

DRYBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th August 2024 at 7.00pm at The School Room, Holy Trinity Church, Drybrook

Present:

Parish Councillors: Dave Middlemiss (Acting Chairman), Richard Moore, Pam Caton, Michael Garland and Pat Weaver

Also present: County Councillor Terry Hale
April Seabrook (Clerk)
2 members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Jacky Johnston, John Print, Roy Bardo, Malcolm Jones and Cathy Blake and District Councillors Shaun Stammers, Jackie Fraser and Trevor Roach

2. Members of the public issues (15 minutes Standing Orders suspended)

A member of the public informed Council that she had put in a request, under the Freedom of Information Act, to the County Council to know what the Section 106 for Mannings Farm had been spent on. The Council informed her that the money had been allocated for Dene Magna School, Cinderford Library, Pre-School and Nursery provision and Drybrook Primary School, although some of this money was yet to be spent. She asked if the Parish Council could ask the County Council if some of this money spent on the Doctor's Surgery, and she was informed that the Council would look into this.

3. County & District Councillor Reports

County Council Terry Hale informed Council that he had received several emails complaining the grass verges beside the roads had not been cut back, which he would discuss with Area Highways Manager, and that Hillside Road was going to be tar and chipped on 30th October to 1st November.

4. Declarations of Interests

None

5. Requests for Dispensations

None

6. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th July 2024

It was resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting, which was held on 16th July, as an accurate record of the meetings, and were signed by the Chairman.

7. Planning matters

a) P0803/24/FUL – 1 Hawkwell Row, Drybrook – Variation of condition 13 (biodiversity enhancement provisions) of planning permission P0495/22/FUL to allow new hedgerow to southern boundary (retrospective)

Decision: No objections

b) Council were informed that the planning decisions of the Forest of Dean District Council would be discussed at the September meeting.

8. Equality and Diversity Policy

Council agreed to adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy. **Action: Clerk**

9. Public Toilets

Cllr Middlemiss informed Council that the District Council has still not sent any information regarding the state of the building and therefore this matter would be deferred until the September meeting. **Action: Clerk**

10. District Council's Local Plan

Council retrospectively agreed the response that was sent to the District Council regarding the local plan. Appendix A

11. Donation request from SARA

Council agreed to donate £200 to SARA. **Action: Clerk**

12. Gloucestershire Police & Crime Commissioner's Councillor Advocacy Scheme

Council agreed to join the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner's Advocacy Scheme, and that Cllr Middlemiss will be the Council's representative.

Action: Cllr Middlemiss

13. Emergency Plan

Council agreed to defer this matter until the September meeting. **Action: Clerk**

14. Councillor Reports

None

15. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that she had:

Informed contractor that the Council would like the following works carried out from the quote that was received, to supply and fit 3 swings, to replace the ropes on the rope walk, to clean all plastic and metal surfaces, to deal with the hanging water issue on the slide and to cut back all vegetation around the play equipment.

Have informed GAPTC that the Council will not be renewing their membership this year.

The donation of £750 has been paid to Friends of Drybrook School towards the new sensory room.

Letter had been sent supporting the campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries and their disposal.

The new notice board for Brierley has been ordered.

16. Accounts/Finance

a) Council agreed the following payments and receipts:

Payments made since last meeting.

Payee	Details	Method	Amount	Power	Budget
Holy Trinity Drybrook	Room hire for 2023-2024	BACS (22/07/24)	£450.00	LGA 172 s111	General Admin
Print 365	Printing Parish Newsletter	BACS (25/07/24)	£199.99	LGA 1972 s142 (1A)	General Admin
Big Box Little Box	Monthly storage rental	SO (29/07/24)	£130.00	LGA 1972 s111	Projects
April Seabrook	Monthly salary	BACS (31/07/24)	£660.30	LGA 1972 s112(2)	Staff Costs
EE	Mobile phone	DD (03/08/24)	£28.48	LG(FP)A 1963 s5	General Admin
Friends of Drybrook School	Donation towards new sensory room	BACS (05/08/24)	£750.00	LGA 1972 s137	Grants & Donations
N Sargent	Donation by paying grass cutting invoice	BACS (09/08/24)	£160.00	LGA 1972 s137	Brierley Field (Donation)
Noticeboard Company	New noticeboard for Brierley	BACS (16/08/24)	£961.20	LGA 1972 s111	Projects
		TOTAL	£3,339.97		

Payments to be agreed at meeting.

