

Walford Parish Newsletter

February 2021



Walford Parish Council
clerk@walford-pc.org.uk

Neighbourhood Development Plan Have your say!



Welcome to Walford Parish over Kerne Bridge

Dates for your diary:

- * 17th February: Full Council Meeting (online)
- * 22nd February: NDP presentation (online)
- * 15th March: NDP presentation (online)

7.30pm start

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The Walford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was originally started in 2012 with significant progress made over the last year or so. Walford Parish Council (WPC) has recently formed the NDP Committee, comprising four Councillors and four members of the original Steering Group, to manage the project.

So what is an NDP and why does Walford need one? The NDP is about many different aspects of how we want our Parish to develop; most importantly housing. Herefordshire Council has a legal responsibility to allocate housing numbers as dictated by central government and will do so without local consultation to any Parish without an NDP. It is therefore imperative that WPC implements its own NDP as this is the only way to assert the will of local residents with regards to future development and planning activity.

What's happened so far? The NDP project has consulted with the Parish via a questionnaire, and three face to face events held pre-Covid. This has given us a good understanding of what is important to local residents. We have subsequently developed our proposed policies to help shape the location, style and size of future development within our Parish. Following a call for sites, a *Meeting Housing Needs & Site Assessment Report (Report)* has been produced by an independent Consultant which includes various options as to how the required housing target can be met.

What happens next and what can you do? WPC wants to hear your questions and feedback regarding the *Report* and invites you to have your say regarding the options it outlines. Given Covid restrictions, face to face public consultation is impossible so instead there will be two live presentations delivered online, both of which will start at **7.30pm**.

22nd February: Outline the contents and recommendations of the *Report*

15th March: Outline the housing development options for using the suitable sites to meet the housing target.

Both presentations will be made available to view and download from the WPC and NDP websites. A questionnaire will then be published to all residents so we can understand your views on the *Report*.

If you do not have access to the internet to view or download the presentation, please complete the enclosed reply slip and send to the Clerk with an A4 stamped addressed envelope.

Once all Parishioner views have been digested, WPC will make a decision as to which housing development option(s) will be incorporated into the draft NDP for submission to Herefordshire Council.

NDP Adoption: Herefordshire Council will review the NDP and return it to the Parish for a further six-week consultation period. The outcomes of this consultation will be incorporated into the NDP which will be resubmitted to Herefordshire Council for a detailed compliance review. The NDP is then submitted to an independent examiner to ensure compliance with the various regulations. Finally, Walford parishioners will take part in a referendum to accept or reject the plan.

As you can see the adoption of the NDP is quite a laborious and time-consuming process with very many quality checks and local consultation requirements. WPC has included an additional consultation step in the process so that every resident has the opportunity to be involved in the initial development of the NDP to help us get it right first time.

COVID Delay: Due to the government lockdown restrictions, all Site submissions received in 2021 will be evaluated once restrictions have been lifted. These will be included in an addendum to the *Meeting Housing Needs & Site Assessment Report* prior to submission of the NDP documents to Herefordshire Council for Regulation 14.

Community Support

Get in touch
with Walford
Community
Support:

community@walford-pc.org.uk

07493 171430.

"This wonderful competition developed high levels of creativity whilst highlighting a number of budding future photographers – huge thanks to the Walford Community Support Scheme!"

Hopefully, you will have received a copy of the Walford Parish Council 2021 calendar. The council decided to undertake this parish-wide initiative with the primary aim of reaching as many members of the local community as possible in order to raise the profile of our wonderful Community Support Scheme.

Given the rural nature of our parish, many residents are widely dispersed and consequently can be somewhat isolated. We wish our parishioners to know there is someone they can contact if they need support; be that providing shopping, an ear to listen or transport to the GP/vaccination centre.

