Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Our Parish – Our Future – Our Say

Survey Results Meeting

30 April 2017

Agenda

- Welcome
  - Apologies for absence
  - Facilities and Safety Notices
  - Thank You To...
- Background
  - What is a Neighbourhood Plan
  - Our Journey So Far
- Sample and Response Rates
- Survey Results
- Next Steps
- Any Questions?

Thank You To...

- Princess Helena College for letting us host the meeting here
- The Primary School and The Church Committee for agreeing to let us host future meetings there
- The Insight Fountain and We Work With Data
- Colin Kendall (Creamers Printers)
- The Delivery / Collection Team Members
- Those who have volunteered other help – if we haven't been in touch yet we will shortly
- **Everyone who took part in the survey!**

Background: What is a Neighbourhood Plan

- Once made, a Neighbourhood Plan has statutory effect which the local authority must follow when determining planning policy and planning applications.
- It should have a vision and priorities up until 2031.
- These are some of the possible issues:
  - Housing: number, design, mix, location
  - Transport and rural roads – including traffic calming, footpaths, bridleways and access for visitors
  - Support for local businesses: development, connectivity, sustainability, building use
  - Community facilities for all age groups in the Parish, including green spaces and play areas
  - Long term growth in the village

Background: Our Journey So Far

June 14	Designated Area approved
June 26	Village Meeting decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan
July 14	Steering Group Inaugural Meeting
November 5	Drop in session – draft of Adult Questionnaire piloted
November 6	The Insight Fountain engaged
December	Young Residents Questionnaire piloted
December	Questionnaires designed and printing commissioned
January 12 to 15	Main delivery phase of questionnaires
Jan 28 to Feb 10	Collected completed questionnaires
February 13	Analysis begun
March 6	Initial analysis results review with The Insight Fountain
March 9	Additional analysis of open questions
April	Report completed and printed

The survey has been an opportunity none of us has ever had before.

We have reached this stage very quickly.

The survey has produced a body of evidence that will be of value to the whole Parish and its future endeavours.

Sample and Response Rate

Households

176 households in Preston

7 empty and 3 removed as out of scope

165 Households in study
plus Princess Helena College

8 declined / unable to take part

7 no answer

150 Households took part *plus PHC*

91% Household response rate

Individuals - Adults

336 adults aged 16+ in Preston

302 took part

90% Individual adult response rate

Individuals - Young Residents (Youth)

28 Young people aged 10-15

24 took part

86% Individual youth response rate

Plus Princess Helena College approx 30 young residents aged 11-15 of whom 7 took part

This is an excellent response rate and exceeds most Neighbourhood Plans.

We can be confident that the data is robust and is based on a sample that is representative of the population of Preston in 2017 giving reliable and valid results.

Whilst we were still doing the fieldwork (collecting questionnaires and delivering some late copies) our Market Researchers told us that we were getting an extraordinarily good response rate. Of the households who took questionnaires to complete about 98% returned an envelope – we were told "THIS IS ALMOST UNHEARD OF IN MODERN MARKET RESEARCH".

Well the great news is that there is a very high satisfaction rate with living in Preston.

You will see that 92% of adults are satisfied or very satisfied with living in Preston. Interestingly, those with children are notably more likely than those without to be very satisfied.

91% of adults and 69% of young people say it is very or quite important for Preston to have a Neighbourhood Plan.

We also asked what people liked most about living in Preston and 81% said green spaces and 60% said the community. Then we have the wonderful writing and pictures from the Under 10s. We asked them to say what they liked about living in Preston – and their work seems to sum up that it is the rural setting and things you can enjoy in it that we all say we like.

It will probably not be a surprise to anyone, that the biggest concern is traffic, transport and travel. Noise from Luton Airport, a poor bus service and badly maintained roads are concerns for residents of all ages.

As well as safety on the roads and transport, it is the lack of activities that our young people highlighted.

People are concerned about speeding traffic especially on certain roads and heavy traffic at certain times of the day.

A third of respondents said they would like a shop, and improving public transport and a reduction in traffic were the next most requested items.

Looking at what we have said we want to improve can add clarity and will help shape the objectives for our plan.

You've provided a lot of quality information about what is important, use and improvements you would like, if the money (time and people) became available. From a neighbourhood planning perspective we can develop policies that:

1. **Protect** the things which are important to us. Looking at usage and importance together, we can see that it is important to maintain each of these things even to those who seldom use them.

   For example: typical usage of green spaces, footpaths and the Red Lion ranges from three times a month to once a year - yet 80% of us think it very important these are maintained.

   The questions for the Young Residents are different in this section but the results indicate that the green spaces and facilities are important from the activities they support.

   This gives strength to policies that protect assets, even in the face of criticism of low usage. The statistics are also supported by the comments you gave in the open questions.

