A CHALFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN … OR A DESIGN STATEMENT … OR BOTH?

Many people will have heard that work is underway through the Parish Council on a plan to help control future development in Chalford Parish and to ensure that valued open spaces and green corridors are retained. Based on advice from our consultants, we need to produce both a Design Statement and a Neighbourhood Plan.

The main document will be a full statutory Neighbourhood Development Plan [NDP], supported with a Design Statement. Once the NDP has passed through various stages [including a referendum in the Parish] our NDP will enable us to:

- control the number and design of new builds and extensions in the parish,
- protect small but important open spaces e.g.[allotments, pleasure grounds and France Lynch Parish bank] for the future.
- retain the important green corridors e.g. between Chalford Hill and Eastcombe [to prevent merging of two villages and loss of connections for wildlife].
- maximise our chances of keeping valued local facilities, and it will enable us to
- retain some key views in and out of our parish.

Once the NDP is ‘made’ (the legal term) it will have the same legal standing as Stroud District’s Local Plan, perhaps even a little more because it will be completely specific to Chalford.

The Design Statement will give details of the distinctive character of our various settlements and hence be better able to protect and enhance them. Almost all NDPs include ‘policies’ about design but they are often rather generalised. By having the Design Statement linked to the NDP through some key policies, before the NDP is rubber stamped, the Design Statement can be in place and making a difference earlier and can then be adapted far more easily.

It is intended to include advice in the NDP that architects, planners or individuals must consult with the SDC and Parish before submitting a plan. The documents are there to be used pro-actively, ideally influencing any potential ‘developer’ (that is mostly people who live here!) on ‘day one’ before anything gets set in stone. Luckily this is an approach fully supported by Stroud District Council so they too will play a key role.

The Parish Council group working on the NDP and the Design Statement have involved local people already and, guided by our consultants, drafts of both the NDP and the Design Statement should be ready to share with all of you soon. So watch this space and be sure to give us your views when you hear from us with the drafts.