

MCNP Regulation 14 Engagement Meeting

Held in Kirtlington Parish Church 31st January 2024.

Question and Answer Session.

Tom Lewis, Parishioner

My name is Tom Lewis and I've been in the village for 34 years and we have a cottage, the last historic cottage, going northwards out of the village.

Jersey Cottages has been in discussion for years. My view is that it should be solely for people who are entering in at a lower income bracket. The problem with Kirtlington that's getting worse is (a) that we're all getting older and (b) we've not got our young community, for example, my daughters cannot afford to purchase in this village. So, we will end up with a completely old community and a very poor and very narrow demographic. So that would be my question. How is the control of who can buy these cottages, how is that going to be maintained and enforced? Because quite often these developments start with low-cost housing and end up with that being diluted.

If you go to the Lake District you actually have a scheme there whereby the person that can sell the properties, well within the park, are designated properties for people who work within a local area, a very local area, and the prices of those properties are different from the remaining properties around, and this has helped, in a small part, to ensure that young workers, people that we need to do farming jobs, people that we need to work the infrastructure, can live in this village.

The opportunity for that to happen has dwindled with council houses being privatised. I think we need to think about that carefully.

It would be dreadful if these two sites just became million pound or in excess of a million-pound, executive homes rather than catering for people who will keep our community going for longer.

My second question, I know I shouldn't ask it, but what is going to happen to traffic in this area if (a) I think the park gets to 1,300 more properties and (b) locally with this development, and also where is the access going to come out from that road that I know is really difficult to reverse into?

Martin Lipson, Chair MCNP Forum

Thank you very much. Let's see if I can answer them in the order that you ask them. No, I'll do them in the reverse order. First of all, any new housing in any village will generate more traffic. It's inevitable and there's not a huge amount we can do about that. I think managing the traffic has to do with...it's a complex thing.

There are ideas around at the moment, some of you may have heard of, called 20-minute neighbourhoods, and one of our policies on sustainable travel is about encouraging people to walk or cycle wherever they can. So, finding sites that are suitable, that are not too far from where people need to get to, the school, the pub, the shop, the church, wherever it may be, the community centre, is a target, but it's often a very difficult target to meet. Owners of sites don't necessarily make the sites that we're interested in available. Owners of sites may not put forward a site that you would be interested in.

So, traffic, yes, is definitely an issue and some people have made it very clear that they think Kirtlington and other villages in our Neighbourhood Plan area are already saturated with too much traffic and that there should be no more housing. That is certainly a point of view I'll come back to that probably later.

But let me try tackling your other question, which is a really important one.

The whole point of the neighbourhood plan engaging with the idea of having more housing in some of our villages is to meet that local need that you have described. It is exactly why we are doing it. We want to try to meet the needs of people who live in those villages. These are older people who want to downsize. (I'm one of them. I'm trying to downsize. So far, unsuccessfully, and I'm not sure whether I'll be able to find anywhere in my village that we can move to). And it's a common problem. Nearly everybody in our sort of area that I talk to is thinking about that kind of problem.

Younger people, people who have had children and grown up in the village, can't afford to stay in the village. The prices are sky high. So how do you develop a scheme that is capable of dealing with that kind of problem?

The answer that we're looking at is something called a Community Land Trust. Community Land Trusts have been going about ten years or a bit more. There is something called the Oxfordshire Community Land Trust, which we are talking to.

There is a Community Land Trust network nationally, which we have become members of. And we are working with various experts on developing that way forward. A Community Land Trust can work with landowners, and that's what we're doing. We're talking to all landowners that we've identified as being potential housing sites, about the possibility that they would sell land to the Community Land Trust. The Community Land Trust is constituted generally as what is called a Community Benefit Society. It used to be called something else, which I can't remember. But it is a legal entity that gives it certain powers and these powers include the possibility of keeping the houses in their ownership in perpetuity which means, effectively, that they can't be bought and sold for a profit.

I won't go into all the technicalities of this, but take my word for it, there are quite a few of these projects already on the ground and that's the way they work. So they are, like your Lake District example, focused in a particular way with powers that allow them to provide the housing to local people and when those local people move on, in one way or another, for the house to be passed on to other local people with no change in the value of that property.

We are still learning how all that works, and I'm not sure I can answer any more questions on that at the moment. It's early days yet, but we are talking to the land owners, and we are looking into exactly how that could work.