Payee	Details	Method	Amount	Power	Budget
HMRC	NI & PAYE	BACS (21/08/24)	£174.51	LGA 1972 s112(2)	Staff Costs
Complete Landscapes	Grass cutting	BACS (21/08/24)	£1,539.00	HA 1980 s96	Recreation Areas
N Sargent	Litter picking/maintaining access to playing field	BACS (21/08/24)	£280.00	LGA 1972 s111	Recreation Areas
		TOTAL	£1,993.51		

Receipts:

09/08/24 Interest £30.23

- b) Council approved the petty cash figures for July 2024
- c) Council received the bank reconciliation for July 2024
- d) Council received budget vs spend up to 16th August 2024
- e) Cllr Middlemiss carried out the monthly financial checks of the Council's accounts on 20th August 2024

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.55pm

SIGNED:

DATE:

DRAFT

DRYBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

Response to the Proposed Housing Development of 97 Residential Dwellings in Drybrook, Gloucestershire.

Introduction

This Local Plan Consultation process and the as yet, undefined potential opportunities and challenges from Government Policies, is providing additional incentive for Drybrook Parish Council to consider embarking upon the development of our own Neighbourhood Plan (NDP). We acknowledge that the development of a NDP will be a longer timescale than the Local Plan timescale. However, we believe that we need to seek early common ground, that will lay a foundation for the future evolution of the village, enabling it to thrive within the context of both the joint aspirations of Forest of Dean District Council and Drybrook Parish Council plans developed in harmony.

With this in mind, we would like to identify key areas in the Local Plan for consideration, amendment and inclusion. We also wish this Public Consultation contribution of Drybrook Parish Council to be considered as a starting point for further dialogue with the District Council Planning process and wish to follow this up with a more detailed dialogue before any future decisions are concluded.

The Draft Local Plan Approach to Drybrook, referenced on page 186, very succinctly outlines how the village developed into a major village post World War 2.

Now defined as one of the five major villages in the District.

The village has developed around the junctions of the Stenders Road, once the main road between Gloucester and Monmouth and the Drybrook Road, the main road between Cinderford and Ross on Wye. Whilst services and facilities have sprung up around this crossroads, there has been an absence of community planning and investment to create an optimum settlement for the health and wellbeing of the ever-growing community. The roads are busy, narrow and congested. There is inadequate provision of safe pavements for people to move easily on foot around the village. Vehicles dominate the settlement. Public transport is inadequate for the community needs.

The village has evolved without a community centre or focal point that encourages social interaction across the generations. No village green or central square and very poor pedestrian and cycle access

around the village. As the motor car has gained in dominance, there is less footfall around the village to support local business services or for community interaction. There is a growing level of loneliness amongst the growing population of the elderly; young people also face boredom and isolation with limited youth provision.

Cinderford is our major centre for many services, yet the public transport links and active transport links are inadequate. This lack of regular and frequent public transport could be a contributor to the underperformance and the holding back of Cinderford as the major services provider for Drybrook and all areas of the Parish of Drybrook. **“A Local Plan Approach: Drybrook and Harrow Hill is a major village, which is expected to further evolve, providing some additional housing to take advantage of the services and other facilities available.”**

This “expectation” that the village will “evolve” and additional houses will be able to take advantage of this evolution suggests that there is a greater plan to develop the village as a community. It is our contention that this evolution will not happen without a joint partnership between the District Council and Drybrook Parish Council.

Therefore, historically, Drybrook has served as a ‘Residential Corridor’ linking with Mitcheldean and Ruardean, with Cinderford also providing the majority access to Education and Employment and primary services. The village has currently very limited access to Employment and currently serves only Primary Education needs. Essentially, Drybrook is predominantly ‘Residential only’ having always been intensively developed for ‘housing only’ with little or no investment to create a more vibrant ‘Social Village’.

Drybrook has less than 1500 residents and in that respect is relatively small.

- 14% of children in Drybrook live in poverty (Local Insight)
- Only 35% of people aged 16-74 are in full-time employment (Local Insight)
- 12% of households have no car (Local Insight)
- But more importantly, Drybrook in particular has a higher proportion of Surgery patients over 65 equaling 24% compared to the local average of 20% and national average of 17% (CQC). Meaning 22% of households in Drybrook are Pensioners.

