

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN** FOR **APPLETON WITH EATON**

Consultation Statement

December 2020



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1: Introduction

1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 in respect of the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan (AWENP) 2020 - 2031.

1.2 The legal basis of this Consultation Statement is provided by Regulation 15(2) of Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which requires that a consultation statement should:

- Contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- Explain how they were consulted;
- Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- Describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood plan.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA DESIGNATION

1.3 Appleton with Eaton Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan (AWENP) for the area designated by the local planning authority, The Vale of the White Horse District Council (VoWHDC), on 10 June 2016 (see Plan A below).



Plan A:
Neighbourhood
Plan Designated
Area

2: The Parish Council's Approach to Developing a Neighbourhood Plan and Community Engagement

2.1 In January 2015 the Parish Council agreed to develop a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as the way to engage positively with planning bodies and others. Two initial public meetings were held in April 2016 (40 people) and May 2016 (36 people). Both of these events were attended by Community First Oxfordshire who provided factual guidance and enabled the Parish Council and, subsequently, the Steering Group to understand early concerns and issues in the community.

2.2 The Parish Council set up a Steering Group made up of Parish Councillors and local residents, including local landowners. Its Terms of Reference were approved by the Parish Council (Appendix D).

3: The Steering Group's Approach to Community Engagement

3.1 The engagement process aimed to involve as many local people as possible throughout the various consultation stages so that the Plan was shaped and informed by the views and knowledge of local people and other stakeholders. The Steering Group sought to engage with as wide a range of people as possible, using a variety of approaches and communication and consultation techniques. The results of activities were fed back to local people and made available to read in both hard copy and via the Parish Council Website as soon as possible after the consultation events.

3.2 Throughout the process the Steering Group has engaged with VoWHDC to seek advice and guidance through correspondence and face to face meetings

3.3 The Steering Group has been keen to ensure that the Plan provides local residents with a voice on how their community should grow and be sustainable, whilst continuing to be the strong and vibrant community that exists today.

3.4 Engaging with the community included:

- Holding local events
- Regular updates in the Appleton Advertiser including a column called "Hattie's column" which was published periodically emphasising the aims of the Plan and encouraging residents to engage with the process.
- Using Hattie the Scarecrow to incentivise engagement from parishioners, local groups and organisations. The Steering Group entered Hattie in the WI scarecrow competition where she was chosen as the winning entry. Hattie the Scarecrow was adorned with a NP t-shirt and was used to draw attention to the Plan by placing the Scarecrow at various locations around the village. Posters were displayed alongside Hattie to announce events and/or to present to the village the results of the Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis and to publicise the areas of focus for the NP.
- The 2016 Survey was delivered digitally on the Parish Council Website, in the Advertiser and in hard copy to every household in the Parish.
- A further Survey was conducted with the Appleton Village Youth Club, OX13.
- Gathering volunteers to work on specific aspects of the Plan, e.g. the Character Assessment.

- Hard copies of the draft NP and the Consultation Questionnaire were delivered to all households in the Parish for the Pre-Submission Consultation.
- Regular Steering Group Meetings
- Regular updates to the Parish Council
- Face to face and virtual meetings with VoWHDC

Engagement was achieved using a variety of media and communication channels to ensure contact with all demographics in the Parish including:

