

Neighbourhood Plan Articles in Freshford Bulletin

Winter 2012



Freshford Parish Council Bulletin Winter 2011/12

delivery of services, roads and traffic speeds, schooling and housing.

And this is where you come in. We want to hear your views and we want as many of you as possible to contribute to the development of a community plan for the future. The process begins with a public meeting in Freshford Village Memorial Hall on Tuesday 31st January, starting at 7:30pm. The majority of that meeting will be given over to 'round table' group discussions so that all attending have the chance to have their voices heard. Very soon you will receive through your door a briefing paper and further information on the event and on what you can expect to come out of. Tom Perry of the Prince's Foundation says: "We will be very happy to assist you in the creation of your Neighbourhood Plan and looking specifically at the provision of a new Village Hall at Freshford for use by the community. We will also look at connections within the villages, public realm, parking and open space alongside the delivery of affordable/elderly housing, the community right to build and the potential for micro power generation."

The public meeting will be followed by a two day workshop on the 16th and 17th February at the Memorial Hall, Freshford for invited stakeholders before finishing on that second

Have Your Say

on the future of our Community at a Public Meeting on Tuesday 31st January 2012 at 7:30pm, in the Memorial Hall, Freshford

Seldom, if ever, has the community of Freshford and Limpley Stoke had such an opportunity to shape its own future. With funding secured through the Prince's Foundation, and with a further application for funding under active consideration by the Department of Communities and Local Government, the two Parish Councils have come together to begin the process of developing a plan for the community (a Neighbourhood Plan) which, unlike the existing Parish Plans produced some four years ago, will have legal force and which will help set out in clear terms the reasonable and considered plans for the future of our area.

There has been much change within the last five years. While the most visible and tangible change has been the building and opening of the community Galleries Shop, there has also been increasing public awareness and activity on those matters which touch our daily lives such as the protection of the environment, improvements to community facilities and the

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include transport and parking, delivery of affordable housing, preferred opportunity sites, a landscape strategy, and concept designs for a new Village Hall. Appendices including a summary of all information gathered from the community, their aspirations and concerns, key issues, attendees and programme of the workshop. The Report will be presented and discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting on the 24th April.

Next steps

In the meantime we heard from the Department of Communities and Local Government that following submission of a joint application, Bath and North East Somerset Council and Wiltshire Council have been awarded a Grant of £20000 specifically related to the Parishes of Freshford and Limpley Stoke to provide support towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the community. As far as we are aware this is the only national scheme which crosses a county border and so it will be watched with particular interest by many people to see how it progresses. We are, to quote the words of BARNES Council, one of the 'nationally recognised front runner Neighbourhood Plan Groups' and parish council members will be contributing to an event at Keynsham on the 3rd May to tell people of the progress of this project and feeding back on their experience to date. We will let you know how we get on!

Nick Stevens.

The Government's New Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Following a period of consultation the Government has now published its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - effective from April 2012.

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took many years of patience and determination in pursuit of perfection and in the summer of 2011, he took the greatest pleasure in seeing this huge task so magnificently completed!

For the last few years, Bryan showed extraordinary fortitude in fighting his cancer, always retaining his wry sense of humour and interest in local matters and taking great pride in his daughter Claire as she pursued her own undergraduate days studying geology in London.

Michele Eccleston and Rowena Wood

Neighbourhood Planning

How it all began

The catalyst for beginning the Neighbourhood Planning process was the work already underway to examine the feasibility of either re-development or a new build of Freshford Memorial Hall. A small group was formed - The Freshford Memorial Hall Re-Development Group and during the course of last year they carried out a considerable amount of work including a survey of local residents, consultation with all hall user groups, an assessment of the needs of each group and a Design Brief. It was then suggested that contact be made with the Princes Foundation as some funding might be secured to advance outline designs for this community scheme and that the Princes Foundation were well placed to offer expertise and assistance in taking plans forward.

Initial contact with the Foundation was positive and in the course of informal discussions it became evident that the Foundation would welcome involvement, particularly if the scope of the scheme was widened to embrace the wide range of issues affecting the community as a whole and so bring the scheme within the broad ambit of a Neighbourhood Plan. The concept of Neighbourhood Plans is novel and is introduced by the provisions of the

Localism Act of 2011. The Government wish is to empower local communities to take a more active role in the development of planning policies at a local level. It was at this point that the two Parish Councils of Freshford and Limpley Stoke agreed to join together and lead the project on behalf of the community.