Despite all these constraints, the community itself is very cohesive, with a range of community services loyally supported. It is this social cohesion that we are focussed on preserving and developing into the future and wish to proactively resist developments that can facilitate social

decline. A Neighbourhood Development Plan that creates a more engaging and sociable village centre will help stimulate commercial enterprises - helping to retain the remaining facilities such as the village Co-op and encourage other retail providers and community enterprises to start -up or return.

The proposed development of 97 new dwellings in Drybrook, Gloucestershire, therefore, presents both opportunities and challenges for our village. As we consider this development, it is essential to evaluate how it aligns with the Forest of Dean District Council's planning policies and the village's current infrastructure and amenities.

The Local Plan LP.86 allocation for Drybrook proposes allowing a further 97 houses on the Drybrook Farm site, With the development encroaching right up to the Drybrook Road and encompassing the old Drybrook Farm. Additionally, this estate will have its main access junction on the main Drybrook Road opposite the Hearts of Oak Pub. This proposal, with the inevitable and significant increase in traffic in the heart of the village, will add nothing but negative outcomes to the evolution of the village. Future housing on the Drybrook Farm site must embrace the needs of the village above and beyond extra houses, if the village is to be enabled to evolve into a better place to live and thrive in.

A further 97 new dwellings would substantially lift the population, but seemingly not enough as a catalyst for investment and improvement, especially bus services, although it would anchor the provision of existing local services.

The village at present is limiting in terms of a 'vital social or civil space' and given it's peripheral location, surrounding forest and agricultural land, residents are forced to seek agency in their lives by travelling further afield i.e.; Cinderford in order to access better amenities and facilities.

Further significant growth requires justification; smarter Planning processes and better regulation for Planners, smarter thinking to reflect local circumstances in order to foster strategies that give better opportunities for both current and new residents to live their lives; actively, financially, safely and securely as well as socially.

As a foretaste of what a Drybrook NDP might include, we could envision seeing the following inclusions.

1. That the land surrounding and including the old Farm house be identified as future community and civic space. With options for future development to include – an open concourse / village square with the old farm house developed as a community resource – a local stores and /or café.

2. A community space, away from the main road, that can build on the successful revival of the Hearts of Oak pub – creating an expanded space for a range of social gatherings such as farmers markets, Christmas fairs, daily social interactions, etc.
3. This space could be accessed from north east of the village and from Harrow Hill by the provision of public pedestrian and cycle paths on the perimeter of the original farm land footprint. Enabling a much more effective off-road network of active transport around the village away from the busy main roads. Essential for encouraging the evolution of the social life of the village.
4. A transport hub space around the old farm house is identified for a future time when a local transport system might include electric minibus shuttle services to Cinderford (and other locations) Enabling village residents of all ages to easily access Cinderford at frequent and regular intervals to use services such as the swimming pool, cinema, hospital, dentist, library, supermarkets, etc.

Please Note: These examples are pre-empting the outcome of any NDP community engagement process, but do serve as a powerful example of why the Local Plan needs to make provision for the future “evolution” and create the foundations for this to happen. We will not get a second chance on this matter.

We wish to initiate this joint planning vision for Drybrook by first respectfully making proposal solutions and inclusions that are stronger than the current Public Consultation offer, to ensure that future aspirations can be met.

Alignment with Planning Policies

Forest of Dean Core Strategy

The Core Strategy outlines the vision for sustainable development in the district until 2041. Key significant Policies to support the future vision for Drybrook, include:

CSP.1 (Design and Environmental Protection): This policy emphasizes high-quality design and environmental protection. The new development should adhere to sustainable building practices, minimizing its environmental impact, whilst enhancing the local character of Drybrook.

CSP.4 (Development at Settlements): Drybrook is identified as one of the settlements suitable for accommodating growth, and defined as ‘one of five major villages’. The proposed housing should contribute positively to the village’s needs while ensuring infrastructure and services are adequately provided.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

The NPPF provides overarching guidance for sustainable development across England. Relevant principles for Drybrook include:

Promoting Sustainable Transport: Development should facilitate sustainable transport modes and aim to minimize congestion not increase – especially taking Drybrook Quarry future proposals into consideration, as well as the current 88% of residents currently reliant on private vehicles.