2. **Facilitate enhancements** to and creation of new amenities and facilities. A neighbourhood plan can set policies to support these enhancements, but it is outside the remit and capability of a Neighbourhood Plan to provide or make them happen.

A note about interpreting the frequency of use collected in question A1. The results have not been normalised to reflect how many can use each of the things. The bus to secondary school is an example - low usage does not indicate lack of importance, all those who need it may be using it.

In some cases the usage can show things are well used when it might seem not. You can go for a walk on the footpaths and hardly meet another person - so it is great to see that so many of us regularly use the paths.

Participation in leisure activities and the requests for more to do are interesting from a planning perspective only in as much as shaping policies for the places and assets used (now and future).

That an activity is fairly niche is not negative - being able to see (and demonstrate) the diversity of activities may be significant in shaping (and defending) our policies.

Outside of planning the questions and your answers to this (and the previous) section have great value. For example:

- Annual events are clearly well supported – the results are a "thank you" to the organisers.
- If you want to organise extra activities, the survey results are a great place to see if there are other like minded residents in the parish you could collaborate with. Don't forget our Young Residents have also provided a comprehensive list.
- Some residents commented they didn't know there was so much available until the survey - a useful side effect. The News Letter, Preston News Service and Parish Council mail shots are all available (as appropriate) communication channels to promote and discover what's on, issues and opportunities.

A lot of information was provided on current housing situations and views for development.

The main points from the questionnaires are that overall the preference is for:

- Small developments
- Two & three bedroom houses with gardens, off road parking, bicycle and scooter storage and low carbon footprint running
- Houses for families, local people, first time buyers and retirement dwellings.

The Steering Group will endeavour to include these points in the Neighbourhood Plan. We need to remember that the Neighbourhood Plan has to reflect the policies of the North Herts Local Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan enhances our control of planning and does not remove any of our existing rights. We still have the usual mechanisms to support or object to any development.

Once the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan are in place, they have a life span of 15 years until 2031.

Any developers wishing to build in Preston have to adhere to both plans and go through the usual planning application procedure with North Herts District Council. It is at this point that local residents can make their views known.

If planning permission is granted and the development goes ahead, it is managed by the contractor. As with all new build, the NHDC building inspector will visit at strategic points and all building regulations must be followed.

The Parish Council and the Steering Group have no part to play in the construction process.

Not surprisingly it is very important for residents to protect the green spaces and views that they have. The rural setting is why many people choose to live in the Parish. Walking in the countryside is a very popular activity.

98% of people agree that it is important to have green space such as woodlands and fields between Preston and neighbouring villages and towns.

95% agree it is important to minimise the impact of development on woodland, hedges, footpaths, bridleways, green lanes, ponds, streams, verges and geological features.

93% agree that it is very important or quite important to minimise the impact of development on historic buildings and the Conservation Area.

Environmental issues in the Parish include 58% of respondents who are concerned about dog fouling and 52% about litter.

By far the most concern is about fly tipping, with 86% saying they are very concerned or quite concerned about this.

Whilst we can't use the Neighbourhood Plan to protect the views in and around the Parish on average people identified 7 views. The impact on Wain Wood, which is a site of special scientific interest, is a consideration for the District Council when a planning application is determined.

54% of replies would like 20mph speed limits in selected locations.

This is something the Parish Council are going to look at when they have the evidence from this report. Reducing speed limits is a very involved process and could take up to 5 years.

The Speed Indicator Device coming into Preston from Luton has been successful. The Parish Council have decided to ask for another one to be installed on entry to the village from Hitchin.

The Steering Group has noted that overall people feel **a good mobile phone signal is more important than having a landline.**

Planning permission has been granted for a phone mast at Preston Reservoir.

The Parish Council have recently been in contact with Waldon Telecom who put in the application about when they were likely to start and were informed that:

- At this stage they do not have a forecast date of when the site will be built, they are at least 3 months away, possibly longer.

As with all planning applications, they have 3 years in which to complete the work.

The improved broadband has clearly been a game changer for those who have a good service. However, the survey shows that it is not the universal success we had hoped. There are a variety of reasons for why this is not the case so issues have to be addressed on an individual basis.

A key issue in getting a Neighbourhood Plan made (into planning law) is showing that everyone [in the designated area] has had the opportunity to have their say and that those who have spoken are a representative sample. For this survey this is supported by the high response rate and that:

- The demographic data for individuals and households from the survey matches the composition of the population from the 2011 Census - so in that respect we are representative.
- The Collection records show that every geographic area in the parish has been sufficiently represented. There is no cluster of households which have not taken part.

All the comments, of which there were many, have been noted. The Steering Group and the Parish Council will be looking at them at future meetings and addressing issues, as appropriate, in the short, medium and long term and within their remit.