What was on offer.

The PC's understood that the help and support offered by the Prince's Foundation would take the form of a two day workshop comprising these elements - two public meetings one at the beginning and one at the end of the process, a one day workshop attended by local 'stakeholders' and a second workshop day for internal workings/design etc with contributions from stakeholders if required.

Involvement of ESHA Architects

The Princes Foundation appointed ESHA Architects of Bristol to take on the role of project leaders and facilitators.

Planning for the event

The first public meeting was held on the 31st January 2012 at the Memorial Hall, Freshford, and the two day workshop took place on the 16th/17th February. Publicity was given via the local newsletters, hand delivered to each home in the two Parishes, through advertising boards placed at key points in the villages and on the local web sites. In addition invitations to local 'stakeholders' were sent out by personal email to approximately 100 persons inviting their participation on the 16th February at the all day workshop. Representatives of the Local Authorities - Planning, Social Housing, Highways, and the Highways Agency were invited to attend so that they could contribute to the process.

What to expect

Following on from the public meetings and workshops, ESHA have prepared a written Report to the Parish Councils which incorporates the Project background, the Community Planning Process, key diagrams and emerging principles on issues that

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they are, then things will have to appear to change." As the Neighbourhood Planning process has sustained its momentum over the summer months, residents have taken the opportunity to express a wide range of views. When the view is expressed that "we want things to stay as they are" then I find myself thinking, not only like Lampedusa that things will "have to appear to change" but also and inevitably that like it or not things will change. What the Neighbourhood Planning process does provide is for this community to influence that change and to have a far greater say over its own future: a future that can be shaped by the voices and actions of residents rather than a future which is left to be determined by those with a more distant interest and with less understanding. The fact that so many residents volunteered to help plan for the future and who are right now actively engaged in the NP process is a sure sign that these considerations matter.

The two Parish Councils remain grateful to all those who are giving so freely of their time and energy to help develop the Neighbourhood Plan and I am sure that you will be interested to read the summaries by Roger Paine and Andrew Orme (pages 2 and 3) on the most recent developments.

Welcome to this the Autumn edition of the Bulletin. Despite what might be forgivingly described as an "indifferent" summer the sheer brilliance of Olympian athleticism shone through to leave us with many powerful memories and images of success and personal triumph. There were few communities, if any, not touched to some degree by the Olympic ideal and, by extension, the ideal of volunteering. Time and time again we heard from members of the public who had volunteered to help and who made plain that they got back from it more than they thought they had put in. Something I read the other day struck a chord. It was in the words of Giuseppe di Lampedusa taken from *The Leopard* (1956) - "If we want things to stay as

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A light has gone out on Freshford High Street. The death of Wylda Chesterman now denies to this community one of its strongest and most articulate of voices. Amongst the many roles undertaken by Wylda with some enthusiasm was that of acute observer and reporter of village services and facilities. In a series of phone calls during May Wylda let me know that "the light at the top of the Hill is not working" to be followed by a call the next day to say "it is now" and then one a week later to say "it's out again. Please see to it." We saw to it. I was, perhaps, not alone in finding myself on occasions still speaking on the phone and offering lengthy assurances that we would "see to it" only to find that the line had gone dead! There was something endlessly endearing about these and similar calls over the years and I hope that others will feel able to help sustain Wylda's legacy of vigilance and action - our eyes and ears. Memories of Wylda appear on page 9 and 11.

Editor Hugh Delap has once again exercised his considerable skills of charm and persuasion in drawing together the many written contributions to this edition. It is my pleasure to once again thank him and indeed all the contributors. I hope that you will not only enjoy reading the articles but be informed by them.

Nick Stevens,
Chairman, Freshford PC

Our Neighbourhood Plan - progress to date

Earlier in the summer, in June, every household in Freshford and Limply Stoke received a booklet setting out a timetable and process for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan for the two villages. Following an open meeting in June, four working groups were set up to consider the key

areas integral to the plan: the Environment, Green Belt and the local Landscape; Planning and Development; Facilities and Services; and Transport and Movement.

