



YOUR VOICE YOUR MELKSHAM SHAPE YOUR TOWN



LOCAL HOUSING CRISIS

No-one in Melksham can afford to buy their first home



A Housing Needs Assessment has revealed that:

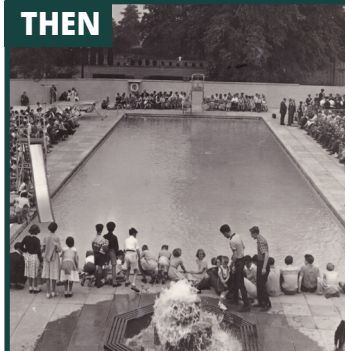
- Nobody on average income or below in the Melksham area can afford to buy a house but a substantial number of people on an average income will be able to afford a house if it is subsidised or discounted market housing; which are typically shared ownership housing or under the Government's new "First Homes" scheme.
- There are a lot of 4-bedroom houses in the area which needs to be balanced out with smaller houses to support the identified need.
- To support the substantial growth in the population of the older generation in the area there is a need for supported living/extra care houses. These would be better placed in more accessible locations such as the town centre or on brownfield sites.
- There is a greater need for affordable housing in the villages.

WHAT'S INSIDE...

The Neighbourhood Plan and you

- ◆ **Melksham specific policies to address identified needs.**
- ◆ **What does the neighbourhood plan do?**
- ◆ **What has it done for us so far?**
- ◆ **How can you influence it?**
- ◆ **Find out how you can get involved on updating the current plan.**

WHAT NEXT FOR THE TOWN CENTRE?



2036

?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE BLUE POOL SITE?

2036

?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE OLD LIBRARY SITE?

A Town Centre Master Plan is being produced by consultants who are taking a holistic, independent approach. They will be examining its Economy and Vitality, its Culture and Distinctiveness, its Connections and Accessibility, the quality of its Public Realm, and its Heritage and Townscape; all set against the pressing agenda of

Sustainability and Climate Change. There is also the possibility of some Town Centre Regeneration Site opportunities with vacant sites in the town centre, including those recently vacated as part of the Campus project; they may provide identified/ allocated housing to meet local needs.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE DON'T HAVE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

NEW HOUSING WILL STILL HAPPEN BUT YOU WILL HAVE...

- No say on where they are built
- No say on the type and size of house
- No say on what development looks like
- No say on what community benefits it brings

It is Government policy that dictates housing numbers to Wiltshire Council who in turn allocate a proportion of that growth amongst the towns and large villages. Using a

Neighbourhood Plan is the way that local people can have a say and influence what the development in their area looks like, and what it brings with it.

“ We worked hard to get a Neighbourhood Plan that local people voted to bring into legal force. Let's keep our Neighbourhood Plan bang up-to-date; this is a living document and we need to respond to a changing context and make sure that our Plan remains as strong as possible ”



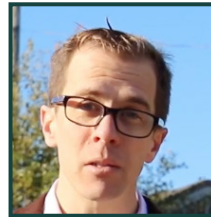
Cllr David Pafford
Steering Committee Chair

WHAT HAS THE COMMUNITY SAID SO FAR?



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

“The Neighbourhood Plan should encourage renewable energy production in ways that will deliver community benefits”



HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

“It's vital that the Neighbourhood Plan supports diverse development that suits the needs of the community...which delivers real benefits for the local area”



SHOPPING, WORKING AND GETTING AROUND

“The Neighbourhood Plan aims to create a positive environment to encourage retail investment into Melksham delivering diversity and choice and making the town more self-reliant”



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AND NATURE

“I like wild areas - they are great for playing hide and seek in. I also enjoy playing with my brother and friends since none of us have big enough gardens to play in”



NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

“We have the beautiful River Avon, meandering through the town with its riverside walks, stretching along fields through King George V Park and onto the wildlife reserve at Conigre Mead”

THE CURRENT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HAS ALREADY INFLUENCED...

- ◆ Wiltshire Council decision on planning applications for large developments
- ◆ Type of housing mix & density
- ◆ Increased flood mitigation
- ◆ Deterred development outside the defined settlements

WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY TOLD US

PROTECTING MELKSHAM'S HERITAGE

The Neighbourhood Plan will list heritage assets that don't have Listed status but still have an important historical value to the local community.

