

Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan
Report to Wheatley and Holton Parish Councils
08 January 2018

On 14 December 2017 our 19th Committee meeting marked 23 months work. Beyond the formal meetings, Committee members, Associates and Volunteers have put in many hours of work. For instance, it took 10 people 28 workshop hours to hammer out the first Draft Neighbourhood Plan ready for May 2017; another 12 hours was spent with Advisers in autumn workshops on deciding the next stage for this 'interesting, untested NP'. Teams have met in homes, travelled to SODC (36 miles round trip), worked on desk and phone communication, organised and afterwards analysed public consultations, while our volunteers have staffed Consultation events and publicised them through leafleting and conversation at the 1860 front doors of both parishes. A website has to be maintained, and on it an Evidence Base in particular has to be built up for public and ultimately Examiner's access.

We have a good working relationship with SODC. Trust has grown after clashes, mistakes, overwork (on both sides) and no one needs to stand on dignity any more. We are also beginning talks with Oxfordshire County (see E. below)

Since the autumn, work has gone into those parts of the Final Version of the Neighbourhood Plan which are ready to be written up. For instance, a new expanded *History and Character* of Wheatley and Holton, has been composed after consultation with Historic England. We listen to every bit of advice we have received, private from the local community, and public from Parish, District, County and national bodies which we are required to contact. WNP and SODC hope the Final Draft Neighbourhood Plan will be published for Examination and Referendum in the Spring of 2018.

Work in Progress

A. The agency *Localities*, which part-funds our work, has accepted our request for a **Strategic and Environmental Impact [SEA]** study on our proposals for Wheatley in particular. SODC required it of us in November. When completed along with a six week Public Consultation, it will strengthen our Plan considerably. *Localities* have now appointed the specialist to conduct it.

B. WNP have appointed a specialist from West Waddy ADP to write our **Basic Conditions Statement** (showing that WNP complies with the law, with the requirement to consult and with local and national policies). He now waits for the Final Draft WNP to be completed.

C. With SODC, our WNP Committee architects are **analysing the Wheatley sites** which feature in the discussion about village regeneration. It is a complex task, given the amount of legislation. Green Belt 'fragments' are also involved. Credit should be paid by the community to Simon Shew and Mike Vaughton who have brought a wealth of expertise and relevant experience to the WNP.

D. A **Consultation Statement** is required, and being produced, to show that WNP has genuinely listened to the community. We believe our response figures are respectable, especially as they compare well with the turnout at Local Elections. We have certainly used every means possible to inform, engage and elicit comment.

E. On Friday 19 January we meet with Oxfordshire CC and SODC officials on **Infrastructure and Traffic**. With land use proposals from both Local and Neighbourhood Plan in their latest drafts, we can talk about traffic in a way we could not two years ago. Had we done so, our WNP work would have been invalidated. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be a traffic campaign, even when traffic and roads are the community's biggest concern. It can however talk traffic and roads [Infrastructure] once proposals have been made about land use. We have prepared our priorities for discussion and

our Evidence Base. We will report on this meeting, perhaps the first of several, to Wheatley and Holton Parishes in February.

John Fox
Chairman
Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Committee.