Positive support for the working groups has been forthcoming across both villages, and in meetings since June a whole series of proposals and ideas have been formulated which can be taken forward as the Plan is developed. In order to gain further feedback and comment, a series of Saturday morning surgeries have been held in Freshford and Limply Stoke during late September and October to publicise progress so far, and to consider new ideas brought forward. All of these opportunities have resulted in positive responses, with residents coming forward to express their views and to give comments. As the Plan develops, it is crucial that everyone's views are brought to bear in terms of both content and future progress. The Plan will be an important document for everyone in the future, not least because its legal basis will form part of decision making when considering planning applications across the two villages.

Our Plan gives us an opportunity to exercise some control over how we want our villages to develop, both to preserve all that is best, and to see what, if any, changes need to be considered to meet present and future demands. Everyone can be involved and contribute to the discussion, and as work continues, having your say will help us all to be part of choosing the future we want.

The next important step will be the publishing of a further booklet, delivered to every household during late November, setting out proposals and comments which could be included in the Plan as it is finalised. Please note that this is not the Plan itself; these are proposals for consideration and discussion. The booklet will contain a fair amount of detail and will include specific response forms so that you can make your views known. We will be looking for comments about particular issues, but we would also value responses

that express agreement or partial agreement about the overall content of the work that has taken place.

This Plan will belong to us all so please use as many of these opportunities as you can to respond. Further information can be obtained from the Parish Councillors, and from the specific Neighbourhood Plan section on the Village website.

Roger Paine

Neighbourhood Plan open surgeries create a stir



You may have noticed a buzz of activity at various locations around both Freshford and Limply Stoke over the last few Saturdays. There have been the public surgeries held to give residents the opportunity to find out about progress on the joint Neighbourhood Plan and to add their own comments and suggestions. Many excellent new ideas have been brought up.

So what is this Neighbourhood Plan all about?

Few of us have any doubt that we live in a very special place. Our Neighbourhood Plan is being put together to try to give us more say in planning decisions that affect us - and to help us protect and enhance these villages we hold so dear. When you think how much has changed in our

homes and our communities over even the last decade or two - mobile phones, the internet, satellite television, green energy, to name just a few - you realise that further change is inevitable. The challenge is to try to ensure that change improves rather than detracts from the things and places we value.

There is much discussion yet to be had in putting together our draft Plan; there are various legal hoops it has to go through; and finally it needs to be voted on by the residents of Freshford and Limply Stoke. After all that, if it is formally adopted, it means that planning applications that fit in with our Plan are more likely to be accepted while those that do not are less likely to go through. Surely that's a worthwhile result!

Where have we got to in this process? Since the summer, some fifty or so residents of both Freshford and Limply Stoke have been busy on the early stages of our joint Plan. Four Working Groups have been reviewing different aspects of our community life with a view to coming up with recommendations to be taken forward. They have been looking at: Planning and Development, Environment and Landscape, Facilities and Services, and Transport and Movement. You can read about the Groups and their discussions on the village website - freshfordvillage.co.uk. Many others have contributed their own ideas - by coming along to the initial workshops, by visiting a surgery, by talking to Working Group members or by email. If you do not have access to the Internet but would like more information or to make comments please contact Andrew Orme, NP Communications, on 723606 or Ingrid Maher-Roberts, NP Co-ordinator, on 723036.

The next stage is further involvement and consultation with residents. We hope to publish the recommendations of the Working Groups in a leaflet to be distributed to all households in the two villages in November. With the leaflet will be a reply form that will enable you to comment on the various suggestions being

put forward. We urge you to do so because it is important that the resulting Plan reflects the views of the whole community. If you agree with the recommendations, please let us know, so that your views will be counted. If there is a particular recommendation that you do not endorse then, again, please let us know, and why, so that your comments can be carefully considered.

If we all take part, the resulting Neighbourhood Plan will genuinely represent the views of our community and will give us a powerful say in planning decisions that affect us.

Andrew Orme
Communications@FreshfordVillage.co.uk

Freshford Neighbourhood Watch



Our Annual Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm, Thursday 22nd November, 2012 at Freshford Primary School Hall. Neighbourhood Watch "Contacts", "Deputy Contacts", and indeed anyone interested in keeping our village well informed and safe from crime are welcome to attend (and have a drink and a nibble).

