



# Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan

## Newsletter 5, May 2021

This monthly newsletter is designed to keep you in touch with work on the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan. Please contact us if there is a topic you would like to know more about, or have any questions for us.

### Droitwich Spa Town Council

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, the Council agreed to establish a group of councillors to Support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is difficult to understand why, after many months, this has not happened. This is causing delay to the project.

Ahead of the Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April, Councillor Humphries submitted a report to the Council. His report can be seen [HERE](#) on our website.

During the Council meeting, the Chairman (the Mayor) stated that Councillors Humphries and Hopkins were aware of the process regarding applying for Locality money and regarding training for Councillors, as that had been made clear at a meeting they attend with the Town Clerk and the Leader of the Council on 22/2/21 the recording of which was available. He concluded by saying, on that basis and, as the report was accepted, there was no need for any further comment.

That statement effectively ruled out asking any questions or starting any discussion.

The Mayor's response did not answer any of the questions raised by Councillor Humphries on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

The meeting held on 22/2/21 was a private meeting between three councillors and the Town Clerk. The Neighbourhood Plan was discussed towards the end of the meeting. No agenda was published and no minutes have been produced. The recording can only be viewed by one person at a time, on request, in St Richard's House. We wonder why the Council cannot make the recording public in line with common practice by other councils, or provide Councillors with a copy. Video files are too large to be sent by email but there are simple ways to transfer large data files to individuals.

The Mayor stated that the part of the meeting relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan covered two matters:

- The process for applying for Locality Grant funding, and
- Councillor training to be provided by Wychavon DC.

These matters are also delaying the Neighbourhood Plan project, so a public and accurate understanding of what was said at the meeting on 22/2/21 is essential.

### Focus on the Environment Team

Tony Jones, Topic Manager for the Environment Team, has been a Droitwich resident for nearly 40 years. He was a police officer for thirty years and a corporate trainer for twenty years. He is now self-employed as a woodturner and woodturning tutor. Tony recently joined the Neighbourhood Plan management group and is seeking volunteers to build the Environment Team.

'Environment' is such a wide-ranging topic that Tony is concentrating initially on issues relating to green spaces.



Green spaces are extremely valuable to us. They help our physical and mental wellbeing, enhance the visual aspects of

where we live and create wildlife habitats and corridors for movement. We need to preserve what we already have and make sure that new developments include green spaces in their plans.

Green spaces can be protected in several ways such as green belt, conservation areas and 'plans'. The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) designates areas of green space for protection from development. Areas can only be designated when a plan is 'made' or reviewed. The current ongoing review has suggested a considerable increase in the areas to be designated in Droitwich. However, numerous smaller green areas have been omitted from those listed. This is where the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan comes in.

Although there is no minimum size, in order to be designated for preservation, the spaces must comply with specific criteria. A green space must be:

- reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;
- local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

We need to identify areas of green space of importance to people who live in Droitwich. They will need to be checked against the revision of the SWDP and against the criteria. We will then have to identify them geographically and map them.

This will need to be done for all the areas of Droitwich within the boundary of the plan. People who live in the area are best placed to feed us with the information needed to identify these green areas so that they can be assessed and logged.

Please let us know if you think you can help, even in a small way.