- Parish Council Website. The Appleton with Eaton website <https://www.appleton-eaton.org> was used to make the Minutes of Steering Group meetings available to the public and to announce upcoming Steering Group meetings open to the public as well as to advertise consultation events. The website also contained a library of Plan related documents available for residents to view along with instruction on how to access supporting evidence documents. During the second non-statutory consultation, the website hosted an online version of the questionnaire used to obtain feedback from residents.
- Social media – Facebook
- Local media – the Appleton Advertiser – a magazine published monthly with a 480 print run. A paper copy of the Advertiser is delivered to every household in the Parish each month.
- Parish shout outs – email updates and notifications to the more than 200 subscribers to the Parish news email update service from the Parish Council.
- Flyers/Posters on noticeboards outside the Appleton Community Shop, on telegraph poles, on the Village Hall notice board, The Plough Inn and The Eight Bells, Eaton.
- Emails to Statutory Consultees
- Parish Council meetings
- Banners drawing attention to the Plan and seeking public views and input were placed outside the Appleton Community Shop, at the far end of both Eaton Road and Netherton Road, on the Manor Barn railings (centre of village), at the War Memorial in Appleton and at the Eight Bells in Eaton.
- Hattie the Scarecrow at village events, club and society meetings as well as at various sites in the Parish (see Appendix J).
- Representatives of the NP Steering Group present at various village events to draw attention to the on-going process and to engage with residents who had questions about the NP.
- Personal visits by members of the Steering Group to every household in the Parish to deliver the Survey and then to collect completed Surveys.

Examples of the media used are set out in Appendix B.

4: Timeline of events

4.1 The timeline of events below demonstrates the evolution of the Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan.

2015

- The Parish Council decided to begin the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan in January 2015 and resolved to set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

2016

- The Parish Council submitted an application to designate a Neighbourhood Plan Area to VoWHDC on 24 February 2016 which was approved on 10 June 2016. (Appendix A)
- New material added to Appleton with Eaton Parish Council website and a social media (Facebook) page established on 6 June 2016. Regular articles and updates published in the Advertiser, delivered to every household in the Parish, from April 2016. (see Appendix B)
- First public meeting held on 16 April 2016 attended by approximately 40 local residents (contact details were taken where possible) and Community First Oxfordshire to hear about and discuss what a Neighbourhood Plan is and why one was to be produced. 16 Key Areas of Concern were identified as a result of small group discussions on “what we want our Neighbourhood Plan to achieve” with the results noted on stickers which were subsequently counted. (See Appendix C). These were consolidated into 6 key issues of concern to the public. These issues formed the basis of the Vision and Objectives of the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan:
 - Sustaining the community and character of the Parish
 - Appropriate housing stock for the future
 - Development issues such as allocation, design, density, local needs and the use of developer contributions
 - The preservation of village amenities including footpaths and green spaces
 - The environmental impact of development
 - Valuing the rural character of the Parish and maintaining the Green Belt
- Attendees were encouraged to engage with the consultation and to become members of the Steering Group.
- Second public meeting held on 16 May 2016 attended by approximately 36 local residents and Community First Oxfordshire to explain the legal framework and process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. 8 parishioners joined members of the Parish Council to form the Steering Group.

- Steering Group Working Groups were formed in May 2016:
 - Survey sub group
 - Events sub group
 - Communications sub group
 - Evidence sub group
 The Communications and Events sub groups were merged in November 2016.
- Steering Group Terms of Reference approved on 4 July 2016 (Appendix D)
- Hattie the Scarecrow appeared at village events and at various sites across the Parish between August 2016 and February 2017 (Appendix J) to draw attention to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- In September 2016 a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was conducted to identify issues of concern, and to build on comments received at meetings and events. The Survey (Appendix E) was advertised in the Advertiser, on the Parish Council website, by email shout out and on posters at various sites in the Parish. It was available for completion digitally on the Parish Council website. Each household in the Parish (371) was visited by a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a hard copy of the survey questionnaire delivered, its purpose explained with encouragement to complete it in order to obtain the views of all residents at the address and help offered to complete the questionnaire if required. 7 days were allowed to complete the questionnaires which were submitted digitally, collected by hand directly from households or by drop off at Appleton Community Shop. 194 (52%) responses were received.
- The 194 responses were analysed and key issues were contextualised into discrete groups to facilitate statistical interpretation. Key issues were divided into strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities to and for the future of Appleton with Eaton as perceived by the respondents. The results of the analysis were as follows (see also Appendix F):

SWOT analysis from survey undertaken September 2016 (actual numbers mentioning the item and percentage of total (194) responses)