Our guests will be Senior Officers from Avon and Somerset Constabulary who have particular interest in community policing.

A key service Neighbourhood Watch Contacts and Deputy Contacts provide to residents is regular information regarding crime and crime prevention.

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purchase and second, the future maintenance and management of the Tynning. I do hope that you can be there.

As always my thanks go to Hugh Delap as editor of the Bulletin, to the many contributors and to Steph Jenkins' long-established team of volunteers who distribute it to every household in the parish and beyond.

May I wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Nick Stevens
Chairman.

Our Neighbourhood Plan - Making Progress

Many residents of Freshford and Limpley Stoke have contributed extensively to the discussions about our joint Neighbourhood Plan. We've had the Open Meetings, the Working Groups and the Surgeries held in both our villages. We've had input from B&NES and from Wiltshire Council and from outside consultants who know their way round the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. We're making progress - though there's a way to go yet!

The Neighbourhood Plan team is now putting together a leaflet - called, fittingly, 'Making Progress' - summarising the main proposals that have emerged so far as likely to go forward to our final Plan. 'Making Progress' will incorporate a questionnaire to help gauge residents' feelings about these outline proposals and everyone in the community is warmly encouraged to let us know what they think.

'Making Progress' will be delivered to every household in Freshford and Limpley Stoke between 20th and 22nd February and the replies will be collected, again from each household, between 4th and 6th March.

This important task is being handled for us by Gordy (above), who knows our

neighbourhood well and will be well known to many residents as the ex-postie for Limpley Stoke - so there'll be a familiar face on the doorstep.



We are really keen to hear from as many people as possible - including younger people and others who have a stake, for example if they work in the neighbourhood. So further copies of 'Making Progress' will be available so that everyone can have their say.

To support the distribution of 'Making Progress' we will again be holding the popular Neighbourhood Plan Surgeries on Saturday 23rd February and Saturday 2nd March. You will be able to come along and speak to members of the Neighbourhood Plan team and ask any questions you may have about the leaflet/questionnaire and about the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Further details will be published nearer the time.

'Making Progress' is emphatically not the Neighbourhood Plan but is an important part of the process. When the Plan itself is submitted for review we will need to show the degree of support in the community for the proposals it contains, so your views count. If you are broadly happy with the proposals it is important that you

should say so. Your comments do not commit you in any way but will help your Councils decide what should go forward in our final Neighbourhood Plan.

So watch out for further information about 'Making Progress' and do let us have your response when the time comes.

Andrew Orme
Communications@FreshfordVillage.com

Freshford Stream

The exceptionally high rainfall over the course of the last few months has led to an increased incidence of localised flooding in the centre of the village. A small working group of parish councillors and residents (the 'Culvert Committee') has been formed to see not only if anything can be done to reduce the risk of flooding but also to take the opportunity to understand better just how the Freshford stream is managed and maintained along its length.

We have surveyed the length of the Freshford Stream, which is the only water course in the village imposing any risk apart from the Rivers Frome and Avon flood plain. We have consulted and researched with

B&NES Land Drainage Team, Wessex Water, the Environment Agency, the Fire Service and communities similarly affected.

A number of natural springs form the source of the stream. First visible to the public in the Playing Field behind the Memorial Hall the stream runs through the Land of Wheat Paddock and Tynning House before emerging outside the hall and shop car park. Freshford stream then flows down beside Freshford Lane, past the school, under the old shop before emerging at the back of the Surgery, through Westview Orchard under gardens and the road to the edge of the Old Parsonage, on to

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mark of the man that he is to be afforded this honour and privilege and an equal mark that he would like to give electors of Bathavon South some priority of his time in what will be a full year of public engagements. Neil suggests that we give thought to inviting him to any particular events due to be held in the parish or to his visiting any local groups so that he can publicly thank them for the work that they are doing. If you have any ideas please speak to me or contact Paula Bartlett, Civic Secretary, who can establish availability and send you a protocol form to complete.
paula_bartlett@battnes.gov.uk

Nick Stevens
Chairman

Neighbourhood Plan Update Magnificent response to 'Making Progress' questionnaire

Residents of both Freshford and Limpley Stoke have made a significant contribution to the Neighbourhood Plan process by taking the time and trouble to respond to the 'Making Progress' questionnaire. In addition to answering the various 'tick box' questions, a larger number of residents also added further comments - some at considerable length. Excitingly, replies came in from well over half the households in the two villages - a convincing demonstration that the community is engaging with the process.

