

Milton under Wychwood Parish Council



Neighbourhood Plan

CONSULTATION STATEMENT



St Simon and St Jude Church

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The Consultation Statement includes the following Appendices:

APPENDIX A - CONSULTATION STRATEGY

APPENDIX B - RECORD OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

APPENDIX C - COMMUNITY (SCOPING) SURVEY AND REPORT

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: an outstanding landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them. Regulated by Natural England
AuW	Ascott-under-Wychwood
CFO	Community First Oxfordshire: the independent charity helping rural Oxfordshire Villages with community matters assisting the Milton under Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan
ECP & WO	Evenlode Catchment Partnership & Wild Oxfordshire
MuW	Milton-under-Wychwood
NP	Neighbourhood Plan, also referred to as Neighbourhood Development Plan, the mechanism introduced to enable local communities to influence local planning matters
NPSG	[Milton-under-Wychwood] Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
PC	[Milton-under-Wychwood] Parish Council
SWOT	An assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to identify significant issues in a structured framework
TOR	Terms of Reference
WFT	Wychwood Forest Trust
WODC	West Oxfordshire District Council: the local planning authority.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Consultation Statement, together with the Appendices, has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. These require that when a qualifying body submits a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to the local planning authority it must also provide a Consultation Statement. Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain:

- Details of the people and bodies who were consulted about the proposed NP, and explanation of how they were consulted
- A summary of the main issues and concerns raised by the people consulted
- A description of how these issues and concerns have been considered, and where relevant, addressed in the proposed NP.

This Consultation Statement sets out:

- the background to preparation of the Plan
- a summary of the engagement and consultation that has helped to shape and inform preparation of the Plan
- details of those consulted about the Plan at the various stages of plan preparation and the extent to which efforts were made to ensure the Plan was prepared with support and input from the local community
- a description of the changes made to policies as the Plan emerged in response to consultation, engagement and critical review.

The process and techniques involved in seeking community engagement and preparing the Submission NP were appropriate to the purpose of the Plan. The extent of engagement is considered by the Milton-under-Wychwood (MuW) - Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) to fulfil the obligations set out in the Regulations.

The Consultation Statement supports and describes the process of plan making as envisaged through the Localism Act 2011 and the associated Regulations, and sets out how it has been applied in the parish of MuW. This has improved the Plan and ensured that it best meets community expectations and the aspirations of the Parish Council (PC).

2.0 APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

The aims of the MuW NP consultation process were:

- to involve and engage the community as much as possible throughout all consultation stages of Plan development
- to carefully consider all feedback at each stage so that the Plan was informed by the views of local people and other stakeholders from the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process
- to ensure events took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken
- to ensure that the results of consultation were fed back to residents and businesses and made available to read via the Parish Council website as soon as possible after the consultation events.

To help achieve these aims, the NPSG was guided by Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) and worked to a consultation strategy as detailed in **APPENDIX A - CONSULTATION STRATEGY**.

3.0 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

In preparing the Plan, the PC has tried to go beyond the minimum required by legislation for community consultation and involvement. Because of the importance of consultation and engagement, the NPSG engaged in a range of consultation methods as detailed below:

- Public meetings – widely advertised and well attended
- Community Survey questionnaires hand delivered to, and collected from, each household
- Visits by NPSG members to schools to engage pupils
- Young Peoples Survey made available to 7-17 age group
- Quarterly parish newsletter delivered to each household
- Key draft plan documentation and minutes of NPSG monthly meetings and PC meetings published on PC Website
- Results of Community Surveys published on the PC Website
- Posters and notifications placed on Parish noticeboards, the village library, and other well used public places
- Draft (Hard Copy) NP documents made available in the village library
- Communication with key village groups, such as the Women’s Institute, Scout and Guide groups.

The NPSG held open meetings to involve and seek feedback from the whole village at key stages:

- 2nd December, 2017, Public Meeting to present results of the Community (Scoping) Survey, to launch the NP and to seek views about the future of the village
- 4th October, 2018, Meeting with PC and Survey Volunteers to present and discuss the Community Survey Report
- 6th October, 2018, Public Meeting to present and discuss the Community Survey Report
- 7th October, 2018, Public Meeting to present and discuss the Community Survey Report
- 6th July, 2019, NP Stall at the Village Fete
- 28th August, 2021, Leaflets and response forms to all households and businesses inviting feedback about the draft NP by 25th September 2021
- 11th September, 2021, Public Consultation meeting on content of the draft NP.

Details of the events and activities, participants and what was discussed are documented along with highlights of publicity and community communication are detailed in **APPENDIX B - RECORD OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**.