Integrating cycling paths – currently lacking within the village, introducing sustainable local public transport options; ie electric and pedestrian-friendly routes, as these will be essential in minimizing carbon footprint, pollution and air quality.

Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes: The proposal itself should aim to help meet ‘local housing needs’; particularly providing affordable housing options as outlined in paragraph 62 of the NPPF, with provision of housing that accommodates across generational needs.

Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities: Development should include green spaces and recreational facilities to enhance community well-being and encourage social interaction, not just a ‘playground’ added to the proposed development.

National Planning Framework Regulations:

These regulations guide the evaluation of planning applications, ensuring developments are assessed for their impact on infrastructure, environment, and community welfare.

Allocations Plan:

The Allocations Plan 2006-2026 identified specific sites suitable for development. Whilst this has now been replaced, the proposed site in Drybrook should strictly align with designated areas to ensure it fully complements the village’s existing structure and community goals.

Benefits of the Development

Economic Growth: The construction and subsequent increase in population will likely boost the already limited local economy. New residents will support existing local businesses and services, enhancing Drybrook's economic vitality and cohesion.

Infrastructure Improvements: The development may drive enhancements to local infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and improved public transport links, benefiting all residents and supporting sustainable growth.

Diverse Community: By offering a range of housing types, the development could attract a diverse population, enriching Drybrook's social cohesion and cultural fabric and fostering a dynamic and inclusive community.

Affordable Housing: Inclusion of affordable housing is essential to address local needs, particularly for young families and individuals, and those residents who wish to live in the locality, ensuring Drybrook remains accessible to all demographics.

However, incorporating shared Ownership and/or leased properties involves ground rent and maintenance – more costly to the purchaser, with any increases not fully controlled.

Shared Ownership also increases the prices of freehold properties making these unreachable for the local population, especially the younger generation.

Better regulation and definition of 'affordable' – especially to Drybrook's local population is required.

Enhancing Local Amenities: Further enhancement of Drybrook's facilities and amenities is critical and crucial to ensure it better serves its residents, and development should include a focus on access to the one remaining local shop and other amenities, which is vital for creating a vibrant community. Currently Drybrook is seriously lacking in a 'central hub' or village 'social focus point'.

Specific current Challenges in Drybrook

There has been a considerable 'Lack of Investment' in Drybrook. District Council owned Land & Buildings have seen little to no investment over the past 30+ years, with areas of land also left derelict. Planning Application P1753/12/OUT – proposed development of 18 dwellings at the Dairy Farm, The Cross in Drybrook has been left derelict for the last 12yrs. Public Toilets and Public Parking are critical for community services and should be prioritized for refurbishment and/or modernization and re-development to meet the current and future needs of residents.

Decline of Essential Amenities: Despite being identified as a 'major village', Drybrook has experienced a decline in essential amenities since the AP was adopted in 2018.

The village currently lacks:

Post Office: The absence of a post office has affected the convenience and accessibility of postal services for residents. Once a week services are insufficient.

Butcher: The closure of a local butcher has limited residents' access to fresh, locally sourced meat and has impacted local economic activity. The Parish Council's recent collaboration to include a Farmers Market to the village has negated this to some degree.

Petrol Station: The lack of a local petrol station means residents must travel further afield to fill up

their tanks. There is also no public facility to enable electric vehicles to recharge, which can be inconvenient and costly.

Strain on Existing Services: The existing services, such as schools and healthcare facilities, will also face additional pressure with the proposed development. It is crucial to plan for adequate expansion and proper funding of these services to meet future demand.

Environmental Impact and Pollution: To minimize environmental impact, the development should incorporate sustainable practices such as energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy sources, and green spaces that promote biodiversity.

Consideration also needs to be given to the fact that areas within Drybrook fall under the Wye Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Flooding and Drainage: Flooding and drainage are critical considerations for any new housing development, particularly in areas with a history of water management issues, Drybrook being a Key Candidate. In Drybrook, given there are underlying watercourses, the following factors should be addressed:

- **Flood Risk Assessment:** A comprehensive flood risk assessment should be conducted to identify any potential risks to the new development and surrounding areas. This assessment should consider historical data, existing drainage systems, and potential impacts of climate change.
- **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** Incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems is essential for managing surface water runoff and reducing the risk of flooding. SuDS can include features such as permeable pavements, green roofs, swales, and retention ponds that mimic natural water management processes.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Upgrading existing drainage infrastructure may be necessary to accommodate increased water flow resulting from the development. This includes ensuring that sewers, drains, and watercourses are capable of handling additional capacity without causing local flooding – already an issue in Drybrook.
- **Natural Flood Management:** Implementing natural flood management strategies, such as planting vegetation to absorb rainwater, can help mitigate flooding risks and improve the area's ecological value.
- **Community Involvement:** Engaging the local community in flood prevention initiatives and education can enhance resilience and preparedness. Residents can be encouraged to participate in maintaining drainage systems and adopting water-saving measures.

