

Newent Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Report on Progress

Changes are in the air and the NDP is gathering pace!

Our January meeting was quorate, thanks to the four Town Council members who attended, and we were able to proceed with substantive decisions, as detailed in the minutes. We now have a new chairperson, as I have stepped down, as planned, to spend more time with my family (as they say!) I do intend to continue volunteering on the Steering Group, but as an ordinary member in future.

I am very glad that I am leaving the post in the capable hands of Councillor Gill Moseley, who has been the moving force and the source of a wealth of vital information throughout the whole NDP project. I would like to thank her sincerely for her help and advice whilst I have been interim Chairperson. This change did mean that we were left without a secretary: although it has been agreed that we can employ a suitable person, potential candidates have been unavailable within the required timescale and the search goes on.

Our Planning Consultant, Le Searles has already given us much useful advice and support, and his ongoing involvement has meant that we no longer expect to need the services of the GRCC advisor, Barabra Pond, who has been thanked for her previous support.

Members of the Steering Group attended a Zoom meeting with representatives for AECOM, the specialist infrastructure consultancy, which will be working with us to draw up a Design Code and conducting a Housing Needs Assessment (a data-driven analysis, as opposed to the survey of public views and wishes which the NDPSG has produced - see below.) They can also produce a Master Plan and, as a preliminary step, will advise us on what form a Master Plan could take.

There is, of course, much to be done before we hold another full public consultation on a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan. Some of the evidence originally collected is now out of date due to recent building developments and development proposals in Newent, the loss of a major employer, changing social habits since the pandemic, and new government initiatives. Steering Group members will be working on updating information via desktop research as well as seeking the views of stakeholders and the general public. Look out for a forthcoming survey on Leisure and the Canal. The survey on Housing remains open, so do please encourage residents in the NTC area to contribute to it if they haven't already done so.

Our regular Steering Group meetings continue on the third Wednesday of each month, and the next is due to take place on 21st February, at 7 pm at the NTC offices.

Helen Selwood

Newent Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

4th February 2024