So, the ambition is that it would not be the conventional developer who comes along and builds what they want to build at the profit that they wish to make and generally that is not going to meet the needs of the kind of people I've just been talking about. We are hoping that some of the land owners at least will be prepared to give a try to this other way of doing it. We'll be able to show them successful examples elsewhere in Oxfordshire, and elsewhere in the country of how this works.

I hope that goes some way to answering your question.

David Richardson, KPC Councillor and Parishioner

Both are very good questions, but if we can try and keep it to one question at a time, please.

Simon Holland, Cherwell District Councillor and Parishioner

I've been a resident of this village for many years. I can't really ask just one question, as a whole load of questions jumped out at me when I read through this, but I'll try and keep this incredibly short.

First of all, I think Local Plans, and specifically Neighbourhood Plans are extremely important, so it's very important to get these things right. So, having read through this, one of the things that jumps out at me is as follows: there is a number mentioned in Appendix 6, that's this number 46, which seems to be an extrapolation

of a whole villages' number, which was from a withdrawn consultation document that has no relevance in fact, so why is that included in Appendix 6 and doesn't this sort of thing facilitate a false narrative?

Secondly....

Martin Lipson

I think before we go on, you'll have to tell me exactly what you're talking about, as I haven't got that document here.

Simon Holland

Well, it's Appendix 6 of your document, so it's the one that is er...

Martin Lipson

That's the site allocation report?

Simon Holland

The site allocation report, yes.

Martin Lipson

Which bit of it are you referring to?

Simon Holland

The opening paragraph.

Martin Lipson

Oh, OK.

Simon Holland

That's good to start with.

Martin Lipson

And the opening paragraph says what?

Simon Holland

It says, it says, it talks about... [inaudible]. Can I ask the other questions first, and then perhaps, otherwise we'll spend a lot of time talking about that. So, despite there being no demonstrable evidence, there's no housing needs assessment on the village, just the general one for the er, from Mid Cherwell. But, there's no demonstrated, demonstrable need for housing. So why is the number increased from 17 to 37 bearing in mind my question as well?

Thirdly, you say you've worked very closely with CDC, so why did you completely ignore the planning officer's report and the result of the planning meeting only a week before your Forum meeting and why are you trying to push a site that the council has found to be completely unsuitable?

Fourth, if Corner Farm wins on appeal, sorry I'll say that again, if Corner Farm wins on appeal, will you amend your site selection and will you continue to push for 37? or would that be treated as a windfall site? And then this is an iterative process, of course, and your proposal hasn't even had first review from CDC. If it condemns your chosen site as being unsuitable, in other words, being consistent with what their planning officer said, then you have to come up with an alternative. Could I ask you, where is that alternative?

Martin Lipson

All these are rather complicated questions to give brief answers to. It may be better if I try and answer them briefly and then talk to you after the meeting about the detail. Without having the document in front of me that you're referring to, I can't answer your question about the opening paragraph, so I'll deal with that later on.

The essential thing about these sites is that they are the sites that came out best of a group of sites, none of which were optimal. So Kirtlington does not offer up any sites that are perfect.

And so, the team effectively has said 'we have to put these into a ranked order, which is the 'least worst' if you like. These two have come out as the ones that are preferred. I don't think anybody in the team would claim that they are the best sites that Kirtlington could have.

But if you compare the various attributes of all the sites, and all the detail is in Appendix 6, (anybody who has the time to go through it, it's a very large document) I think you will find an explanation for why these two have risen to the surface, if you like. The process of advocating sites is a completely different process to dealing with planning applications.

So, if at the same time as what I've just described, a planning application goes in on one of the sites, and it is reported on by the planning officers, that does not need to have any impact on the thinking of the assessment team. They are two parallel but completely separate processes. And although, obviously, the issues that are brought up by the planning officer in her report are known to the assessment team, it doesn't mean that they have to come to the same conclusion.

So, I think that is a reasonable answer to give you, but I would be very happy to discuss it with you in more detail after the meeting, if you'd like to. I think there was a third question, I'm not sure I answered, but I have a feeling that this is a bit too detailed for the meeting, and it would be better if we can have a conversation later. Is that all right?

Paul Clifford, Parishioner

I've been a Kirtlington resident for about 10 years. Thank you very much for another lucid presentation, Martin, and for all the work that your team has done in getting us this far.

I wanted to raise a question about what seems to me a rather rigid adherence to the concept of historic settlements. This is a vital concept within planning applications and the two most recent planning applications at Corner Farm and Jersey Cottages were both turned down, at least in part, as a result of being deemed to be without the historic settlement of the village.

