

Lessons Learned
There's always a better way!

A Potted History (for those who arrived post April 2017)

The UWLNP was started in 2011 as a 10 Year Development Framework and was finally made in April 2017 following a positive vote of virtually 90%. Many who voted against the Plan lived in house adjoining sites listed in the Plan!

We published 12 Redhorn articles, delivered 12 posters, draft Policies and a detailed questionnaire to all houses, undertook 7 public Consultations including 3 voting sessions, and undertook 2 events aimed at the youth of the Parish

187 parishioners voted for or against sites and this resulted in them having 25% of the vote on the sites. This was the first-time parishioners, including Parish Councillors, had the chance to vote rather than just talk about, write letters or act as Consultees to WC about planning applications.

The Plan has started to reverse the trend of building 4 or 5 bedroomed houses. Of 23 properties approved or already built, there are sixteen 2 or 3 bedroomed houses and 2 bungalows.

9 affordable homes have been built or are included in the UWLNP plan. Only 4 would have been built without a made Plan. The Housing Needs Analysis undertaken by Wiltshire Council only found a need for 8 Affordable Homes, so the demand identified has been fulfilled.

The Plan has been instrumental in ensuring planning applications comply with the number and size of properties built and has closely followed the Design Statement in the Plan, which identifies how houses should 'look'.

The sites in the Plan were the most popular sites voted on by parishioners and sites also passed a very strict Site Assessment designed by the Steering Group.

With a Neighbourhood Plan

- Would the number of houses in Upavon been increased by 43?



With a Neighbourhood Plan?

- Would a Design Statement have improved new houses in Easterton?



Lessons Learned

1. Events overtook us as we started drafting the UWLNP before the Neighbourhood Planning Bill was enacted. We had no idea of how long it would take to get a Plan made, or of the complexities involved.
2. We recognise that we should have had better defined roles for Steering Group members.
3. With so many alterations, additions and amendments being made, we did not exercise adequate document control.
4. Our Wiltshire Council Link Officer was at best weak. His experience with other NPs, he was the Link Officer for, did not result in him guiding us adequately.
5. **You can't please all the people all the time – especially when it comes to housing developments!**

Going Forwards.....

1. The draft WC Local Plan says that 60 built or planned houses are in place, but it proposes 65 houses for Urchfont Parish in total up to 2036. 2 or 3 of the single house sites in the UWLNP might not be built so there is a shortfall of perhaps 7 houses.
2. A Development Group should be formed, which should include 4 Urchfont Parish Councillors and a review group. UPC should bear in mind that the Steering Group set up in 2012 had a retired Planning Officer, someone with a lifetime of work in Housing Associations and a Chartered Surveyor. This meant we see no need to employ an expensive 'Plan Maker', who might just 'cut and paste' Policies from other reviews of NPs.
3. Terms of Reference should be drafted and agreed by the Development Group. The Group should include parishioners with relevant skills.
4. Development sites should be chosen to protect the structure of the village - e.g. no development south of the B3098. This accords with the votes of the parishioners during the development of the plan.
5. Simon wonders if we should look for '**Rural Exception Sites**' which will provide cheaper land and therefore cheaper houses. Wiltshire Council should be asked if it is advantageous for them to appoint a Link Officer and if they have the resources! A new Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) would need to be undertaken to identify whether there is still a demand for Affordable Homes. The Affordable Homes built and planned to date more than satisfy the original need identified in the early Development of the UWLNP.
6. The Development Group should look to see if a 'Rural Exception Site' can be included. These are defined by The National Planning Policy Framework as, '*small sites used in perpetuity for affordable housing, where planning would not normally be granted.*' This would result in the land and finished house cost being considerably lower than sites within a Development Boundary and would therefore allow them to be sold in perpetuity at low prices.
7. The UPC's Clerk should be appointed as Secretary to the Development Group and his time funded by UPC unless the Development Group can raise funds itself.

Is the UWLNP still able to stop predatory house builders?

For NPs to be strong WC have to have a 5 year Housing Land Supply.

It currently has a 4.6 year supply, but Planners feel this position is defensible because the Local Plan is well under way and actual delivery to date is above target.

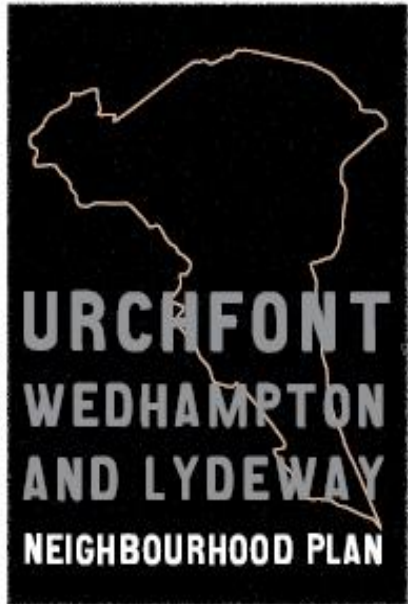
There are also a number of appeals which will be decided one way or the other in the next three months.

In the meantime we are somewhat open to unwanted applications and this was stated by the applicant who made an application recently at Lydeaway, who said the UWLNP was out of date!

A review of our Plan is therefore warranted.

Planning Practice Guidance

- The NPPF gives three examples of the types of changes and how they will be treated by WC:
- **Minor (non-material)** modifications to a neighbourhood plan or order are those which would not materially affect the policies in the plan or permission granted by the order. These may include correcting errors, such as a reference to a supporting document, and would not require examination or a referendum.
- **Material modifications** which do not change the nature of the plan or order would require examination but not a referendum. This might, for example, entail the addition of a design code that builds on a pre-existing design policy, or the addition of a site or sites which, subject to the decision of the independent examiner, are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan.
- Material modifications which do change the nature of the plan or order would require examination and a referendum. This might, for example, involve allocating significant new sites for development.



And Finally....

Questions, Comments, the Way Forward as you
see it?