

**BRACKENFIELD PARISH
INITIAL MEETING TO DISCUSS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING
AT
BRACKENFIELD CHURCH HALL ON THURSDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2017 AT 7PM**

During January, invitations and information leaflets were circulated to every household in the Parish, resulting in a pleasing attendance of 34 members of the community, including four Parish Councillors (with apologies from one member).

Mike Edwards thanked the Parochial Church Council for the use of the Hall and for setting it up for the meeting and introduced Joe Dugdale, from Rural Action Derbyshire.

JD outlined the background to Neighbourhood Planning, in the context of National and Local Government and explained that once “made” i.e. officially adopted, the plan sits alongside the Council's Local Plan and is used as a reference against which any development applications are judged. N-E Derbyshire's new Local Plan will be published in the next few weeks.

A Neighbourhood Plan can protect features of the environment but must also look ahead to what the community needs will be in ten to fifteen years time.

The Parish Council is the Qualifying Body for the Neighbourhood Plan and it is their role to start the process by requesting the designation of a Neighbourhood Area. In this case the area would be the Parish minus two fields which have already been adopted as part of the Wessington Neighbourhood Area.

Once the Neighbourhood Area is designated, a grant of up to £9,000 is available to pay for costs such as room hire, printing and consultant's fees.

JD explained that a steering group would need to be formed, consisting of parish councillors and/or residents. With the assistance of a consultant to guide them through the process, they would carry out the required tasks including consultations, gathering evidence and developing reports. This would be quite a lot of work which could probably be achieved in about 18 months, given that Brackenfield is a small community.

The process is independently inspected to ensure that everything has been conducted legally after which there is a referendum (both paid for by the Local Authority). A simple majority of voters is required before the plan can be “made” or officially adopted.

A question/answer session followed with further discussion in small groups, looking at what Brackenfield might be like in ten or fifteen years time and what the pressures on the community might be. There was some discussion about whether or not there should or could be any development in the village and whether a Neighbourhood Plan was necessary.

A show of hands was used to vote on starting a Neighbourhood Plan and it was agreed by a majority of around two-thirds. Seven people offered to participate in the steering group and their contact details were noted.

The next step is for the Parish Council to formally request that the Local Authority recognise the Brackenfield Neighbourhood Area and then to apply for the appropriate grant.

Whilst this is in process, the steering group can meet to establish themselves with a constitution and start to plan their strategy. JD agreed to attend this meeting and ME/CE agreed to make contact with the other volunteers.