It seems to me that the logical conclusion of saying we cannot build anything outside the historic settlement of the village is to say that we may only build where our forefathers built and that seems to me to be a recipe for ossification.

I would much rather, given the colossal and overwhelming demand for housing throughout the country that the policy reflected something along the lines of a modest, reasonable and proportionate extension of the historic settlement, of a given settlement, which would allow a degree of flexibility which otherwise we will not have.

If we do not do this, all we will be able to do is to do the extremely modest little bits of infilling on existing sites as they come up, which will not in my view go anywhere near meeting the historic demand which is currently overwhelming and historically unprecedented.

Martin Lipson

Thank you for that. First of all, thank you for thanking us for the work that we've been putting into this. Just to remind you that we are all volunteers. Many parish councillors and other volunteers have put a huge amount of time into this. In my own case it's pretty much what I do for a living, except nobody pays me for it. What I've done in my retirement. It's much appreciated when people do thank us.

I agree with everything you've said about making sure that villages can stay alive and should effectively allow small areas of expansion. That I think is what we're doing here.

What we're proposing to the best extent that we can. I think I explained right at the beginning that the settlement area is meant to show where development can happen and where it cannot happen and we could say we're contradicting our own policy by putting these blue areas, attaching them onto the existing settlement area where we're not supposed to develop and that is because there is no choice.

If you do want to try and find a solution to where older people are going to downsize to, or younger people are going to be able to afford, you have to build some new dwellings and somewhere has to be found for those. So that is exactly the intent of these areas.

Development on these areas may or may not proceed and the extent of it is not clear yet. A lot of discussion and negotiation has to happen. The type of housing that will be built and who will be building it? None of these things are decided yet. But we are trying to make a start and our thinking aligns very much with what you just described.

Mark Harrison, Parishioner

Resident on and off since 1960.

Just going back to the site selection process, can you perhaps tell me why the site assessment team for Kirtlington were chosen? I ask that question because I question a little bit of an independent view perhaps being needed due to the obvious personal views, preferences and perhaps biases of the people involved, we're all ultimately biased by our own individual views anyway.

Martin Lipson

Well, I'm glad you said that last bit because I think that is true. I think everybody has opinions and especially when there's a long history of concerns about the development in a village like Kirtlington. You'd be hard-pressed to find anybody who didn't have a view one way or the other.

So, the principle of a site assessment team for the site allocation process is that it should be done by local people who know the village concerned and so we asked the Parish Council to nominate a group who would be familiar with the village and who would know about ownership, who would know about availability or would find out about it and would be able to think.

For example, in Steeple Aspen, where I was a member of the team, we knew of sites that some people didn't even know were possible and so we included them in our search. We looked into them to see whether the owners would be prepared to consider them and some of the owners were surprised to be approached and never thought that their site could be considered for housing. In the end, those sites probably fell by the wayside for various reasons, but it was that local knowledge that was important in order to be thorough. The idea was that you would not be open to criticism later for having forgotten about this site or that site and never considered such and such a site. So, the attempt here was to be as inclusive as possible to include all possible sites with the local knowledge that the team had.

The decision about who formed the team was taken by the parish council. That's the way it should be and that's the way it has been done by all neighbourhood planners that have done this process.

Margaret Forey, Parishioner

I apologise for being an incomer now of twenty-five years. I would like to agree entirely to what the first speaker said about local needs.

I had never lived in a village community before I came here and one thing that is patently obvious to me is how vital the links are: the historic links go from people who are familiar with the village, who are forefathers of the village, who have a local connection and local attachments.

I like very much this idea of a Land Trust which would allow such properties to be kept for the children of current villagers. I really do agree. Though I'm sorry that no, perhaps smaller, development of a Corner Farm seems to be even considered. Thinking of the needs of older people in the system that you're talking about, it would be much more accessible to the central facilities of the village than something right up at the top. I wonder whether in future that might be considered as a possible addition to the plan. Thank you, that's all.

Martin Lipson

Thank you very much for that comment. I would not rule out anything really. Things change. Ownerships change. People come and go. Ideas come and go. We have to be open to all these possibilities.

As I said earlier, one thing I have discovered is that producing a neighbourhood plan is you're in a changing environment all the time. So, I don't think I would say anything has been ruled out. If circumstances change and that site you're referring to comes round again in some way, having had a refusal, and a different proposition is put to the local community that they support then there may be a different outcome.