Thanks to grant-funding we have received (and in the absence of being able to get together face-to-face), we have recently provided regular treats to Scheme members such as a fish 'n' chip lunches and afternoon tea boxes. This has given a much-needed morale boost. Membership of the Scheme is open to any member of the parish in need of social support; short- or long-term. We employ a part-time Co-ordinator, Be Mackintosh, and rely on parish-resident volunteers to help out when they can.

Drawing on local talent, Walford Primary School were delighted to be asked to participate in the production of the calendar, organis-



The twelve winners from Walford School

ing a photographic competition for the children in classes 1 to 6.

The children were asked to take photos of our beautiful parish and enthusiastically set about snapping. There were two winners per class, and we were grateful to Sandra Walding of Ross Photographic Society who judged the entries. The winners were awarded a book token for the local bookstore, Rossiters. The children were congratulated in a very excitable socially-distanced awards ceremony at the school, attended by Be Mackintosh, Community Support Co-ordinator and Monica van Lienden, Chair of Walford Parish Council.

Headteacher, Ms George said, "Walford Nursery & Primary School has always enjoyed strong links with the Community Support Scheme so we were delighted to get involved in their 2021 Calendar competition. The children took part with great enthusiasm and as a result, we now have an impressive catalogue of stunning local landscapes and features. Pupils of Walford are exceptionally talented but we were actually blown away with the high standard of photography produced. In actual fact, the staff

team were relieved that the school did not have to judge the breath-taking entries. This wonderful competition developed high levels of creativity whilst highlighting a number of budding future photographers – huge thanks to the Walford Community Support Scheme!"

The scheme has always been successful in obtaining grant-funding from many generous sources for which we are very grateful. We are especially indebted to our team of committed volunteers and send our heartfelt thanks to them.

Our next project is to revitalise a room at Walford Village Hall to use as the base for our operations, and hopefully Covid-safe gatherings in the not-too-distant future... watch this space for more information coming soon!

The Support Scheme would love to hear from anyone who feels they may like to become a volunteer or if anyone you know could benefit from our services.

Become a Parish Councillor

The Parish Council currently has six vacancies so if you are care about what happens in our community and have time to be involved then please consider joining. Details of how to stand and what being a Parish Councillor involves can be found on the Wal-

ford Parish Council website. An election will be held in May to fill the six vacancies. Details of the election process will be provided nearer the time.

Polling Stations: A safe place to vote

Ahead of the Police & Crime Commissioners Elections to be held on 6th May, the electoral commission has confirmed that polling stations will be a safe place to vote.

There are other ways to vote, either by post or by

proxy. You should register early; more information can be found on the Electoral Commission website.

Your vote matters so don't lose it!

Parish Finances

It is important that parishioners can trust in their Finance Committee; here we will explain our role and duties in order that you are assured we are spending the precept (your contribution made via your council tax) responsibly. The fundamental principles of the Finance Committee are that the finances are managed in a transparent, impartial fashion while seeking value for money at every opportunity. We are bound by various laws and have our own set of Financial Regulations (available on the website). The committee is currently comprised of five members of the Parish Council, all of whom are Walford parishioners and contribute to the precept.

Our meetings are open to the public; advertised on parish noticeboards and the website. The subsequent meeting minutes are published on our website. They can also be emailed to individuals by contacting the clerk directly. Additional paperwork associated with the meetings include the list of the payments and the income and expenditure statement. This statement has recently been simplified to provide clear visibility of income and expenditure of our operational items such as lengthsman payments and employee salaries, separated from our projects.

The accounts are made available for public inspection annually and we are legally bound to undertake both an internal and external annual audit.



Your parish; your money in safe hands

Budgeting is an important part of our role. This enables the council to make an informed decision on setting the precept at a level that will cover our annual requirements. The time for finalising this for the financial year 2021-22 is now. It is a time for us to reflect on priorities to ensure we continue to deliver value for money to our parishioners and to foster a vibrant and prosperous community.