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>Clubs 76 (39%) School 78 (40%) Shop 112 (58%) Green Space 75 (39%) Character 145 (75%)</p>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>Access to Countryside/Footpaths (total) 65 (33%) Of which: River access 54 (28%) Traffic and Transport (total) 322 (100%) (mentioned more than once in most surveys) Of which Loss of bus service 117 (60%) Access to A420 80 (41%) Parking 65 (34%) Speeding 42 (22%)</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Small Scale Housing to meet Parish Needs 103 (53%)</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>Large Scale Housing 110 (57%) Loss of Green Space 32 (17%) Loss of facilities 30 (15%)</p>

The responses ranked as a top 10 were:

- 1** Character of the village (Strength) 75%
- 2** Loss of bus service (Weakness) 60%
- 3** The Shop (Strength) 58%
- 4** Large scale Housing (Threat) 57%
- 5** Small scale housing to meet village needs (Opportunity) 53%
- 6** Access to A420 (Weakness) 41%
- 7** The School (Strength) 40%
- 8=** Green space (Strength) 39%
- 8=** Clubs (Strength) 39%
- 10** Parking (Weakness) 34%

- The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group presented the Survey's findings to the Parish Council, most members of which served on the Steering Group. The results of the SWOT survey were published in the Advertiser in December 2016 and on the Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page on 14 November 2016. These results, combined with comments received at meetings and events, were used to form a coherent Vision, Objectives and Policies. 6 Policies were ultimately drafted to address the key issues raised.

- The Vision and Objectives set out were:

Vision

“The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan celebrates the rural setting, character and vibrant communities of both Appleton and Eaton. The Neighbourhood Plan welcomes positive change, good design, and sustainable growth, whilst conserving and enhancing the special qualities and features that create this small but thriving community. The Plan aims to protect its green spaces, rural environment and historic character for future generations.”

Objectives

- To protect and enhance the special character and local distinctiveness of both Appleton and Eaton.
- To maintain existing village facilities and to support enhancement of existing village facilities.
- To protect the status of the village shop as a community run facility and to support proposals that result in the improvement of the village shop and/or post office.
- To oppose proposals of change of use, delicensing and/or closure of the existing public houses and oppose redevelopment that is detrimental to the current use of the facilities.
- The retention and support of current sites/business that provide jobs/employment.
- To encourage the development of business enterprise unless it adversely impacts upon the character of the area/village, the amenity of neighbours or the safety of pedestrians and road users.
- To ensure The Plough Inn, Appleton and The Eight Bells, Eaton are protected from delicensing and/or closure, to prevent a change of use ensuring the retention of existing use as public houses for the benefit of the community.
- To retain, maintain and improve existing access routes to the benefit of the community.
- To protect the green spaces, landscapes and views from loss or harm.

Policies

- Local Green Spaces
- Design
- Public Houses
- Village Facilities
- Business and Employment
- Access

- On 25 May 2017 a public consultation was held at Appleton Village Hall to present an overview of the draft Vision, Objectives and Policies based on the responses to the SWOT analysis questionnaire. The public were asked to comment on the drafts. Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were present to engage with the public and to respond to any questions raised. The public were asked to comment on the draft Vision, Objectives and Policies using post-it notes. 124 responses were received (see Appendix G).
- The majority supported the Vision, Objectives and Policies. The Steering Group reflected on the detailed comments made. As a result, the Vision was redrafted to make it more direct and clear. The Objectives were redrawn to include and reflect the views expressed (Green Spaces, Design, Public Houses), to clarify and remove duplication (Public Houses, Village Facilities and Business and Employment) and to make them positive rather than restrictive in nature. The draft Policy on Design was amended to cover Design, Character and Context. New Policies were added on Appleton Community Shop and Post Office and Community Projects.
- More detailed explanation was inserted into the draft Plan about the protection afforded (and the restrictions placed on development) by the Green Belt provisions and the place of Appleton and Eaton in the VoWHDC Settlement Hierarchy.

To reflect the views expressed the Vision was amended to:

“Our vision is to enhance the rural setting and character of Appleton and Eaton to 2031 and beyond through sustainable growth and good design which conserves and enhances the special qualities and features that create this small but thriving community, particularly its green spaces, rural environment and historic character.”

