Minutes of NDP Environment Group meeting
Thursday 20th February 7.00pm in the village hall

Present: John Martin (Your Locale), Sue Starling, Max Berridge, Tori Pope, Angie Arkell, Jan Alexander
Apologies: Tania Laugier

John introduced the session and said that the next stage of the work would be largely his. He offered a reminder – while Village Design Statements (LPC considered one but did not do it) were largely powerless, a Neighbourhood Development Plan carries legal weight in planning decisions. It is a statutory planning document that adds detail to Local Plans produced by the unitary authority.

WNCC had still not issued housing figures despite requests from Your Locale (they are legally obliged to do so and the fact that they have not done so is puzzling – Harborough had their Local Plan out by mid-January) but this is more of an issue for the Housing group.

The clerk to register for 'Parish Online' giving access to maps.

Existing designations: John will identify designated significant sites – earthworks, ridge-and-furrow, buildings, etc - and send material to Clare. We were advised not to try to alter this as certain points need to be made.

Local knowledge: this may include habitats, significant trees, anything that members of the community like about the village. People with local knowledge should be consulted.

John gave a Power-Point presentation.

Environment Group's aims: –

- protection for what is significant and characteristic in the natural, historical or social environment of Lilbourne
- directing the location of new development as part of 'Sustainable Development'

Environment Group's objectives: Produce 'Environment' chapter of NDP, to include

- 'Sustainable Development'
- Natural environment
- Historical environment
- Social environment
  - Local Green Spaces
  - Open spaces for sport and recreation
  - Views
  - Footpaths
  - Flood risk
  - Renewable energy generation

Environments Group's tasks:

- Review what has been done so far on environment policies
- Decide which points are important; recognising what can/cannot be covered by the NDP (must have regard for national policies, and the unitary authority's Local Plan.)
- Assemble evidence to support policies dealing with agreed issues, using existing designation (John) and local knowledge (the group) so that good features of the local environment are protected and the location of any future development can be directed to where it will do least damage, as part of Sustainable Development
- Draft the chapter – narrative, maps, policies. It is always the longest section of the NDP, partly because it includes typically 14 or 15 maps that give a framework.

1. Local Green Spaces
The most important, significant, characteristic and highly valued open land in the Plan Area, to be protected in perpetuity and in almost all circumstances because they are irreplaceable. The criteria are demanding, so must be rigorously checked. The 'Local Green Space 'designation should only be used when the green space is

- Reasonably close to the community it serves
- Local in character, not an extensive tract of land
- Of particular local significance – e.g. historical significance, richness of wildlife
- Demonstrably special to the local community – e.g. beauty, recreational value, tranquillity

2. Important Open Spaces

- Open spaces are of high local value for recreation, amenity or tranquillity within or close to the built-up area, but are replaceable; their functions and amenities, rather than their sites, are to be protected.
  Development proposals that would adversely affect them will not be supported unless
- the open space is replaced by at least equivalent provision in an equally suitable location
- it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required by the community.

3. Biodiversity
Sites of high biodiversity significance, including wildlife corridors, will be identified. Stipulation that developers must check biodiversity on any proposed site before beginning a development.

4. Historical significance can include things within living memory as well as bygone artefacts. Things that the community consider significant include non-designated heritage assets important for their contribution to the layout and characteristic mix of architectural styles in the village. Their features and settings will be protected wherever possible. Any harm arising from a development proposal, or a change of use requiring planning approval affecting any of them, will need to be balanced against their significance as heritage assets. This can be a controversial issue.
e.g. Ridge-and-Furrow areas are non-designated local heritage assets

5. Footpaths and other walking routes: Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths, will not be supported without appropriate mitigation.
There could be an initiative to turn permissive footpaths into accredited rights of way

6. Flood risk resilience & climate change: very important. Local experience needed. Surface water can be just as bad as river floods. Development must not increase the risk of flooding.

7. Renewable energy sources: the NDP could support turbines etc to an extent, to gain some sort of control over if and where they are placed. Conversation with landowners needed.

Next meetings:
7th March 7.00pm at the hall to discuss the next full meeting: think about views. Take photos - winter photos are good before trees come into leaf. Decide on important spaces

Sunday 16th March 3.00pm at the church, to walk round the village