

Neighbourhood Area to be designated

Woolpit Parish Council have submitted the application to designate a Neighbourhood Area. It should be approved by Mid Suffolk District Council within a few weeks. The map which shows the boundaries is too big to print here, but you can download it from the website:

www.woolpit.org/WNP/docs.html

The new issue of *The Woolpit Diary* has a full page notice about the Neighbourhood Area consultation.

Steering Group formed

The first formal meeting of the Steering Group took place on 10 March. Feedback from the working groups formed last month showed a considerable interest in the Neighbourhood Plan among Woolpit residents and businesses. People want improvements to infrastructure and facilities in line with growth. They want to ensure that the right sort of housing is built, and the village centre protected.

Members of the Steering Group:

Tim Baker	Ben Holden
Caroline Blomfield	Trevor Howard †
Andrew Brain	David Hughes
Jennie Denny	Richard Mawhood ‡
Jane Foster	Alan Round
John Guyler	Jane Storey
Lisa Hicks	Dr Richard West

† Chair ‡ Vice-chair

Email addresses are on the website:

www.woolpit.org/WNP/contact.html



Our new logo, designed by the Publicity team.

Action plan

Now that the Steering Group has been formed, we need to make the neighbourhood planning process meaningful for everyone who has a stake in the outcome. This means, first of all, making them aware that they have an important opportunity to express their concerns and wishes for the future; and listening to the comments and ideas they put forward.

We'll be spreading the word and organising or appearing at a number of events in the village. The focus groups (see box below) will reach out to all the different parts of the community: young and old, residents and businesses, those who feel threatened by new housing developments and those who see an opportunity to sustain a thriving village. Volunteers will be needed for all sorts of roles: publicising events, mounting displays, manning stalls, listening to people and having conversations with them, making tea, sharing what other people are saying ...

When key issues have been identified, we'll build an evidence base using questionnaires and surveys.

The next step: involving our helpers

We are hoping to involve more of our volunteer helpers, according to interest and experience, in the coming programme of community engagement. So we are forming a number of focus groups. Some will communicate with different parts of the community; others will deal with certain aspects of the programme. If you have already volunteered to help, you may be invited to join one of these groups.

The groups include: Liaison with MSDC, Publicity, Community engagement, Business, Utilities, Health and welfare.

If you would like to be involved, and have not already provided information about your interests and experience, please contact

Trevor Howard th221250@aol.com
 Richard Mawhood puffin.cix@gmail.com



Proposed housing developments

Green Road

Artisan-PPS recently distributed a leaflet to all households in Woolpit showing their latest proposed plan. It is broadly similar to the second-stage plan published on their website in February, but there are several differences.

They followed this up with a new consultation and exhibition in St Mary's Church on Monday 4 April, where more details were available, especially with respect to the floor plans and building materials to be used. If you missed the exhibition, or would like to review what you saw, the documents - house types, street views, new plan of the site - are all available from Artisan's website at

<http://artisan-pps.co.uk/consultations/woolpit>

If you have any difficulty downloading these documents, contact me at

puffin.cix@gmail.com

and I will forward a copy by email.

They have also put on line the ecological appraisal, carried out last August, and the transport assessment, which was done in October. Given the levels of concern expressed, particularly about traffic, a close examination of these two reports may help to inform your response to this development proposal.

Please do copy the comments you make to Artisan to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as well, via

peggy.woolpitpc@btinternet.com

The more comments we receive, the better the picture we can form of the concerns people have regarding future development in Woolpit.

Old Stowmarket Road

Pigeon Investment Management have informed the Parish Council that they expect to submit a planning application within a few days.

Why Woolpit?

After living abroad for 14 years we came to know that "home is where the heart is" and that we wanted to retire in England. But whereabouts?

Originally coming from London but having enjoyed the countryside in Canada, we knew we wanted somewhere in the country; nowhere too remote and somewhere with a bit of life about it.

Our ideal location would hopefully have transport links, a few shops, and a health centre. Somewhere that was friendly and not too large. Most important for us was to find a village with a community spirit.

We started our search in Hampshire and over 5 years worked our way clockwise through Dorset, the Cotswolds, Buckinghamshire, North Essex and eventually we stumbled into Suffolk.

We've been here nearly 4 years now and are so happy with the community and how welcoming everyone has been.

Our neighbours are fantastic, our fellow dog-walkers are interesting and always ready to stop for a chat and my husband has been warmly welcomed at the golf club. And we've only just arrived.

So what do we think about the development? As newbies it would be hypocritical for us to complain that others want to move into the area but what we fervently believe is that any new development should be done sympathetically so as not to lose the special charm that Woolpit has.

Linda Hill