Every single one of the ideas summarised in 'Making Progress' received a majority in favour. Some of these showed overwhelming support for a shared view of our future, including:

- protecting our 'green lungs'
- limiting further development to preserve the unique character of our neighbourhood
- bringing The Tynning into common ownership

- slowing traffic on the A36 and creating a 20mph zone throughout the community
- improving road safety for school children by providing a space for the bus and a footpath to the Memorial Hall
- refurbishing the Memorial Hall, supporting the shop and developing an integrated hub for the community.
- Other topics, while still showing a majority in their favour, received less of a clear-cut endorsement. These included:
 - providing better footpaths across Church Field and the riverside meadow
 - making provision for likely housing needs over the next 15-20 years for the elderly and young families
 - designating unused land in Middle Stoke as a village green.

Partly the concern here was 'where's the money to come from?' There was a feeling that in difficult times we need to prioritise the projects we take on, which is a very reasonable view. Sometimes the question encompassed two thoughts and people found they supported one but not the other. Fortunately, many respondents added comments to their forms to explain their thinking. All of this provides a rich seam of considered opinion to guide the Neighbourhood Plan Management Group in how to take the Plan forward.

We now have received input from the Working Groups, from residents, from representatives of B&NES and Wiltshire Councils and from specialist consultants. All of this will be carefully considered in taking things on to the next stage. In the meantime, all results of the 'Making Progress' survey - both the quantitative analysis and the additional comments made - are published online. Just follow the link from www.freshfordvillage.com.

Andrew Orme

Summer 2013

The Bulletin

This is the 20th edition of the Bulletin in its regular quarterly form; it resumed publication five years ago, in August 2008. We've made some small changes to mark the occasion but also to align it more neatly with the Parish Council website, www.freshfordvillage.com. It's a very small point but we are now using the same font in our title and at the beginning of each article as is used at the top of the web pages.

We shall welcome your comments - as we welcome comments on any aspect of the Bulletin.

Hugh Delap

Comments sought on Draft Neighbourhood Plan

After 18 months or so of committed involvement by many members of our community, the evolving Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan has reached an extremely significant stage. Valuable contributions from the Working Groups, advice from specialist consultants and officers from B&NES and Wiltshire Councils, a superb response to the 'Making Progress' questionnaire, and many comments received through the popular open Surgeries have helped to clarify local feelings about the key issues that face us.

Now, since 1st July, the Draft Neighbourhood Plan has been available for consultation in the community. The important point to understand is that this is still a *draft* plan. Nothing is yet finalised and we are keen to have your comments. That's what the consultation is all about. Please help make this document as good as it can be, and as reflective of local opinion, by pointing out any errors, inconsistencies or matters you are not comfortable with. And if you like what you see, it would be encouraging to hear that too! Open

Surgeries were held on 6th and 20th July at Freshford Memorial Hall but if you were not able to come along there's still plenty of time to have your say.



Visiting the display at an Open Surgery

The Draft Plan is available on the village website at

[http://www.freshfordvillage.com/living-in-freshford/parish-council/](http://www.freshfordvillage.com/living-in-freshford/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan/draft-neighbourhood-plan)

[draft-neighbourhood-plan/](http://www.freshfordvillage.com/living-in-freshford/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan/draft-neighbourhood-plan) together with higher resolution versions of the maps and the many documents that comprise the Appendix. (If you have any difficulty downloading the Draft Plan, please let Ingrid know at ingrid.freshfordpc@gmail.com and she'll email you a copy direct.) Also on that page you will find a downloadable comment form. A printed copy of the Draft Plan is on display at the Galleries Shop along with a supply of comment forms. If you or anyone you know does not have internet access and is not able to visit the Shop, a limited number of copies of the Draft Plan are available from Ingrid on loan.

Originally it was planned that the community consultation would last until 11th August. However this consultation period is now going to be extended by a couple of weeks or so. The final close date will be announced when it has been decided.

