

THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT IN LEA AND CLEVERTON PARISH

Would you be interested in helping to ensure that development in our parish reflects our community views?

One of the many responsibilities of the Parish Council is to appraise all planning applications which affect our parish and to then submit comments and recommendations to Wiltshire Council's planners which we feel represent the interests of the whole of our parish community.

We spend much time and energy at full Parish Council or Planning Committee meetings deciding what comments and recommendations to make. During this process we seek to ensure that only those planning and development proposals are approved which promote the quality of life and economic health of our community, conserve and enhance the natural environment and respect the historic character and distinctiveness of our villages (Lea, Garsdon and Cleverton).

At the same time we have to ensure that our recommendations accord with the policies and provisions of all statutory local development plans. Whilst Wiltshire Council planners do not have to agree with our recommendations, they must consider our local parish views before deciding to grant or refuse any application for permission for development.

Over the past 18 months we have had differences of opinion with Wiltshire Council on a number of planning applications. As a result we now wish to go ahead and prepare our own local, parish planning documentation. The scope and content of such documentation will need to be agreed through consultation with both our parish community, and Wiltshire Council planners. It may, for example, take the form of a relatively straightforward Design Statement or a more wide-ranging Neighbourhood Plan. We would also need to prepare a Conservation Area Statement for Lea.

The preparation of such documents will make us better informed, and provide greater confidence and a stronger mandate for our discussions with Wiltshire Council planners. Once accepted by Wiltshire Council, a Design Statement would become a supplementary planning document. If a Neighbourhood Plan were prepared, that would become the Development Plan for the parish. Either would have to be taken into account by Wiltshire Council when making a decision on a planning application as they would be regarded in law as material considerations.

If this documentation is to be meaningful and self-sustaining, it must represent the views of our entire parish community. We therefore need to involve as wide a cross-section of our community as possible in its preparation. As a first step therefore, the Parish Council would like to establish a small core of people who will form an initial 'design group', to act as co-ordinators. This group, which may well change as circumstances unfold, would be responsible for undertaking all consultations, and for drawing on help from local groups and individuals from within the wider community

At this stage we would therefore like to hear from any individuals from within our Parish who would be interested in joining two of our Parish Councillors to become part of an initial design group. To help you to decide if you would be interested and willing to contribute to the challenge of preparing a Design and Conservation Area Statement for our parish, here are some key points:

- The objective will be a document which represents the views of our community about the important characteristics of our parish and thus demonstrates our commitment to high quality, locally distinctive design. It would therefore support and strengthen the role of the Parish Council when consulted over planning applications
- The likely scope of the document would include (a) a description of the history and resulting settlement pattern of our parish, which has resulted in the distinctive character of our villages and surrounding countryside (b) a description of the qualities which make up that distinctive character. These qualities could include land use and landscape, the disposition and shape of settlements and the nature of different types of buildings (including their social and heritage value and their situation within the villages). All of this will set the scene for (c) the drafting of clearly defined design principles which can be used to manage future change, incorporating the need to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of our parish
- The likely timescale to initiate, prepare, consult and agree the document with our local community and to agree and obtain approval from Wiltshire Council planners, will be of the order of 12 months

If this is a challenge which interests you, please contact our Parish Clerk John Parmiter on lea_clevertonpc@btinternet.com or phone him on 01666 823730. You may also if you so wish visit him by arrangement at 33 Pembroke Green.

Stuart Suter