

## Response to Allensmore Neighbourhood Development Plan

<name provided>

Please could we have a section in the NDP relating to the development of community cohesion. I appreciate the opportunity to agree with extending the use of the church and safeguarding the village hall, but I think we need to go further in terms of developing community resources and community cohesion.

The scattered nature of housing in Allensmore and the division of Allensmore by the A465 are a barrier to community cohesion. If we want to create a sense of community I think we need to be more proactive. I would like to see plans for initiatives that help to bring the community together that include the development of existing and new community buildings and resources.

I'm attracted to the idea of having a village common or even several mini commons - pieces of land that belong to the community. The big question would be how we acquire the land. Ideally villagers who own land might be persuaded to bequeath / gift/ peppercorn lease some land to the community. Alternatively the Parish Council could put in a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund or similar fund to purchase land from village landowners for community purposes. (There would be issues of land registration and terms of use which would need to be addressed when the type of land use was determined). I envisage the Parish Council being the guardian of the community owned land.

What we did with our community owned land would be up to the community, but examples of what might work include:

- a village green (<named person's> idea) / community garden with seats
- a community managed plantation for local firewood supply / local biomass plant
- a bonfire site
- a wildflower meadow
- a site for a band stand / maypole / other piece of community furniture
- a plantation of nut trees / other easily managed crop for local harvest

It would be useful to know the extent of existing pockets of common land in Allensmore, where they are and what their terms of use are. I'm assuming the verges of the A 465 used every year by travellers are common land? Are there other areas?

It would also be useful to understand the C of E's plans for St Andrews church into the future. Is it likely to be sold off? Would the C of E be willing to participate in / fund an experiment to develop the church as a neighbourhood café / shop / other neighbourhood facility.

Would it be outrageous to suggest we build a foot-bridge over the A465? Those of us who cross it regularly on foot take our lives in our hands.

In addition to land and buildings-based plans to improve community cohesion, I'd also like to see some people-centred plans. One suggestion would be an initiative to honour the elders. The idea would be to interview the 10 oldest members of the community, gather old photos / stories of significant events or changes in the village that elders have witnessed. The stories could be compiled into a book and a limited number of copies made to be presented to the elders at community event – with a few additional copies being made for the community (these could be made available in the phone box library and the church). People love personal stories. I can see multiple benefits from such an initiative for the elders, their families and the wider Allensmore community. We would need to fund raise for such an initiative.