

Hi, for those who do not know me I am Chris Hill. We moved into the end of Heath Close nearly 30 years ago and, I am afraid to say, just used Milcombe as a place to commute from. But then, last summer, I found that the field next to me was sold for building; so, I started fighting it and joined the Parish Council. I have also been doing research on the history of Milcombe and on the future that might happen over the next few years.

I have, since Nigel Davis is on holiday, been asked to talk to you about a Neighbourhood Plan. Some of you may remember that a Milcombe Parish Action Plan was developed about 15 years ago, with the intention to indicate how both the Parish and Cherwell District councils, along with other organizations, should develop the village and its resources. Unfortunately, at that time there were no ways to make any major changes, although we have managed to build the Multi Use Games area in the Play Area, and some additional dog bins and a bus shelter in New Road.

In 2011 the government enabled the Localism Act which modified the Town and Country Planning Act and the National Planning Policy Framework. Amongst other tasks, this enabled both the Right to Build allowing people to design and build their new houses, and the ability for a parish council to request the local planning authority to make a Neighbourhood Development Order under which a Neighbourhood Area would be created. This would normally be applicable to the complete parish, though it could be limited to part of it, or could be a combination of multiple parishes. Within that area, some functions of the planning process would be devolved to the parish council, giving them more control on the way that new developments are processed.

At the end of last year, we made an application to Cherwell District Council and a Designated Area was approved for us, to cover the entire parish. Our next step is for us, and more importantly for you, to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parish. When completed, and accepted, it will become part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used as part of the determination of planning applications. As such, it must support the delivery of strategic policies included within the Cherwell Local Plans, as well as meeting the requirements included in the Town and Country Planning Act and the National Planning Policy Framework, and those of other organizations.

The new Development Plan will be much larger and complex from the previous Community Led Plan, and will take up to 2 to 4 years of effort. Within the plan, we are expected to provide information on

- The method and needs for a new Neighbourhood Plan.
- The history and development of Milcombe, including Conservation.
- The nature of our landscape and how it is used.
- Identification of sites of interest, etc.
- An analysis of our population and housing.
- Information on businesses in the parish covering farming, manufacturing, wholesale and including Work from Home.
- The resources that are available within and around the parish.
- Information on recreation and sports.
- Information on transportation in and through the parish.

For our future development, we need to identify how we expect it to grow, including

- New housing, including Right to Build.
- The size and type of housing, including suitable places for them and the number to be built.
- Business developments and how we can improve them.
- New resources that we need locally.

- New and better recreation and sports.
- A Plan for Nature, including an area for a nature park.
- Better and more sustainable transport.
- Our plans for the future of Milcombe.

The development of this plan WILL involve the residents living in the parish. We will need to

- Carry out a survey through the parish to collect information on people, housing, businesses etc.
- Collect information from residents regarding their views on the parish and how they want it to grow.
- Collate this information to develop the new plan. This must cover all of the parish and not just the central area here.
- Show this proposed plan to our residents and make any adjustments that might be needed.
- If needed, have an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out against it.
- Submit the proposed plan to Cherwell District Council for review. That will include an independent analysis of the plan to ensure that it meets the legal requirements.
- Carry out a referendum across the parish to approve the new plan.

This process will take time and effort. There are organizations which can help with this, including funding. This plan must meet the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act and the National Planning Policy Framework, along with those of Cherwell District and Oxfordshire councils, and demonstrate that it does by references to the applicable requirements. It must include

- The Plan.
- The requirements that it must match.
- Maps, photos and charts.
- Summarized information from the survey.

It must be produced as a fully formed publication and would be around 50 to 80 pages.

As a project, this will be headed by Nigel and myself, as representatives of Milcombe Parish Council. To that we need to add about 4 or 5 members of you, our residents. These must cover different groups of people, with different interests – I have my ideas, but I do not know what a 20s couple with children or a 50s with teenagers would want.

Historically, Milcombe, like most small villages, was based around farming and it was not until the growth that occurred in the late 50s to 70s, combined with more automation in the farms, that we became more of a commuting base for Banbury and further. There is the possibility that that process could grow in the future.

Over time, people move away or die; now we need new people and new ideas for the village. The question is – What do you, who live and grow here, want for the future of the village?

If you are interested in helping us, please contact either of us or any of the Parish Councillors.