Community consultation event to explore scope and themes for the plan (Dec 2017)

3.1 Consultation on the designated Neighbourhood Plan area

On 21st September 2016, the PC voted to proceed with the process of developing a NP and it was decided that the Planning Sub-committee should continue to explore this. As the qualifying body, the PC applied to West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) to propose the whole of the parish as the neighbourhood area to be designated. This area included the village of MuW, the hamlet of Upper Milton plus the settlements of Heath Farm on Lyneham Road, The Bungalow Holding, Springhill Farm, High Lodge Farm, Lower Farm, Milton Downs Farm, Quarry Hill Cottage, Crows Castle and the Sewage Works.

Under the Neighbourhood Planning (Amendment) Regulations 2016, the proposal qualified for designation without consultation or decision from WODC and the designation was made by WODC on 1st March 2017.

3.2 Consultation on the need, scope and themes for the Neighbourhood Plan

The PC arranged a Community Survey during April 2017 to help evidence community interest in and potential content for a NP. The PC, assisted by CFO, prepared the Community (Scoping) Survey content and questionnaires were hand delivered by PC volunteers to all (740) households.

The Community (Scoping) Survey gave all households in the parish the opportunity to express an opinion on the following questions:

- What do you love about living in Milton-under-Wychwood?
- What do you think could be improved about Milton-under-Wychwood?
- Do you think producing a NP for Milton-under-Wychwood is a good idea?

Households were also asked to indicate which themes on the following list should be included as policies in the NP:

- Wildlife
- Landscape
- Historic Environment/Heritage
- Open Spaces /Footpaths etc
- Recreation/Leisure Facilities
- Community Facilities
- Housing style
- Housing Numbers
- Type of Housing
- Location/distribution of development
- Second Homes/Holiday Homes
- Transport/Traffic
- Economy/Jobs.

Finally, households were asked to state any other topics they felt should be covered in the NP, and were invited to provide an email address should they wish to be kept in touch and consulted about the NP and other Parish Council activities.

138 completed Survey questionnaires were collected by the PC after 16th April 2017 and CFO was asked by the PC to produce an independent report on the Survey results. CFO found that **91% of respondents thought it was a good idea to have an NP**. The results are detailed in **APPENDIX C - COMMUNITY (SCOPING) SURVEY AND REPORT**.

On 19th July, 2017, the PC agreed to go ahead with the development of a NP. On 18th September 2017, the first meeting of the NPSG took place. Initially the group comprised three Parish Councillors and four volunteers (all residents of the village) who agreed to join a steering group to help guide the development of the NP. The NPSG agreed their Terms of Reference (TOR) and submitted them to the PC for approval. The PC voted in favour of the TOR at the November 2017 PC meeting and published them on the PC website.

In April 2018, CFO assisted the NPSG with a brainstorming session to help identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) for the parish. The feedback from the earlier December 2017 public consultation was also used to help inform the SWOT analysis. A copy of the SWOT analysis is included in **APPENDIX F - STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT)**.

The NPSG used the results of the Community (Scoping) Survey and the SWOT analysis to help define the objective themes for the NP.

3.3 Community Survey used to seek opinion on various community themes

CFO, liaising with the NPSG, developed a NP Community Survey questionnaire based on themes developed from earlier consultations. The Community Survey gave all households in the parish the opportunity to express an opinion on various community issues (including parking, traffic, infrastructure, housing development and environment) and to register their own housing need should they have one.

In February 2018, the Community Survey was distributed to 800 households and 540 completed Community Survey questionnaires were collected by the NPSG or posted directly to CFO using Freepost envelopes. This represented a **response rate of 67.5%**.

The Community Survey included seven sections as follows:

- Part 1 - Our Community
- Part 2 - The Environment
- Part 3 - Character and Heritage
- Part 4 - You and Your Household
- Part 5 - Housing Needs
- Part 6 - New Housing
- Part 7 - Transport and Movement

CFO analysed the Community Survey results and a copy of the report is included at **APPENDIX E - COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT**.

3.4 Young People's Survey

In addition a Young People's Survey was also developed by CFO and the NPSG for the age range of 7 - 17 years. This was undertaken alongside the Community Survey and focussed on facilities for young people and sought opinion on the following village topics:

- Clubs and activities
- Recreation and sports facilities
- Safety when walking and cycling
- Transport
- Population and housing growth
- Green spaces
- Wildlife, plants and flowers.

CFO analysed the Young People's Survey results and a copy of the report is included at: **APPENDIX D - YOUNG PEOPLE'S SURVEY AND REPORT**.

3.5 Presentation of the Community Survey and Young People’s Survey Results

The reports for the Community Survey and Young People’s Survey were both presented to the public in two well-advertised identical open-house discussion sessions on 6th and 7th October, 2018.



