

Update on Rushwick Neighbourhood Development Plan

Three years ago the parish council decided to prepare a neighbourhood plan to be part of the statutory development plan for the parish as a community led framework to guide the development and conservation of the area. Unfortunately, the process was halted, the principal reason for the delay, besides COVID, has been the review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) which proposed Rushwick as an expanded development comprising 1000 additional houses, 5 hectares of employment land, a traveller site and a new railway station with 500 car parking spaces. The parish council strongly objected to these proposals. Planning Law requires that a Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the District Councils Development Plan (SWDP). Because of the SWDP Review and the allocations for development proposed within it, the Neighbourhood Plan as originally conceived could not be progressed. The Neighbourhood Plan would not have been in conformity with the SWDP Review and would not have been endorsed by the District Council as required.

However, the SWDP review has been delayed by more than 2 years, and there is now uncertainty over the viability of the proposed railway station and other aspects of the development plan. In addition, MHDC has recently lost the appeal for the large development alongside Claphill Lane. Because of these delays and the continuing uncertainty, the Parish Council have decided to progress the Neighbourhood Plan. But we need help and would welcome any volunteers to assist.

The 8 steps required to complete a Neighbourhood Plan are

1. Designate the neighbourhood area and appoint a Qualifying Body to produce the plan: *This has been completed and Rushwick Parish Council have been designated as the Qualifying Body.*
2. Obtain evidence: *This has been completed via the village survey and obtention of the housing requirement for the parish (approx. 20 additional houses upto 2040) prior to the proposal for Rushwick to be an 'Extended Settlement'*
3. Involve and Engage the Community: *In addition to the village survey we have had 2 public meetings*
4. Develop Vision and Objectives: *This has been done*
5. Write policies: *We have produced policies (which can be found on a separate posting). These now need to be produced in a formal document for consultation with the village.*
6. Submission to MHDC planning Authority: *This needs to be done both informally for initial comment and formally for their approval*
7. Independent Examination: *MHDC planning authority will submit the document to an independent examiner to ensure it complies with legislation*
8. Undertake a Referendum: *The parish will vote on whether to accept or refuse the plan.*

We need help to complete this plan. The outstanding tasks are to organise the village consultation, analyse the feedback, assist in making any changes and help collating the information needed for the formal examination. If you can help with any of these, please contact Robert Jenkins on 07803 464280 or by email at rdjenkinsfamily@btinternet.com. Thank you!