- **Monitoring and Maintenance:** Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of drainage systems are crucial to ensure their effectiveness over time. Regular inspections and prompt repairs can prevent blockages and reduce the likelihood of flooding incidents.

By addressing these factors, development can minimize the risk of flooding, protect local ecosystems, and enhance the safety and well-being of Drybrook's residents.

Traffic and Transport: Development must address potential traffic congestion. Implementing effective traffic management strategies. The proposal for a roundabout opposite the Hearts of Oak public house is not an effective or efficient traffic management strategy. Whilst roundabouts represent a forward thinking approach to traffic management and capacity they can also cause queues to form in busy periods, reducing traffic flow as well as causing safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists.

Enhancing 'local public transport' options will be crucial for maintaining accessibility and reducing reliance on cars, with smarter concepts for traffic management that reduce congestion rather than creating a central 'concrete hub' in Drybrook Road.

Health and Well-being: Providing recreational spaces and promoting active lifestyles are vital for community health and well-being. Development should include; walking trails, and an area of community space to facilitate social interaction and physical activity.

It should aim to encourage an inclusive and connected community, to engender a sense of safety, security and belonging.

Social Aspects and Community Integration: Efforts should be made to integrate new residents into Drybrook's existing community. Drybrook Parish Council initiatives such as local events and community programmes can foster social cohesion and strengthen the village's sense of identity. Currently, the more recent development at Mannings Farm has not proved a successful integration.

Impact on Local Culture: Whilst there are no distinctive characteristics or buildings that hold Drybrook 'unique' – although there is one Listed building – a chapel in the village, maintaining Drybrook's features and heritage is essential as the village grows. It is dominated by surrounding forest and agricultural land, which needs to be preserved. Drybrook's heritage includes extractive industries and reserves (coal, stone, quarrying and iron mining), with Forest 'free Miners' still inhabiting Drybrook.

Thoughtful planning and design can ensure that new housing complements the existing environment and respects the village's cultural landscape.

Anti-Social Behavior and Crime: Increased population density can sometimes lead to anti-social behavior and crime if not carefully managed.

The most recent previous development at Mannings Farm was given no consideration to the village or existing residents. The development has caused significant issues and strain to Drybrooks' infrastructure and increased traffic with no improvements made to access/egress points in either the High Street, or at Mitcheldean for the additional traffic.

Flooding has also been an issue due to drainage issues.

The existing development was meant to include social housing at approx. 20% with 80% private/shared ownership. Due to the price and charges involved in Shared Ownership the development has become more 80% social housing and 20% private, and Anti-social behavior and drug dealing is prevalent.

It is now well known within the village as the 'Bronx' with the site receiving daily visits from the Police.

The Mannings Farm development as it currently stands is not a good example of effective or efficient town and village planning, and especially not for Drybrook.

Clearly the built environment can have an impact on how successfully an individual can embed healthy behaviours, such as social interaction into their lives.

Ensuring the new development includes well-designed public spaces and adequate lighting for example, can help reduce crime rates and promote a safe environment for all residents.

The Concept of the 20-Minute Neighbourhood

The concept of the 20-minute neighbourhood, also known as the 15-minute city, (www.smartcitylab.com) has gained prominence internationally as an effective way to create healthy and active communities. This concept emphasizes 'living locally,' where individuals should be able to meet most of their daily needs—such as shopping, exercise, education, socializing, and healthcare—within a 20-minute walk from home, with safe cycling and local transport options.

Implementing the 20-minute neighbourhood concept in Drybrook can improve equality and inclusion, help tackle climate change, and enhance the village's overall quality of life. This approach supports sustainable living and aligns with the goals of the Parish Council in creating a vibrant and self-sufficient community.