Community meeting to discuss Community Survey results (Oct 2018)

3.6 Neighbourhood Plan Information Stall at the Village Fete

Complimentary to the foregoing Surveys, the NPSG also established an information stall at the 2019 annual Village Fete. The Fete is a popular and well attended community event and on 6th July, 2019, NPSG members talked with visitors throughout the day using charts and diagrams to illustrate emerging themes of the NP. A register of feedback was maintained during the event and comments were recorded for later reference during the development of the draft NP. Also, during the day over 70 people responded to a “tell us your favourite view in the parish” invitation by completing a simple Form. This information was used to help evidence work on the Key Views policy. A sample of the feedback register and favourite views form is included in **APPENDIX J - SAMPLE PUBLICITY AND ENGAGEMENT MATERIAL.**



Neighbourhood Plan stall at the village fete



Milton-under-Wychwood Fete on the Village Green

3.7 Consultation on the draft NP and Policies

By mid 2021, the NPSG were ready to consult with the community about the content of the draft NP but, because of ongoing Covid-19 concerns, it was felt that attendance at a public meeting would be very limited due to social distancing precautions. Under the circumstances, it was decided that to reach the whole community it would be more effective to ask them to review the draft NP via the PC web site.

This was accomplished by producing a very instructive Leaflet and Response Form which the NPSG delivered to every household by 28th August 2021. Instructions provided the web link to the draft NP (via the PC website) and for completing and returning the Response Form. The Leaflet also provided alternative instructions for those households without access to computers, or those with mobility problems. Responses were requested by 25/09/2021. A copy of the Leaflet and Response Form can be seen in **APPENDIX J - SAMPLE PUBLICITY AND ENGAGEMENT MATERIAL.**

A public meeting was also arranged for 11th September 2021 with full Covid precautions in place. Twenty-nine members of the community joined NPSG members in a presentation before breaking out in to smaller groups led by NPSG members to discuss each of the themes. A summary of the feedback received during these consultations is detailed in **APPENDIX K - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION EVENT - FEEDBACK SUMMARY.**



Public consultation workshop to present and discuss NP themes and policies (Sep 2021)



The NP Facilities theme and policy is discussed in a public consultation meeting (Sep 2021)

3.8 Consulting on issues and options

Development of the NP was discussed at each PC meeting and councillors endorsed the strategy and objectives of the NP.

3.9 6-week pre-submission consultation under Regulation 14

The Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation commenced 6th December 2021 and ran for 6 weeks ending on 20th January 2022. The consultation event was widely advertised as follows:

- PC Website
- Posters on village notice boards
- Flyer/Response Forms delivered to every household.

Letters and/or emails were also sent to the consultees below, and the distribution list and sample letters are included in:

**APPENDIX G - ORGANISATIONS, PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES CONTACTED, and
APPENDIX H - EXAMPLE CONSULTEE LETTERS AND NOTIFICATIONS.**

- County Council, District Council and neighbouring Parish Councils
- Our MP, County Councillor and District Councillor
- Owners of land that the draft NP proposes should be designated as “Local Green Spaces”
- Owners of Land included in the draft NP’s proposed Blue-Green Corridors
- Owners of property specifically included in the draft NP’s Facilities and Infrastructure policies
- Owners of properties identified in the draft NP as “Non-designated Assets”
- Various other organisations, the responsibilities of which are directly related to the contents of the draft NP like the Environment Agency, Cotsway Housing Association, Cotswolds Conservation Board, Wychwood Forest Trust, Network Rail, Thames Water, Wild Oxfordshire, Natural England and Historic England.

4.0 ISSUES RAISED AND CHANGES MADE AFTER REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

The issues raised during the Regulation 14 consultation and the follow up changes that were made are detailed in:

APPENDIX L – LIST OF RESPONDENTS AND RESPONSES TO REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The MuW NP is the outcome of over four years of community engagement in various forms which also took into account the communication limitations caused by COVID-19 restrictions. It comprises a set of locally specific planning policies intended to guide development management decisions on planning applications, so that they better reflect the community’s expectations concerning controls and support for development in the Milton-under-Wychwood parish.

We have received considerable support and guidance from many sources during the plan-making process. We are satisfied that the outcome from that support, and the manner in which community aspirations have been captured through the proposed planning policies, creates a NP which lends sufficient support to appropriate sustainable development proposals as they arise.

The Plan provides a set of planning policies that seek to support and guide decisions on sustainable development proposals. We believe that the draft Plan is a fair reflection of the

majority of views expressed by the local community throughout the various stages of plan preparation.

All legal obligations regarding the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans have been adhered to by the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (NPSG). The draft Plan is supported by a Basic Conditions Statement and by this Consultation Statement both of which adequately cover the requirements set out in the Regulations. MuW PC has no hesitation in presenting the Plan as a policy document that has the support of the majority of the local community which has been fully involved in its preparation at all stages.

This Consultation Statement completes the range of tasks undertaken to demonstrate that publicity, consultation and engagement on the Plan has been meaningful, effective, proportionate and valuable in shaping the Plan which will benefit residents in the MuW NP Area by promoting sustainable development.