John East, Parishioner

I believe that Heyford Park that's leaving Mid-Cherwell forum. Could you tell me the reason why that is and what effect that's going to have on the finances of Mid-Cherwell forum?

Martin Lipson

Yes, it is. Heyford Park Parish Council is considering leaving the neighbourhood plan because they feel that as a growing new community, they ought to have a neighbourhood plan of their own and so that is under discussion and I'm not going to say anything further about it because it is ongoing.

John East

What about the finance situation? How close is that?

Martin Lipson

The finance situation is not a concern.

Peter Shaw, Parishioner

Hello, my name is Peter Shaw. I'm 20 years here in Kirtlington.

I'd just like to reiterate what Tom said about affordable housing and keeping things in perspective. I hope the developers, what we want are the developers telling us what they propose. But just from my point of view, I'm just a little confused as to how the system works.

You probably explained this when you were talking about it initially. Does the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan have the ability to circumvent what the CDC decide? And given that that blue area MC3A was turned down twice by the CDC, does that not mean we are getting nowhere because CDC will not allow it in the first place?

Martin Lipson

Well, it's a complicated situation and I'm not sure I can give you a very clear answer. Things change over time. The Cherwell local plan is currently in force and the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan is currently in force. Both of them are under review and the policies in the future will change. So, it depends on which version of which plan is in force at the time that a new planning application goes in. So, if we're saying something might happen in two years' time and we have had our reviewed plan approved then our plan would be the most recent plan with permission and its policies would take precedence over Cherwell's. If it was the other way around and Cherwell's new plan was in force and ours was not then their plan would take precedence. That's the way it works.

Dan Moore, Developer

Hi everyone, my name is Dan Moore. I am a consultant for Corner Farm. My question, Martin, just going back to that point there it's not a question, it's a point regarding that. Obviously if English Heritage make a comment regarding that development and if they oppose it then your neighbourhood plan application obviously will fall away. Is that correct?

But that's not the question, sorry. My actual question is to do with the strategic environmental assessment and your consultant's report. The report outlines many recommendations regarding Kirtlington, the built environment, the historic environment, biodiversity, all of which it says that recommendations that the sites that you've chosen shouldn't be allocated. I'm just wondering why the report that has been commissioned by Mid-Cherwell is being ignored or are you waiting for English Heritage and CDC to step in?

Martin Lipson

Well, I'm not aware that our consultants have advised us to do something against what we're doing. I think you'll have to be more specific about that one. The question about English Heritage is an important one. The way this works is that the Neighbourhood Plan puts forward its proposals and when we submit our plan to Cherwell and they go out to consultation, the statutory bodies such as English Heritage will then comment on what we have proposed. If they say we don't like it, we object, then the examiner of our plan will look at the objections and take them into account.

The examiner is not duty bound to agree with objectors. I'll give you an example of that: the owner of one of the local green spaces that we put forward in our original Neighbourhood Plan in 2019, the owner being the Diocese of Oxford, who owned the allotments in Steeple Aston, objected to us having put forward the designation, the protection if you like, of the allotments. They said we want to be able to develop these allotments in the future. The examiner said no, not interested in that, and approved our protection of the allotments. So, owners and statutory bodies can express their views and it is the examiner who decides which way to go.

So, you use the phrase 'fall away'. Our proposals would fall away if the examiner required them to fall away, but if the examiner did not find in favour of English Heritage's view, then our policy would become part of the statutory development plan.

Jamie Elwin, Parishioner

Former planner. You started by saying that Cherwell District Council had identified the need for 500 houses in 11 villages. That is correct. In which case that's roughly 50 per village of which we are one. So somehow, room for housing has to be found, if not on this site.

I think somebody also asked you earlier, have you got a plan B? And I think I would reiterate, have you got a plan B?

Martin Lipson

OK, well, first of all, that is not yet policy. It is a proposal from Cherwell that there should be 11 larger villages with 500 new houses between them. The original version of that proposal actually had the numbers for each village. They then withdrew that and now it simply says 500 between the 11 villages, but it isn't policy and by the time that that version of the Local Plan is published, it may have changed. So, as I said earlier on, what we are doing with these blue sites is an insurance policy. We are deciding if it is necessary to have some more housing in our villages, we are deciding where those sites should be, rather than letting Cherwell, because if we don't, it will be decided by Cherwell, one way or another, either by planning applications that are put in by speculative developers, or by Cherwell itself, which can allocate the sites without consulting the local community.