SOLUTIONS & INCLUSIONS

Specific request for amendments and inclusion in the Local Plan:

1. Policy LP 86 - Statement

We would like to see the inclusion of an expectation that a significant area (needs further discussion) between the Drybrook Main Road and the farm be set aside for community / civic space. To be developed by commercial partners or compulsory purchase or Community Land Trust mechanisms.

Policy LP. 86 – alterations in Purple text

Local Plan Approach. Policy LP 86. Pages 185-187

Drybrook Farm, Drybrook and To The Rear Of High Street, Drybrook

About 4.3ha of land adjoining Drybrook Farm, Drybrook and to the rear of High Street is allocated for approximately 97 dwellings and for associated landscaping and at least 0.6ha open space especially to the higher ground. The site should provide pedestrian **and Cycle access from Drybrook Road via the old Farm House** to the development recently completed to the northeast and directly to the High Street while vehicle access is likely to be ~~close to~~ **restricted from the Drybrook Road via** the former Drybrook Farm buildings which are part of the allocation. The development of the site will need to take full account of and be compatible with the protection of the nearby bat SAC and its areas of influence.

This site adjoins one recently completed and offers an opportunity for additional development. The land allocated is in part quite prominent and its development must take account of this. There is also a watercourse which crosses the site and will need to be provided for. Overall the site is capable of providing a mixed housing development and the additional land now allocated is considered a suitable means to ensure that it can be achieved providing improved accessibility to the village centre and ~~some~~ **the provision of community open space adjoining and opening on to** the main Drybrook Road while enabling the former Drybrook Farm buildings to be developed **for community services or retail provision**. The development of the site will need to demonstrate it will not have an adverse impact on the nearby bat SACs and the populations they support. The landscaped areas and associated open space will **need to** provide some benefit for the village overall.

2. Important open areas: Green Infrastructure Allocations. As shown on the FDDC Policies Map.

In order to further enhance the evolution of a quality central area for our ever-growing village we would like to propose that the Old Orchard between Drybrook Car Park and Quabbs Road be

identified and designated as an important open area and potential future recreation space for the village centre.

This area needs this protection as any future attempt to seek planning permission for housing would mitigate against any vision to enhance the quality of the village for the community by developing a more open civic space at the entrance to Drybrook Farm.

Could it be included in areas identified on the FDDC Policies Map?

Conclusion

The proposed development of 97 new dwellings in Drybrook does offer an opportunity for growth and revitalization. However, it is essential to ensure that this growth is proportionate and sustainable in meeting local and 'appropriate solutions' to housing for Drybrook.

It needs to align with key policies from the Forest of Dean District Council's Core Strategy, the NPPF, NPPF and the 'replaced' Allocations Plan. Addressing the current lack of investment in public buildings, areas of other derelict land and the decline of essential amenities will be crucial to supporting sustainable development.

By ensuring development of our village is sustainable and inclusive, it can meet the needs of both new and existing residents while preserving Drybrook's cohesion and features, providing a new identity. Community engagement, active collaboration between Forest of Dean District Council and Drybrook Parish Council to participation in the planning processes will be critical to shaping the future of our village.

Drybrook requires extensive investment in order to revitalize its identity from a 'Corridor of Residential housing only' to a more vibrant 'Social village'. Planners need to encompass a more people centric design – as proposed 'Solutions and Inclusions' outlined above, and not just develop 'Residential Dwellings' without full consideration to addressing the wider issues and constraints that Drybrook village currently possesses.

Adopting better principles of building with nature, improved green spaces so that it doesn't compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

As 'Residents only' with minimal current amenities in Drybrook, people need to 'Live Well' and there needs to be some restoration to 'local pride', belonging and social interaction, making Drybrook a 'destination to live, not just to reside within a 'corridor'.

As a Parish Council we have encouraged residents to participate in this consultation. But, this Consultation has not been either accessible or conducive to the average member of the public, and we have received numerous comments to that effect.

We are committed to supporting and serving residents in Drybrook, and look forward to working collaboratively with FDDC in producing a Local Neighbourhood Plan for the future of Drybrook.

CHAIR

DRYBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr John Print

Appendix 1.

Forest Of Dean District Council Local Plan

Core policies that have helped inform our response

2.8 Broad priorities and objectives:

The FoDDC Council Plan (2024-28) has the following priorities

Overarching Principle: We strive to meet the needs of the Forest of Dean while taking into account the needs of the Forest's future generations.