Of course, many of the issues raised by the community over the detailed discussions that have taken place do not concern planning matters and are

therefore not applicable to the Neighbourhood Plan. Nothing has been lost, though, and the good ideas have been noted and may well contribute to the neighbourhood in other ways. A good example of this is the Environment Group, now up and running and seeking to take forward some of the enthusiasm generated by one of the Working Groups.

Looking ahead, the forward programme for the Neighbourhood Plan is:

- Confirmation of close date for community consultation.
- NP Management Group review comments made, take advice where necessary and modify Plan if appropriate.
- Submission of Plan to Lead Councils - B&NES and Wiltshire - for Formal Validation and further Formal Consultation.
- All being well the Plan is then submitted for an External Examination.
- If approved, it will then be put to local voters in a Referendum.

The ultimate timing of the Referendum outside our control but looks like being early in the New Year.

Andrew Orme

Redevelopment of the Village Memorial Hall

A big thank you to all those who attended the community consultation meetings on 16th May and 13th June. Hewitt Studios used the comments and views expressed in developing, from the three options, a concept design to form a basis for designing the first class community facility to serve Freshford, Limpley Stoke and the other local villages for the next sixty years and more.

Of the three options: refurbishment with some additional facilities, refurbishment with a range of improvements and new facilities, and a new build; the last was

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about? Judging from the low chuckle that spread round the room it was clear that many present thought that a simple point had been made well. Despite the plethora of information that is available at the click of the button we remain committed as a Parish Council both to the publication of the printed Bulletin (and its distribution to every Freshford household) and to the concept of 'engaging' with you through talking, listening and doing.

Nick Stevens
Chairman, Freshford PC

The Neighbourhood Plan - frustrating delays but a better Plan is emerging

In the Summer edition of The Bulletin we reported on the widespread and valuable local consultation on the draft Plan. At the time we hoped that the consultation would be complete by the end of August but we now realise this was over-optimistic. This article will help residents understand where the process has got to and what now needs to happen.

A key stage in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan is the approval by Bath and North East Somerset Council and Wiltshire Council of the Neighbourhood Area Designation. Because our Plan spans two counties we need the approval of both councils. This approval needs to be given before formal local consultation can take place. The Management Group has yet to receive confirmation that the Order of Designation has been 'signed off' by the two Councils.

The need to prepare a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has further added to the delay. This is an assessment of the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan, and 'reasonable alternatives' to a plan. It helps to ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development. The early advice received by the NP Management Group suggested that a SA

was not really necessary. (The Department of Communities and Local Government, which provides grants for the development of Neighbourhood Plans, specifically excludes SAs from its grant support.) However B&NES and Wilts have now decided that they do require a full SA, which is a considerable piece of extra work. The SA has to be approved by certain statutory authorities before it can be submitted for local consultation.

These delays are frustrating and have involved the Management Group and others in considerable extra work (though we have managed to obtain a grant to retain a consultant to help us prepare the SA) but every cloud has a silver lining - the resulting Neighbourhood Plan will be a better, more representative document as a result.

The consultation process held in July, although jumping the gun as far as the formal legal process is concerned, has been immensely helpful in clarifying the views of residents. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to reflect the views of the community as a whole. The Management Group has endeavoured to channel the ideas generated from open meetings, the questionnaire and the working groups into a coherent Plan. It was difficult for residents to comment in the abstract but once we had published a draft Plan, people were able to make more specific suggestions - and many of the points made have been pure gold!

The point is also worth making that the Neighbourhood Plan is not a plan necessarily reflecting the wishes of the parish councils of Freshford and Limpley Stoke but is intended to reflect the majority wishes of residents of the two villages. Clearly we would wish the plan to be in a form which has the support of the two parish councils but the key task of the Management Group has been to focus on the expressed wishes of the community. The Management Group is using the delay to revise the draft Plan so that it will benefit from these submissions. When the Neighbourhood Area designation has been approved and the Sustainability Appraisal has been produced and approved as required, we

will be publishing this revised draft Plan for a further six-week consultation by the community.