The Objectives were amended to:

Themes	Objectives
Village character	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To safeguard the village character and ensure that any potential development will enhance this. 2. To maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton. 3. To safeguard the landscape and views and ensure that any potential development will enhance this. 4. To protect, enhance and conserve existing green spaces to maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton.
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To ensure existing and future residents will benefit from the existing village facilities that serve as valuable community assets. 6. To ensure the protection of The Plough Inn, Appleton and The Eight Bells, Eaton and preserve their function as valuable community assets for existing and future residents
Businesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. To provide businesses the opportunity to operate and develop within Appleton with Eaton.
Community Access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. To ensure that public access within Appleton with Eaton is preserved for the use of the community.

The Draft policies were amended to cover:

- Design, Character and Context
- Local Green Spaces
- Village Facilities
- Appleton Community Shop and Post Office
- Public Houses
- Business and Employment
- Community Access
- Community Projects
- In August 2017 12 parishioners volunteered to complete character surveys of every part of the Parish using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit and with the advice of Community First Oxfordshire.

- In October 2017 the Steering Group sought to get feedback from the younger generation and so attended OX13, the Parish Youth Club whose members are aged between 13 and 16. A representative of the Steering Group distributed a questionnaire; all 14 attendees responded. OX13 members identified several areas where they thought Appleton excelled, such as friends and community, as well as areas which were negative or could be improved upon such as the lack of a bus service; for full details please see Appendix H.
- The views and concerns expressed were covered by the Objectives and Policies already in draft so no additional policies or amendments were deemed necessary.

2018

- Meetings were held with Bluestone Planning (designated by VoWHDC) on 12 January 2018, in January 2019 and on 14 February 2019.
- On 27 January 2018 the draft Neighbourhood Plan was made available at a drop-in session at Appleton Village Hall. 35 members of the public attended. Very few commented formally but most who attended expressed strong verbal support for the draft Plan. The formal comments are noted in Appendix I.
- Copies of the posters advertising the event, summarising the Plan and setting out each of the draft Policies were added to the Facebook page for those unable to attend in person together with a link to the questionnaire to enable the public to submit responses online (See Appendix B). Members of the public were also able to leave comments at the Appleton Community Shop. The closing date for comments was 12 February 2018.
- 50 comments and suggestions were received in response to the consultation (Appendix I) on a number of the areas covered in the Plan which were all considered by the Steering Group; further information on points raised and actions taken are within Appendix I. No changes to the Policies followed other than the renaming of the “Community Access” Policy as “Connectivity” to aid clarity. The Steering Group also decided to review the Green Spaces Assessment as a result of comments received.
- After further consideration by the Steering Group the Vision and Objectives of the Plan were amended to reflect the comments and particularly to clarify and sharpen their focus:

“Our vision is to retain and enhance the rural setting and unique character of Appleton with Eaton parish to 2031 and beyond and to ensure sustainable growth and good design which conserves and enhances the special qualities and features that create this small and thriving community.”

Themes	Objectives
Village character	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To safeguard the village character and ensure that any potential development will enhance this. 2. To maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton. 3. To safeguard the landscape setting and views and ensure that any potential development will enhance this. 4. To protect, conserve and enhance locally important green spaces.
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To ensure that current and future residents will benefit from the existing village facilities that serve as valuable community assets and to support enhancement of existing village facilities. 6. To ensure the protection of The Plough Inn, Appleton and The Eight Bells, Eaton and preserve their function as valuable community assets for current and future residents.
Businesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. To provide businesses the opportunity to operate and develop within Appleton with Eaton, taking care to ensure that they preserve or enhance the character of the parish, the amenity of neighbours and the safety of pedestrians and other road users.
Community Connectivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. To ensure that public access within Appleton with Eaton is preserved and enhanced for the use of the community.
Community Projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. To ensure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions from any future development is used for the benefit of the community.