We decided that was not the right way to do things, and it would be better to prepare for the possibility that that will become a requirement. So, it is not a requirement yet and, incidentally, that is the answer to the question that was asked earlier about why we increased from 17 to the current figure, 35, I think it is and that is because we are responding to a threat. If that threat does not materialise then we will reconsider and look at the situation again. It's one of those changing situations that I have been referring to.

John Harrison, Parishioner

The Wolf Development, which is going to end up putting more sewage into the sewage treatment works, and then that goes into the River Cherwell. Does anyone at the time do an assessment of the existing sewage treatment works and their capacity to take it into development?

Martin Lipson

Very important issue, which is common to quite a few of the villagers around here who are already suffering with problems of backflow and so forth from the sewage system. When a planning application for a larger development goes in, Thames Water are supposed to look at it in detail and say whether their existing system will cope. Our experience is that they do not do this job properly. They often say, "Oh well, we'll just allow it. We're not going to object." And more problems then occur. It's a very poor part of our planning system that these utility companies are not required to make changes in response to growing communities and it's something that a lot of major plan groups are concerned about. They don't have the power to do much about it other than to object to the powers that be, if you like, to our and so forth. It is quite a widespread issue and concern amongst neighbourhood plan groups.

Simon Holland

There was something you said about insurance, and I don't really understand this, so perhaps you could explain it, but if you put into the Neighbourhood Plan a number for development, that means you will almost certainly get that development. I used to be a developer, I would have thought that was a developer's charter, because if I looked at those sites, I'd go, "Oh good, Kirtlington Village, wants 37 houses or 35 houses or whatever it is, they are not going to get them on the registered park and garden, so what I am going to do is option every other site in Kirtlington and your site assessors have very kindly laid them all out for me and then, with the power I have as a developer, I can tackle each one of those sites to get my 35."

So, I don't see what insurance that is, I take it as quite the reverse. I mean the position at the moment.... Our Neighbourhood Plan, which is excellent in many ways, but it has a number for this village, 17. Outside the Neighbourhood Plan, if we were to be just reliant on the Local Plan, the pressure on this village to have houses at the current moment is zero and that's because villages aren't allocated individual amounts. Large amounts are allocated to all the villages.

And as you all know, what has happened in Cherwell over the last 10 years is there has been an enormous amount of development, not in this village, but that has absorbed the housing allocation for the villages. So here we have the irony is that putting in 17 means that we'll probably get 17, whereas we wouldn't have to

take any if it was without that. We should only be building according to what we need in the village, not what other people say we need. So please explain how the insurance policy works, because it seems to be the reverse in my understanding.

Martin Lipson

You have to remember where the 17 came from in the first place. It was the three villages which are identified in Cherwell's last version and current version of the Local Plan. (That included Fritwell in this area). These villages were all again called category A villages, expected to take further development. The Neighbourhood Plan in its first iteration was responding to that by saying, "OK, maybe it's quite a good idea for the health of our village, for the reasons we've already discussed tonight, to have a modest amount of extra development, and we will therefore say how much of it we think we should have". And those figures were approximately a 5% increase in the population of those three villages.

The Parish Councils at the time discussed that and agreed that that was a good way forward, which is how we brought 17 into the Neighbourhood Plan in the first place. It's an expression of the wish of the Parish Council at the time that the village should expand to that extent. The same thing is happening again now, except that the wish is slightly different and it's a response to the different offering from the District Council.

Simon Holland

Yes, but you haven't answered my question with respect as to how that is ensured, because as I said, that need has evaporated. Currently, outside the Neighbourhood Plan, there's no need for 17 houses.

Martin Lipson

What need has evaporated?

Simon Holland

The need to build 17 houses in Kirtlington.

Martin Lipson

Why has it evaporated?

Simon Holland

Well, because the seven hundred houses, or whatever it was that were required for villages through E, were more than exceeded by development in the last ten years.

Martin Lipson

No, that's supply, not demand. You're talking about supply. I'm talking about demand.

Simon Holland

Well, then could you please point then to the housing needs assessment that shows that we want 17 houses in this village.

Martin Lipson

I don't see any point in questioning the 17 that has been in the policy since 2019. You're four years late, I'm afraid, with your point.

Simon Holland

Well, it's only an illustration of how this insurance policy of yours isn't going to work. You can't explain by just expanding, you know, a not very good policy to a larger extent is going to be better.