Next Steps

Short Term

- **Stage 2**
  - Deeper analysis of results
  - Gather other information
  - Define the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan
  - Engage volunteers for specific projects
  - Draft Plan based on objectives
  - Review and refine objectives and draft plan
  - Informal consultation

Until our Plan is "Made"

- **Stage 3** – Conduct formal round of public consultation
- **Stage 4** – Examination of the Neighbourhood Plan by an independent examiner - to ensure it meets all statutory obligations.
- **Stage 5** – Referendum conducted and paid for by NHDC – assuming the examiner recommends that our draft plan can proceed.

We've made a great start but there's a long way to go.

We need to get deeper into analysing the results and begin to gather other information.

The Neighbourhood Plan will set out the community's overall vision for the Parish and should include overall aims for any future development. These can relate to a wide range of planning and regeneration matters – social, economic and environmental. The vision and aims of the plan can then be translated into detailed policies, guidance and proposals.

We will need an overview of the Parish which will provide a useful context for the policies including key evidence – social, economic and environmental data.

As you have heard, we need to include Planning policies as once made the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory local development plan and can contain policies against which development proposals will be considered.

We need to establish key themes and issues and help from volunteers will be very important to moving the plan forward, possibly with working groups tasked with exploring a particular issue or idea in more depth.

Once the draft plan has been produced we will need to conduct an informal consultation and then review the plan.

Stage 3 will be to conduct a formal round of public consultation followed by an examination of the Plan by an independent examiner.

Once the plan has been recommended to proceed, a referendum is held, paid for by NHDC. The Neighbourhood Plan needs a simple majority of more than 50% of people voting in favour to be adopted.

Any Questions?

Here is the set of questions from the attendees with the presenters' answers:

Q *Having done this process, are there any questions you wish you'd asked?*

A Perhaps on the school question, we could have phrased it slightly differently.

We might have clarified the difference between dog walking v. ordinary walking.

The process is not closed, tell us if we have missed anything.

Q *Regarding broadband speeds, as I am completely non-technical I couldn't find the answer to this?*

A Only about 64% people managed to answer this one, but gave a fairly consistent answer. Yes it was technical but the data we got was good, it enables us to work with BT going forward. Problems with the copper line to the village are being progressed with BT.

Q *How much has all this cost?*

A We have spent just under £7000 so far. We had a Government grant for £5088 and can apply for another £3912 to be spent by the end of the year. We have recently received a grant of £400 from NHDC to be spent on publicity materials. The flier advertising this meeting was paid for from that grant. The remainder has been paid by the Parish Council.

Q *What has happened to the promised mobile phone mast?*

A Planning permission was granted last October, valid for 3 years. The Preston Parish Council (PPC) has enquired when they intend to start work and have been told that at this stage they do not have a forecast date of when the site will be built, they are at least 3 months away, possibly longer.

Q *With reference to the question on reducing speed limits, why does it take so long?*

A Because we have to go through Herts County Council and the Police. PPC are doing all they can to progress through. We now have strong data from the questionnaire to back up our request for speed reductions.

Q *Can we use some of the data in the meantime to help the parish? Eg speeds near the school.*

A PPC can consult the school regarding speed limits around the school. Anything the PPC can use the data for, we will.

Q *The questions on dog fouling, fly tipping, crime etc. I wasn't concerned at the time of the questionnaire but I am now, given that some crimes have occurred. What happens now?*

A We can incorporate views at any time until the document [Neighbourhood Plan] is ready.

Q *Regarding development, what can we do in respect of the proposed 21 houses at Castlefield, to slow it down or control it?*

A The NHDC has allocated a maximum of 21 houses to Preston Village as a whole, this does not mean all 21 have to be built.

The Neighbourhood Plan has to mirror what has been put in the Local Plan, which has been agreed by Councillors. This Autumn an Inspector will examine the proposed Local Plan.

There is nothing we can do at present until a developer puts in a proposal. However as individuals we can all put forward our views at that point.

The Neighbourhood Plan will help control the development as it gives us important evidence about what should and shouldn't happen.

Q *Regarding the Local Plan, Preston has been designated as a Category A village – why? Did we fight that?*

A Yes, PPC tried hard to fight it over several years but was unable to succeed.

Q *If before the development proposed at Castlefield there's infill, does this reduce the total?*

A A. Yes it does, they will be deducted from the 21 allocated to the village. Infill is preferred by village residents. This squeezes out development opportunity.

Q *The main footpath in the village from Butchers Lane to Chequers Lane was missed off the questionnaire. Why?*

A At first it was an oversight, accidentally missed off, but once realised its inclusion would have affected print layout of the questionnaire making it more expensive to print.

Q *Why was Hitchwood footpath included if it's outside the parish?*

A It was felt necessary to include this as it is well used by residents and considered a village resource.