Policies

- Design, Character and Context
- Local Green Spaces
- Village Facilities
- Appleton Community Shop and Post Office
- Public Houses
- Business and Employment
- Connectivity
- Community Projects

- Further text was added to the draft Plan to explain the reasons for the lack of sites allocated for development and any policy on infill development beyond the Design, Character and Context Policy, i.e. the protection afforded and restrictions imposed by Green Belt policy and the place of Appleton and Eaton within the VoWHDC as a smaller village and open countryside respectively.
- The Steering Group continued to meet throughout the year, to develop the draft policies in line with professional advice from VoWHDC (directly and via Bluestone Planning) and to identify and address evidence gaps ahead of the forthcoming Pre- Submission Consultation.
- The Plan continued to be amended to reflect the advice received from VoWHDC and to ensure that it fully reflected the public's comments in the May 2017 and January 2018 consultations. As a result, particularly of professional advice, and prior to the Pre-Submission Consultation, Objectives 4, 6, 8 and 9 were further amended:
 - Objective 4:** To protect, enhance and conserve existing Green Spaces to maintain the rural character of Appleton with Eaton.
 - Objective 6:** To ensure the protection of The Plough Inn, Appleton and The Eight Bells, Eaton with their gardens and to preserve their function as valuable community assets for current and future residents.
 - Objective 8:** To ensure that public access within Appleton with Eaton is preserved for the use of the community and enhanced where possible.
 - Objective 9:** To ensure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and Section 106 agreements associated with any future development are used for the benefit of the community.
- The Policies largely remained unchanged in essence but some of the wording was amended to reflect comments and advice from VoWHDC. For example, the Design, Character and Context Policy was amended to include encouragement for sustainable design and construction methods. The draft Policies were reviewed to remove prescriptive language as far as possible. The Green Spaces Policy was expanded to set out an ambition to enhance and increase the provision of Local Green Spaces where possible. Similarly, the Public House Policy was narrowed in line with advice from VoWHDC.
- The Neighbourhood Plan banner was displayed at the village Harvest Supper in September 2018 to publicise the upcoming 6-week Pre-Submission Consultation.

5: Pre-Submission Consultation Process 2019 and Follow Up

5.1 The Pre-Submission Plan was published as per the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Regulation 14(a), through the channels outlined above, and to the list of organisations as per the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Regulation 14(b) – see Appendix L for the list of statutory consultees who were consulted.

Copies of the Pre-Submission Plan were sent to the VoWHDC as per the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Part 5 Regulation 14(c).

- A six-week Pre-Submission Plan consultation ran from 7 May -21 June 2019. Hard copies of the draft Neighbourhood Plan were delivered to every household in the Parish. A launch event was held at Appleton Village Hall on 18 May 2019. Hard copies of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the Evidence Base and Scoping Report and all Appendices to the draft Plan were made available at the Appleton Community Shop, on line on the Parish Council Website, and also linked via Facebook to the website. ¹ Responses were submitted both digitally via the Parish Council Website and in hard copy at the Appleton Community Shop. Reminders to the public to respond were published in the Advertiser.
- The consultation period lasted for 6 weeks. 82 (63 paper/19 online) responses were received from members of the public and 10 from Statutory Consultees. These have been collated into a single document attached as Appendix K in which all the responses are set out and collated along with the resulting actions taken and amendments made.²
- In July 2019 a Steering Group sub-committee was formed and continued to meet to work through the responses and make appropriate amendments to the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Progress was delayed by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A virtual meeting was held with VoWHDC on 12 October 2020, followed by further email consultation with VoWHDC. As a result, further minor amendments were made to some wording in the Neighbourhood Plan and Appendices for clarification purposes.
- The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the Parish Council on 22 December 2020.
- The Appleton with Eaton Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the VoWHDC in December 2020.

¹ See Appendix B.

² The majority of responses advocated support for the plan. There were a number of detailed comments on policy wording and other matters. Each of these comments was considered individually and the actions taken are set out in Appendix K.

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