Priority 1: Thriving Communities:

Objective: To foster resilient and inclusive communities that are motivated and competent to adapt to the challenges and opportunities posed by the climate and nature emergencies.

Priority 2: Decarbonisation and nature recovery:

Objective: For the Forest of Dean to have a protected and enhanced natural environment, and be on target to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Priority 3: Sustainable Economy:

Objective: To foster economic prosperity while ensuring environmental sustainability and social well-being.

3.1 Core Policies

Policy LP1. Sustainable Development:

The following are required:

1. A design to reduce vulnerability to and provide resilience from the impacts arising from a changing climate
2. Development to be located so that the form and mix and/ or proximity to essential services and facilities reduces the need to travel and offers accessible sustainable travel
3. Design and location of schemes which provides facilitates for walking and cycling for access to services, employment and for leisure trips
4. Development which provides or has easy and safe access to public transport able to provide a usable service especially in the case of larger schemes (over 25 dwellings)
5. To have a long term positive impact on the locality through design and by being adaptable to changing user demands within the scope of the LP
6. To be designed to maximise green infrastructure (GI), support nature recovery and improved biodiversity (including but not limited to any requirements for net gain), making optimum use of and enhancing watercourses and other features.
7. Proposals for new development must demonstrate regard for healthy places and take account of national guidance and best practice that promote healthy development principles, including those proposals for development and spaces which are, but are not limited to being: a) readily walkable, inclusive, safe, with convenient access for all to healthcare, the natural environment and opportunities for healthy food growing, and social interaction, b) Provide a mix of high quality, energy efficient, affordable and adaptable housing that meets the needs of different groups in the community.

FDCC Local Plan and any emerging Drybrook Parish Neighbourhood Plan need to work in harmony to develop effective and efficient Best Practice within guidance from:

Design - Creation Of Place Principles, Character, Quality

Policy LP 15.

Including but not exclusively:

1. Establishing or supporting a strong sense of place,
2. Being visually attractive, employing good architecture and landscaping with a range of integral open space serving a variety of purposes which respects the amenity of residents and others.
3. Contribute to environmental enhancement, for example through the design and use of open space, GI and multi purpose SUDs features.
4. Adopt an inclusive approach to produce safe and accessible environments that will embrace the needs of all different groups in the community.
5. Providing layouts with pedestrian and cycling routes integrated within the overall layout and having a distribution of open space which allows connectivity within the development and to adjoining areas
6. Being designed to support the use of public transport and

6. Built, Natural and Historic Environment

6.8 New layouts should be designed to include pedestrian and cycle routes as an integral part and these should where possible provide linkages to neighbouring areas, making use of and sharing open space within the development. These routes should be safe and attractive to use and are likely to be separated from the major vehicle routes. Layouts should enable connections to public transport and support travel by means other than private vehicles. Existing and new open space should be well integrated into a development and be multi functional, for instance as visual amenity, as a drainage feature and as GI. Open space should where possible form part of a network or add to an existing one. Open areas (spaces between buildings) are often critically important to the feel as well as the function of a scheme and must be considered from the outset in the design process.

Policy LP. 18

Land of Recreation and Amenity Value

The following land of recreational, cultural and amenity value will be protected from development:

1. Land identified on the policies maps as Important Open Areas

Just as the Settlement Boundary has been moved to accommodate additional houses within the Drybrook Farm proposal we wish to argue that the green space directly to the south of the District Council car park on Drybrook Road be protected by being designated an important green space to contribute to the evolution of the centrally located social spaces within the village

New Recreation Land And Uses

Policy LP. 19

New development will be expected to make provision and/ or provide a contribution towards provision of informal open space and other facilities including those required for children's play and youth/adult recreation and allotments. In considering the provision of new space and the contribution of any that exists, the need to retain, expand by way of habitat creation such as tree planting, and further develop a network of green infrastructure will be taken into account. Recreation and amenity land will be expected to serve more than one purpose where possible, such as providing GI, SuDs, pedestrian and cycle routes and tree planting.

6.22 New development which generates a need for open space will be required to provide this to an appropriate level where there is a shortage. This includes the provision of play space and youth adult play space which is required to meet the standards adopted by the Council. It also may include land for allotments. Casual open space for amenity, wildlife and visual purposes will also be required as an integral part of development proposals and this and other more formal space will make a valuable contribution to GI and fulfil a variety of functions. Although the space to be provided will be in keeping with the needs of the development or that specified in the LP, it will be expected to be accessible for the wider community. This may include for example large areas set aside as part of the major allocations but also smaller play areas and incidental open space within smaller developments.

