

## **EDINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – UPDATE AUGUST 2020.**

Back in early March 2020 you may recall completing the Edington Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. As we went into lockdown the answers were entered into a large spreadsheet, and were collated. Because of lockdown and social distancing, the plan took a back seat, but now it is being resurrected.

Of 319 questionnaires that were issued 129 were returned completed – a total of 40.44%, which for a survey is a good result. A big thank you to everyone that gave their time designing, distributing, completing, collecting and collating the questionnaire. We could not have done it without you.

For this Neighbourhood Plan to benefit the Village as a whole, and to be inclusive, it is important that we have a broad input of ideas and skill set to move forwards and develop each section. If you have an interest, particular knowledge, would like to participate in developing any of the sections, you will find an email at the end of each summary. Send an email expressing your interest to that person and they will contact you.

Further on in this article is a summary from each section of the questionnaire that has been put together by a member of the NP Group – apart from Housing which warrants a different approach.

### **Environment and Footpaths**

A Climate Change Emergency was declared by Wiltshire Council in February 2019 with the target of being carbon neutral by 2030 using a community-led approach. The Edington Neighbourhood Plan is a significant opportunity to voice how our village community wishes the necessary changes to reach that target to be implemented throughout our village.

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic during lockdown has brought the village more together in terms of supporting the more vulnerable in our community but also with the effects of many on furlough and an increase in those working from home. Many more have been using the village footpaths because of this and as part of their daily exercise.

Feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire highlighted the following:

Edington was confirmed as a friendly and peaceful place to live, well managed by the Parish Council with the open spaces, views and walks together with easy access to Salisbury Plain considered precious.

Suggested improvements included:

- The History of Edington made more visible as an addition to King Alfred being depicted on the entrance signs to the village.
- An increase in the number of footpaths and cycle routes away from the B3098 to more safely link the two ends of the village. More pavements along the B3098.
- Provision of more litter and dog waste bins.
- More trees and flowers planted throughout the village together with the more environmentally friendly management of verges away from toxic herbicide use to encourage greater biodiversity.
- A Working Party of volunteers set up to help maintain the village and supplement the work of the Village Steward.

- Preparation for the higher risk of flooding and the potential for more fires on Salisbury Plain resulting from climate change.
- Awareness that to improve links and reduce vehicle emissions, Devizes is making plans to open a new railway station on the same line passing through the presently unused Edington Railway Station and so calls for it also being re-opened for the same reasons.

## Highways and Transport

### Highways

These were the main issues raised:

- Dissatisfaction was expressed with the state of the roads and speeding traffic.
- Many would like to see better paths throughout the village.
- Most agreed that verges and hedges need better maintenance.
- Many would like to see better cycle routes in and around the village.

These were frequently occurring comments made:

- Heavy (non-farm) traffic should be restricted.
- Traffic calming and speed restrictions were suggested.
- There were parking issues on the main roads.
- The state of the roads was a concern, with potholes specifically mentioned.
- Many would like to see more and improvements to existing footpaths around the village.

### Transport

These were the main modes of transport reported:

- The majority are using petrol/diesel cars daily.
- Many are also walking to local destinations.
- Some were occasionally using Bus/Train/Taxi

These were frequently occurring comments made:

- A better and more comprehensive bus service needed (a route to Westbury station was suggested).
- Many comments re better paths needed to local amenities, bus stops and around the village generally (which ties in with the above comments re footpaths).

### Village Amenities

Most used by more than 50% of residents except the Mobile Library and The Link.

The most frequently used amenities – although not in Edington, are the Bratton Shop and P.O. and Bratton Surgery, followed by The Three Daggers Shop and Edington P.O.

Some of the responses indicated that a more general village shop and community café would benefit more residents in the village.

Majority agree there are sufficient picnic and rest areas in the Playing field. There were suggestions for better and more seating with undercover picnic tables and benches, and better sports equipment.

Suggestions of a larger better equipped Parish / Community Hall could also provide for a wider range of activities for all age groups.

### **Social Wellbeing**

Social Wellbeing is a vital part of who we are as a community, and the neighbourhood plan survey has given a strong flavour of what that means to many members of our village. That it is a “nice place to live” and a “very friendly place” and that it “provides support for those who need it” were all strongly supported. But alongside that, there are a number of themes that need to be considered. Some villagers would like to see more variety of activities and community facilities on offer which support all age groups within our community that support our physical and mental well-being. It is also important to understand how these can be provided for in a sustained way. Of course, the NP survey was conducted before we experienced Covid19 and the subsequent lockdown, and more work will need to be done to understand the impact of isolation and practical challenges on both our physical and mental health. I hope we can gain further knowledge from the volunteer hub, parish council and organisations like the Link and WI. It will be exciting to build up plans to look at what can be offered, and I will be looking for people to work with me to ensure we really do focus on what people need and want.

### **Commerce and Employment**

Coming shortly.