Neighbourhood Plan

At the October meeting of the Parish Council, the decision was taken that work on the Neighbourhood Plan should be suspended.

To just briefly give a bit of background…..

When this council initiated the neighbourhood planning process over two years ago, it had been made very clear to us that Wiltshire Council were expecting us to contribute to its housing requirement. We believed that through a Neighbourhood Plan we would be able to direct this development to locations chosen by the community.

We believed this would enable to us to preserve the rural character of the parish, safeguard against large-scale development and protect the green belt. Evidence from the 'Have Your Say' survey reinforced the importance of these issues to our community.

Before long it became clear that the ability to allocate sites within the parish was going to be a problem. Within Winsley's Settlement Boundary there are virtually no possibilities and all land outside of the settlement boundary lies within the green belt.

Working with Wiltshire Council, we were encouraged to look at potential sites that lie adjacent to the settlement boundary although obviously still were within the green belt. Having duly identified a shortlist of potential sites and presented these at a public meeting, we received the following statement from Wiltshire Council

"Our advice is that because of the Green Belt designation you will not be able to allocate sites for housing outside of the settlement boundary in the Neighbourhood Plan at this time".

So Wiltshire Council recognised that unless there is a national green belt review, for which there is no plan at the current time, Winsley is unable to make any significant contribution to the 2026 housing requirement as no development will be permitted in the green belt.

Without the current need to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to prevent inappropriate development, the council were unanimous in their decision that the considerable effort and cost of producing the plan at this stage could not be justified.

It was agreed that this decision would be reviewed in 6 months. 6 months is up, the core strategy has been formally adopted and the situation remains the same. Should there be a change to national policies relating to the green belt, the council will review its position on proceeding with a Neighbourhood Plan and update the community.

To conclude, it is worth saying that ….

Much valuable information has been gathered throughout this process about how residents would like to see the parish develop over the next ten to fifteen years. It was agreed that these issues can, at least initially, be dealt with through the the Parish Council where a system for public involvement in decision making already exists. You will hear later from Pam on initiatives that are already underway.

Cllr. Helen Harrison