AT LAST!

Children have been born, grown up, gone to school and left home while we've been working on the Neighbourhood Development Plan - - - or it feels like that, anyway. However, the day has dawned, at last, when the Plan has been submitted to Cotswold District Council, and we can all breathe a sigh of relief - - - can't we?

Well, not quite. We have done our bit by developing and writing the Plan. We have made every effort to ensure that everyone in the community knows about the Plan, its purposes and the Policies it contains, and has had ample opportunity to contribute to its development. We have done everything we can to ensure that it complies with all the requirements of the Local Plan, national planning strategies and European law and directives. (You begin to appreciate why it's taken a while!) Responsibility for making the Plan now passes to CDC as the Local Planning Authority (LPA). It is for them to steer it through the quite complicated remainder of the process. This begins with a senior councillor checking our document is in order before proposing to the Full Council the commencement of the next phase. That has all been completed and so we can move on.

CONSULTATION

This is the next public consultation on the Plan. Yes, you're right, we've had two of those already, but the law requires that there should be another one, this time run by CDC. The consultation runs from Wednesday 4 December to 24 January 2020. The normal six-week timescale has been extended to take account of the holiday period. This is publicised in a recently issued CDC press release. The Plan and its supporting documents have been posted online, both on the CDC website;

(<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/residents/communities/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-force-or-development/somerford-keynes-neighbourhood-plan/>) and on our own village website

(somerfordkeynes.org.uk). Once again, anyone who wishes to do so may submit comments for consideration at the next stage. Comments may draw attention to some specific aspect(s) of the Plan or they may be general comments of support or criticism.

EXAMINATION

Another duty of CDC is to appoint an Examiner. This is a totally independent professional who has no previous involvement with the Plan or the Parish. However, the Parish Council must agree to the person nominated and, in effect, may veto that appointment if not completely happy. The person recommended by CDC and approved by our Parish Council is Andrew Ashcroft. He has been the Examiner for a number of Plans in the Cotswolds, so is familiar with the area. The Examiner considers the Plan, its supporting documents and any submissions made in the consultation. He must decide if he has sufficient information, if we have to respond to any consultation comments and the timetable for the rest of the process. It is expected that he will make an unannounced and unaccompanied visit to the Parish, as part of his investigation.

EXAMINER'S REPORT

The Examiner will then publish his Report, on the basis of which he will make one of three recommendations. He will state that the Plan can go forward to a Referendum either unchanged or with modifications. He can also decide that the Plan should not go forward to Referendum. However, let's assume the best and we move on to the final - yes, final - stage.

THE REFERENDUM

The Plan is put to a vote of all the residents in the Parish on the Electoral Roll - the same one used for all local and national elections. This is a secret ballot, probably sometime in the spring of 2020, and, provided that a simple majority supports it - half of the votes cast plus one vote - then the Plan goes to a full CDC council meeting, where it is "made". This means that it becomes a part of the Local Plan and from then on it becomes part of any planning decisions affecting the parish.

GOT THAT?

This may not be the most exciting read ever to come into your life, but, hopefully, it helps to explain what's going on now. It IS a lengthy and complicated process, but then planning decisions may have far-reaching consequences for the community. So, it's important to get things as right as they can be.

THANK YOU

The Somerford Keynes Development Plan is the means by which you, the community of the Parish, have the opportunity to influence future planning decisions. Many of you have contributed in different ways to the emergence of the Plan and the Policies at its heart. Thank you for your efforts, without which the Plan would not have reached this stage. There may be further to go, but we have done our part and we look forward to a successful conclusion.

The NDP Team