Residents need to understand, though, that the main reason why this revised draft may still not please everyone is because a Neighbourhood Plan must conform to local Core Strategies (the lead Councils' planning frameworks) and to the National Planning Policy Framework and should plan positively to support local development albeit, within the parameters of Green Belt policy. This means, for instance, that our Neighbourhood Plan cannot overrule planning policy on local 'brownfield' sites like Freshford Mill or the Rentokil site in Pipehouse if these fall within the emerging B&NES Core Strategy. Despite this, we firmly believe that our Neighbourhood Plan will genuinely help the community to shape local development to meet our needs and aspirations.

So what of the schedule from here on?

It is outside our control but we are unlikely to be able to publish the revised draft Plan for formal consultation before Christmas - so that will be a treat in store for the New Year! In the meantime we will continue to keep you informed of how things are going through the Freshford Village Website and do please get in touch with any member of the Management Group should you have any questions to ask.

Andrew Orme
Nick Stevens

Neighbourhood Plan Management Group

Spreading the Word

If you have a business, an enterprise or just an interest that you would like to give a wider airing how about considering sponsoring an edition of The Bulletin? Rates are very reasonable and copies go into every house in the parish and beyond, the Galleries Shop & Café, the doctors' surgery and the school. The full colour version goes onto the website and the back page, with your message, onto the notice boards. If you're only

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These costs are primarily met from the Precept (Council Tax), some Grant Aid from B&NES and Fees. For the first time in many years, the Council is budgeting for a significant increase in potential costs. This arises from two factors. Firstly, the proposed purchase of the Tynning; this is budgeted to cost some £30,000 plus fees. The purchase costs will be covered by borrowing, resulting in loan repayments over thirty years; together with the need for additional maintenance across the Tynning, this will require an extra £4,000 each year. The second aspect concerns the Memorial Hall. The finances of the Hall have been an issue of some concern, and the Parish Council has agreed to pay an additional £1,000 each year to support its general operating expenses. All of the other items of budgeted expenditure for the Parish Council will remain broadly the same in total.

Overall, therefore, the Precept levied by the Parish Council will increase by £5,000, from the current £13,500 to £18,500 in 2014/15. The increase will be reflected in Council Tax Bills: the Band D charge will increase by about £17.50 for the whole year; this will be reflected as an increase of £1.75 per month over the ten month billing period (other Bands will increase proportionately).

Full details of the 2014/15 budget are available on the Village Website, and Councillors can provide any further information that is required.

Roger Paine

Important stage reached for the Freshford & Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan

January has seen the publication of the Revised Draft Plan for a six-week formal consultation with the local community.

Yes, you might think we've been here before.

Back in July 2013 the Management Group published a Draft Plan, thinking that we were starting the formal consultation.

Unfortunately it transpired that the Lead Councils - Wiltshire and B&NES - had not yet technically approved the Neighbourhood Area Designation, which had to be in place before the formal consultation could legally begin.

Still, although jumping the gun as far as the formal process was concerned, the July consultation was immensely helpful in clarifying the views of residents. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to reflect the

It has been a longer process than any of us envisaged at the start - but we're getting there!

Andrew Orme

views of the community as a whole. Though the Management Group had tried to channel the ideas generated from open meetings, the questionnaire and the working groups into a coherent Plan, it was difficult for residents to comment in the abstract. However, once they saw the proposed text they were able to make more specific suggestions - and many of the points made have been extremely helpful and constructive.

So the Revised Draft Plan, which was published on 11th January, is a better, more representative document as a result. The Consultation will be open until 22nd February so do take the opportunity to see where we've got to - and let us know what you think.



The Plan was displayed at open surgeries at the Limpley Stoke Hotel on 11th January and at Freshford Village Memorial Hall on 18th January. Both surgeries were deemed great successes with a large number of residents - 23 at Limpley Stoke and 78 at Freshford - to attend and view the Revised Plan at length.

The Plan and related documents are also on the Joint Neighbourhood Plan section of the FreshfordVillage.com website, of course, and a printed copy is available for inspection at The Galleries Shop.

Looking forward, any further comments received during this community consultation will be carefully considered and the Plan amended if appropriate. The final Draft Plan will then be submitted to the Lead Councils for further formal consultation and for consideration by an independent Inspector. Finally, all being well, we hope to bring the Plan to Referendum by the community, possibly in September.