

Allensmore Neighbourhood Development Plan

Report for Parish Council 27th July 2017

Steering Group

Since the last Parish Council meeting we have had two meetings of the Steering Group, on 19th June and 17th July. We were joined at the last meeting by two local residents, John and Dorothy Harris who both were positive and supportive of what we are trying to achieve. We have not had any change in personnel.

Designation

Allensmore NDP Designated Area was approved by Hereford Council on 26th May 2017. There is a Service Level Agreement with Hereford Council that needs to be checked and signed as appropriate by the Parish Council. **Action PC.**

Consultants

The Steering Group discussed the shortlist of consultants – Tony Cramp was excluded from the decision because of his Declaration of Interest. We had overwhelming advice to appoint a completely independent consultant, and chose Kirkwells. Despite being based outside the county, they have extensive knowledge of NDPs in Herefordshire, and are currently working in Eaton Bishop, Madley and Kilpeck. Our contact is Louise Kirkup, who attended our most recent meeting on 17th July and had an informal tour of the designated area beforehand.

The Parish Council are asked to formally appoint Kirkwells as our NDP consultants. **Action PC.**

Launch Event

The launch event for the NDP process will take place on Saturday 29th July at the village hall. A leaflet about the launch event was put together and agreed by the Steering Group. 250 copies have been printed at a cost of £32.99 (inc VAT) and members of the Steering Group have hand-delivered a copy to every premises in our designated area. The event has also been promoted:

- On the village notice boards
- By roadside notices around the village (thanks to Tim Hancox)
- By Steve Mumford's email distribution list (26th July)
- By a notice in the County Times section of the Hereford Times (27th July)

The event will be an informal drop-in event where:

- we will have displays about the NDP
- members of the Steering Group will be available to chat
- tea/coffee/refreshments will be available
- a small display of Allensmore in the past will be included and additional information will be sought
- comments about living in Allensmore now as well as its future development will be solicited.
- new volunteers will be welcomed

Plan

Following “data gathering” at the launch event, Louise Kirkup will be attending the next Steering Group meeting on 21st August where we will start developing our “Options and Issues” document. This will be published for consultation with local residents when it is agreed by the Steering Group and Parish Council. We expect this document will evolve over time into our NDP as we respond to feedback from residents. No timescales have been agreed yet; we still believe the whole process will take 1½ to 2 years to complete.

Finance

An “Expression of Interest” has been submitted for the grants (24th July), and work has begun on the main application. Some of the questions on the application form are not straightforward, and we are referring back to Kirkwells to help complete the application (a service offered by them free of charge!).

Whilst we expect the grants to cover all Kirkwells’ fees, the Steering Group will endeavour to minimise costs wherever possible by covering some of the work ourselves. We are currently exploring other sources of income such as funding from Awards for All to help with community engagement. Nevertheless, there may be some other minor costs like those incurred for the Launch Event. Any request to cover such costs will be put before the Parish Council for approval in advance of expenditure.

The Parish Council are asked to approve this approach. **Action PC.**

Declarations of Interest

Advice has been sought from our Hereford Council Liaison Officer and Kirkwells about the scope of the declarations of interest statement in the Steering Group’s Terms of Reference. For the purpose of the NDP, the strong recommendation is that declarations of interest should include ownership or renting of any land in the designated area, plus registrations of any businesses or other interests. This should cover the Steering Group member, his/her spouse/partner and any close family members.

The Steering Group defers to the Parish Council for a decision of how to achieve this, whether it is by completing the same form as Parish Councillors use to declare interests to the Council, or otherwise. If the Parish Council forms are used, members who are both Parish Councillors and Steering Group members are already covered although they may need to review existing declarations to check full compliance with advice regarding the NDP. **Action PC.**

Nick Chapman
27th July 2017