Martin Lipson

I think it's simply a matter of opinion whether it's a good policy. There are clearly people in this room and a lot of other people who think that allocating sites in the larger villages is a good policy because it's something that is coming from the community in response to a perceived need. A need is the one that you heard articulated by other speakers earlier on. For older people and younger people. That need is not going to go away.

Simon Young, Parishioner

Hi there. My name is Simon Young. I live opposite the school in the terrace there. I have a one-year-old, so not much time for that in a full-time job to be delving into appendices and looking at supporting documents. I have to just focus on the things that are important to me, I suppose. One thing that I would say is to build on what this gentleman said here and the gentleman over there talking about the sort of the curtilage of the village, I suppose. In the plan, talking about site MC3B, there's talk of retaining the wall, green barriers, lack of access here. But I think all of these sites, whether they're on the south side of the village, the north side of the village, the middle of the village, they're an opportunity to make the village better. We have maybe 500 years of different house types, all sort of beautiful, the way the houses are arranged around the greens. We have the particular style of the village as it is. And we should see a site like MC3B, that's the entrance to the village from the north, when you arrive at the village, that's an opportunity to make the village better.

You see a green, you see an arc of nice terrace houses, and they can be houses of small terraces for families. They can be houses of, all types, there could be, you know, a shop with space there. We shouldn't shut it behind a wall and say we just cram in as many houses as possible. We can make the village better. We can leave our mark, you know, for the next generation.

In improving, we don't just say this is curtains and stops today. We don't just squeeze in what we can and shut it all off and, you know, leave it like that. But sorry, the specific question was, in MC3B, the list of conditions for the site, do they prevent a developer from saying, well, the wall, it would actually be better to open that up to be agreed, if we've written it in the plan that the wall has to be protected, because it's a nice wall, but it's not particularly special, for example.

Martin Lipson

OK. Clearly, you have read this particular policy, so I appreciate the detail which you're referring to. The protection of the wall is a response to a general concern in the Neighbourhood Plan for the protection of stone walls in the Neighbourhood Plan area. It is not really a specific one to this site, other than that we know that some people might oppose development on the site, if that wall were to disappear, and so we've started with a number of criteria that we would hope a development on that site would adhere to, but all of those are up for grabs. They're all available for comment of the kind you've just made. I think you've already submitted comments on this, if I remember correctly.

Simon Young

I did submit a consultation comment, so I was just making a broader point on that development being a positive thing, if we make it so.

Martin Lipson

And I think that's a very helpful comment to make. It's nice to hear something positive said about these proposals. And I do think that I agree. This is what's called a gateway site. It's the first site you would see coming from the north of Kirtlington into the village. If it's really well designed and really carefully thought about, it can be, like any other really good development, a genuine asset: something that improves the village - it has to be really well done.

Our ambition for Community Land Trust is that it would be an exemplar. Something that people from all over the country would come to have a look at because it's been so well done. That's the ambition; and, incidentally, that is also the answer to Councillor Holland about developers moving in. We are hoping that our strategy will stop developers from moving in. We may be unsuccessful, but our strategy does not need to do the kind of thing that he is proposing.

Mark Harrison

This question is really around the needs of the school in the village. It probably applies to Steeple Aston as well. I understand that both schools are struggling with the numbers. It strikes me that a significant number of houses are needed, not only in the north of the village, but also at Corner Farm and the other site to ensure that we get the required numbers over the coming years to keep the school viable. We need houses, we need modest houses, with the sort of people who will send their children through the school education system at least to year 6 as far as the primary school is concerned. I just wondered how much emphasis on the future of the school is put in the thought process?

Martin Lipson

It's very much part of our thinking. We are trying to keep the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan area, all its villages, alive and sustainable for the future. Some of those villages have schools which require an input of new founders from time to time. We have to have a live village, not one that is dying on its feet. That's something that all villages know, and there are ways of achieving that. Our ideas in this Neighbourhood Plan very much support what you have just said.

Note on the transcript:

This Q and A session transcribed above followed a Regulation 14 engagement presentation on the draft Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2040 given by Martin Lipson, Chair of the MCNP Forum. The meeting was attended by 59 parishioners and hosted by Kirtlington Parish Council and the Council's MCNP representatives, with the following in attendance: Cllr Kay Chacksfield, Cllr Briony Enser, Cllr David Richardson, Christine Marsh and Helen MacBeth. The transcript is from a recording made in the church and some details were unclear owing to the church acoustic