Thank you to those of you who responded to this survey. A small group of volunteers is looking at the evidence for these sites; it's a short list but valuable nevertheless, and the next step is to contact landowners. You can view the sites put forward on the Neighbourhood Plan website and we will be seeking your views on these heritage assets in the New Year.



FORMER LLOYDS BANK

KELLY'S LAMP



HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS LED BY THE COMMUNITY

The next version of the Plan will include housing site allocations for small and medium sites, whereas the Local Plan being produced by Wiltshire Council will be allocating large, strategic sites. The Plan's housing allocation means that future development is Plan led and not speculative development in isolated green

fields. This is your opportunity to comment on where these smaller sites should be. Some 90+ sites have been put forward by local landowners, and are currently being assessed for suitability by independent consultants. We will be asking your views on these sites, and the community benefits that they bring, in the New Year.

PROTECTING VALUED LOCAL GREEN SPACE



There is the opportunity through the Plan to give a Local Green Space planning designation to protect spaces that are important to the local community.

Thank you to those of you that put forward local green spaces that were important due to their historic significance, their beauty, their recreational value, their richness in wildlife or their tranquillity. This designation can only apply to small,

local spaces and not large tracts of land. The volunteer task group is now working through the 50+ sites that the public put forward to ensure that they meet the necessary criteria and eligibility to produce a shortlist, we are currently making contact with the local landowners. You can view the sites put forward on the Neighbourhood Plan website and we will be seeking your views on the shortlist in the New Year.

STRENGTHENING LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE DESIGN

We are forecast to accommodate a further approx. 2,500 houses up to 2036.

We can't stop the housing numbers but we can have a say in what it looks like.

For new housing, and other development, it's not just about where it is, and whether its two or three bedrooms, or rented or for purchase; it's about what it looks like and this is where the Design Codes come in. Consultants have been appointed to do this work, and are looking at what "good design" looks like for the Melksham area and all future planning applications will have to adhere to the Code when the

Plan is adopted. From designing out anti-social behaviour, to brick colours, to solar panels, this is all covered in the Design Code. It covers local identity and character, access and movement incorporating the Priority for People work, green and blue infrastructure, sustainability and energy efficiency and the built form. There will be some community engagement on this piece of work as we seek your views in the New Year.

What about the proposed Bypass? What about the proposed Canal?

The Neighbourhood Plan is all about planning policy, and to be referred and adhered to when planning applications are considered.

There are a couple of proposed large infrastructure projects that are in the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan area and there are separate task groups looking into these projects to ensure that the Plan is reviewed in line with the

latest updates on these projects. The Plan will have Priority Statements on these projects, but they will be light touch as the Neighbourhood Plan is not the place for decision making on these projects; and therefore cannot have policies relating to them. Volunteer task groups have met with the project teams on these separate projects to review the current priority statements with them.

YOUR PLAN

HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVED?

PUBLIC CONSULTATION IN THE NEW YEAR

This update has hopefully let you know about how the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan is already making a positive difference.

Long term and new issues like tackling climate change, providing affordable homes in the right places and helping local business recover from the impact of COVID make it imperative that our Neighbourhood Plan evolves to provide strong local powers, alongside Wiltshire's upcoming new Local Plan that will set out where new homes and jobs will be provided looking ahead to 2036.

The current Melksham Neighbourhood Plan runs to 2026. But we need to stay up-to-date with a revised Plan which will look ahead to 2036 and tackle even more important local issues.

We want you to get involved in keeping your Plan as strong as possible and continue to shape the way that Melksham grows in the future.

Lots of work has been done during 2022 and early in the New Year we will have the draft revised Plan for you to comment on. Please do look out for the public consultation after Christmas. There will be lots of ways to get involved, and don't worry if you are not online, there will be a public exhibition and drop in sessions for a number of weeks.



KEEP IN TOUCH

Information on the progress on the review of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed on the dedicated website www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org and dedicated Facebook page.

You can sign up to the mailing list by contacting any officer at the Town or Parish Council or by clicking the link on the website. If you are not online, please contact either of the councils who can provide written updates. Look out for further consultation and engagement opportunities advertised in the Melksham News too.

- **Sign up for the mailing list**
- **Visit the website which is regularly updated**
- **Follow the Facebook page**
- **Attend future consultation events**
- **Read regular updates in the Melksham News**
- **In person**

www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org

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