7.1 Accessible community halls, schools, shops, places of assembly and GP surgeries are often key to the quality of life in a rural community and provide both points of contact and essential services. Proposals for development which would involve the loss of facilities where there are no accessible alternatives will not therefore be supported. It is the access to community facilities that are being protected by this policy, and not a particular shop, hall or public house so in general it will apply to situations where there is a threat to the only one of a particular facility. It applies to a wide range of facilities and will mainly affect the more vulnerable rural parts of the district although it could still apply in the towns where there are unique facilities under threat. In protecting schools, recreation space associated with them is also protected. This may or may not be available for wider community uses and may be covered by additional designation(s) in the LP such as an Important Open Area. This policy protects access to the facilities concerned.

Argue that a NDP and a FDDC Local Plan has to have the ability to initiate essential services that have failed to be delivered along with extensive house building in the past. A growth that has earned Drybrook the label of “Major Village” without the concomitant development of civic and community space that is essential for creating a sense of place, wellbeing and encourages better community behaviours.

Policy LP. 24

Active Travel

Active travel will be promoted and provisions required throughout the FoDD including where necessary by the addition of new infrastructure which enables safe travel as part of networks using existing and new routes. Development proposals will be required to support these and make contributions to enable their use and introduction.

Active travel routes and networks should be integrated into development enabling access to services and to points (hubs) where other transport (including public transport and other services) are available.

Active travel – walking and cycling has to be an essential component when delivering a future vision for Drybrook. The very busy, narrow main roads with narrow or non-existent pavements will never facilitate safe active travel. A whole village strategy needs developing. Taking advantage of new build in the designated area to integrate car free active travel routes within any new development and extending the provision to enable active transport away from the main roads and built on routes that ensure community use for practical purpose above and beyond exercise.

Appendix 2

Potential Opportunities and Constraints in the new Government’s Legislature programme.

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

- Improve local planning authorities capacity.
- Accelerate house building and infrastructure delivery
- Reform compulsory purchase compensation

English Devolution Bill

- Create a strong new “right to buy” for community assets, such as empty shops, pubs and community spaces.

- Make devolution the default setting, with places granted additional powers (over strategic planning, local transport networks, skills and employment support)
- Introduce new powers and duties for local leaders to produce local growth plans.

Better Busses Bill

- Remove the ban on publicly owned bus companies
- Provide more accountability over bus operators
- Give local leaders more control and flexibility over bus funding

Appendix 3

Notes from initial informal thoughts and discussions:

- Drybrook identified as a major village: What are the components of a major village. Can provision be made to future proof the plan to protect future generations and enhance opportunities that might not be currently fundable - but are none the less needed.
- History of Drybrook development as a village.

The future evolution of Drybrook

- Accept current economic situation where it is harder to fund public services and amenities
- However, a plan can facilitate an ambitious future by preventing bad development and the killing-off of potential for improvement as conditions allow moving forward.
- Increased housing numbers coupled with a decline in local amenities and the challenge for the local community to walk and cycle around the village, exacerbates the sense of isolation, loneliness, reduces the opportunities for exercise- walking and cycling, with very limited resources for community interaction.
- Loneliness, lack of facilities, no village focal points – absence of community space – reduce potential for greater community cohesion and engagement
- Population is aging, new build with affordable housing might rebalance this trend.
- Greatest need – alongside further increase in house building (and affordable homes) Development of community space in the heart of the village.
- Ageing population, lonely, abandoned neglected.
- Young population. Teenagers – boredom, confined, restricted.

On the improvement list for the future.-

- Access to local affordable food
- Better public transport – transport hubs
- Better play and community outdoor space
- Community shops, café, toilets,
- Planning that goes beyond focussing on a house by house or estate by estate application of the Development Plan but looks at the development of the community holistically
- Meets current targets without jeopardising the needs of future generations in a village community.

Additional Information

Community Land Trust web link:

<https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/about-clts/what-is-a-community-land-trust-clt/>

Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils

GAPTC Grants for Neighbourhood Plan Development.

<https://www.gaptc.org.uk/news/2016/12/grants-available>

DRY