Regarding our current priorities, we will of course continue to provide basic services covered by the duties of our lengthsman and rights of way provision. We will also be continuing our projects; the work being undertaken to deliver a Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan, providing social and welfare support via our Community Support Scheme, and continuing to manage the Kerne Bridge canoe launch as an asset within our parish. We are also hoping to fund a new initiative in the coming financial year, working with the police to provide SmartWater (used to trace stolen goods back to their owners) to every household.

We are very proud that Walford Parish Council continues to deliver significant value to our community, with careful and considered management of our funds.

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News from Walford Church



St Michael and All Angels Church, Walford

We are thankful that we have been able to continue to worship throughout the pandemic with the aid of technology. We have a wonderful **family Zoom service** on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month

that starts at 11am. Anyone is welcome to attend, and if you wish to do so we urge you to get in touch with the benefice administrator (administrator@rossparishes.uk) who can provide the monthly details. As Walford Church is a member of the Ross benefice (which includes Ross and Brampton Abbots), we are fortunate to have access to all the digital services being offered. Please go to <https://rossparishes.uk/digital-services/> for a list of services available and how to join in our worship.

Given the current (and ever-changing) laws on numbers of people allowed to

attend weddings and funerals, it is common for churches to offer the option to live stream these significant events to wider audiences. This will only be possible by installing WiFi at the church, which is one of our highest priorities. We believe this will cost in the region of £2,000 including the hardware. Any donations towards this valuable improvement would be very gratefully received, as would any offers of expertise that individuals may have in the field of live-streamed events.

Public Rights of Way

There has never been a more important time to be able to get out and about, socially distanced and safely, to exercise body and mind. In Walford we are lucky to have many miles of beautiful Public Rights of Way (PROW).

Upkeep of these paths and tracks can be quite complicated and is often misunderstood. In general terms, the land under the PROW belongs to a landowner, but the surface is not theirs to damage. Hedges alongside PROWs are the responsibility of the landowner to manage such that the PROW is not blocked. A PROW across farmland should not be cultivated, but in practice this is often impractical. It is therefore the duty of the landowner to reinstate the surface swiftly after damage has been done - within

14 days of ploughing and within 24 hours of subsequent cultivations. New obstructions, such as gates and stiles, need permission and overgrown vegetation must be cut back to allow access.

Unfortunately, many landowners, as well as users, do not fully understand where the responsibilities lie.

There is a neat summary of landowner responsibilities at this link:

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Parking-Roads-Travel/Public-rights-of-way/Guidance-for-landowners-and-occupiers.aspx>

As users, we must respect the land over which PROWs traverse. Farmland is not 'free access',

but part of a working business. As such, although the public has the right to pass, using the legal line of the path or track, it is important to keep both dogs and perhaps also children, in check - with four-legs on leads! Farm animals are easily injured if frightened and their presence should be respected - dogs must not be allowed to chase animals. Also important is that many crops look like grass when starting to grow, but are easily damaged and should not be regarded as a play area!

Locally, at Parish Council level in Walford, we are able to clear back surface vegetation when problems are reported via our Clerk or our website, as well as repair signage.

However, greater problems such as fallen trees, should be reported to the higher authority - i.e. Herefordshire Council.

There is a map of Walford PROWs available on the WPC website. This map shows the path identification numbers starting 'WA'; these are important when reporting a problem. To download this map, click on 'Public Rights of Ways & Highways' at the following link:

<https://www.walford-pc.org.uk/parish-life/parish-maps/>

Finally, we would love you to send us photos of any great views from Walford PROW for inclusion in future newsletters. You can email these to clerk@walford-pc.org.uk.



View across Coughton Marsh from WAB

To report a problem to Herefordshire Council:

<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-public-right-of-way-problem>

Walford Parish Council
clerk@walford-pc.org.uk

Sandbags

The Council has a supply of 500 sandbags available to local residents in an emergency situation. **Please contact Simeon Cole on *******

Get in Touch



www.walford-pc.org.uk



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