

Asfordby Neighbourhood Plan Jubilee Day Consultation 3.6.12



Introduction

Asfordby Parish Council appointed Helen Metcalfe and Colin Wilkinson (town planning consultants who have undertaken other work to assist Asfordby with the preparation of the Plan) to set up a Neighbourhood Plan stand at the Jubilee Day celebrations on 3rd June. Earlier in the week the Parish Council had worked with Helen and Colin to agree a set of policy statements (see stakeholder report from 29.5.12) and these statements were voted on by the local community at the Jubilee Day consultation.

For the Neighbourhood Plan to be embraced by the wider community it is vital that more people are involved in the debate about what Asfordby needs and how agreed objectives can be delivered. The Jubilee Day celebrations were a good opportunity to begin that discussion although further consultation will be essential.

The event was held at the Parish Hall and ran from 10am until 4pm with a wide variety of entertainment (from a circus show to local sports and dance clubs) throughout the day. Despite the weather being dreadful there was a great turnout which shows the level of community spirit there is in Asfordby. The Neighbourhood Plan stand was next to the refreshments stall and people were encouraged to comment on the policy statements, look at the maps and discuss their concerns with Helen and Colin over a cuppa. Photos of Asfordby people in action are shown at Appendix 1.

Format for the Consultation

Statements on exhibition boards asked 'How do you want Asfordby planned?' and 'What do you want Asfordby to be like in 2026?' Reference was also made to the key findings in the Asfordby Profile that Colin had prepared. The key findings were that by 2033 one third of the population will be over 65 and that there will be 300 more households in Asfordby.

The stall was set up to allow people to think about Asfordby Parish in a number of ways.

1. A large map was set out and people were given the following instructions:
 - Put a **silver star** on your house
 - Use **blue spots** to show what areas you think should be protected.
 - Use **orange spots** to show what areas around Asfordby could be developed.
 - Use post it notes if you want to tell us more!

This got people thinking spatially about their community. By identifying where they lived it was also possible for Helen and Colin to understand if there were particular reasons why they were identifying areas for development or protection. A photo is at Appendix 2

2. Voting Wall

People were asked to vote on the 9 statements that had been agreed at the stakeholder event earlier in the week. If they agreed they put a **green spot** if they disagreed they put a **red spot**.

The 9 statements covered the social, economic and environmental issues that the Parish Council felt should drive the Neighbourhood Plan and enabled people to think more about the relationship between levels of growth that Asfordby could have and the implications of that for the future.

3. Free thinking board

Participants were encouraged to provide more comments on post it notes about any aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Who are you?

People were asked to identify themselves by their age and gender so there was a record of the mixture of people who commented. The fact that this consultation ran along with a community day of celebration meant a wide spread of ages were in attendance and this is reflected in those who participated in this consultation exercise.

5. Plan Your Ideal Town

This is an activity that has been used in both primary schools in Asfordby as part of the extended consultation work. It consists of a generic base map with model houses, shops, leisure facilities etc. Children were encouraged to plan their ideal town. This enabled their parents to spend longer on the map and voting wall but, as importantly, gets the young people thinking and talking about what they think about living in Asfordby and what they wanted in the future. Several young people started on this activity and went on to comment fully on the map and the voting wall.

79 people were involved in this consultation (40 women and 39 men). Of whom 15 (19%) of respondents were under 20 and 10 (13%) were over 65. Other people did come up and look at the stall and commented on the proposals verbally but did not participate fully.

Consultation Findings - What the map told us

A photo of the map is shown at Appendix 2. At the stakeholder event 3 specific ideas had emerged about where additional houses could be built and what areas should be protected in the parish. These proposals and the associated comments are shown below.

Idea A: Develop the land between the by-pass and Regency Road.

There were 9 **blue spots** on this area (showing land should be protected) and 7 **orange spots** (showing land could be developed) revealing that opinion was divided on this idea. However the post it note comments shown below were strongly against the idea.

- The roads are already really busy, more development here will be too much and too noisy
- This land was originally proposed for landscaping to protect houses from noise, there should be no more development here
- Too noisy to have houses so near the by-pass (3 comments)

Idea B: Allow Asfordby Hill to expand (in the hope that this will enable the settlement to offer a shop again and support existing community facilities).

There was complete support for this in principle. The general location for growth was to the west of West Street and behind the sports ground. A thorough site investigation would be required to assess how far you could develop given the previous land uses on the site. It should be noted that there was only one family who participated in this consultation from Asfordby Hill and they were supportive of the idea to allow some expansion of the settlement. However, consultation with this community would need to be undertaken to develop this idea further.

A teenage boy did put a blue spot on this site west of West Street as he was keen to ensure that the area he used for mountain biking was not encroached upon. The area to which he referred is actually further north; however, the value of this open space provision for playing off road on bikes is referenced at every consultation undertaken with young people. (The children at both primary schools had this is a 'gold star' special place). This boy's comment was typical:

We take mountain bikes here and play games, it is a great space and needs protecting.

Idea C: Protect the land between Asfordby Hill, the Valley and Asfordby Village to prevent coalescence.

There was support for the idea that the 3 settlements should remain distinctive and blue spots were placed on all the sites between and around Asfordby Hill, the Valley and the village. Whilst most people wanted every piece of land between the 3 settlements

protecting (blue spots) there were some people living in the Valley who could see the benefit in developing the field that runs behind the last row of houses on Main Road on the western edge of the Valley (to the north of the roundabout). Access is an issue here but it could be argued that the development of this site would still not cause the Valley and Asfordby village to merge.

Elsewhere there was consensus on other sites that should be protected:

- land to the east of the parish hall playing fields up to the roundabout
- land both sides of Main Road as it runs into Asfordby Hill
- land between the western edge of the village and Hoby Road
- land south of the village along the River Wreake corridor

Other possible development sites

- 6 people suggested that there could be some development to the west of Hoby Road
- Site on the west side of Station Lane south of Debdale Lane
- Asfordby Storage Depot
- Asfordby Hill, the land south of Station Road
- Redevelop Asfordby mine

Other comments

Over the day people discussed a range of other matters, some were put on post it notes others were part of a discussion, but those points were also recorded afterwards. They are all helpful in understanding what people value and how people feel about Asfordby.

- We love skate parks but the one at Asfordby needs repairing and improving we don't use it because it's not very good
- I would like a larger Coop in the village
- I used to be able to fish but now it's members only and not accessible for me (boy aged 12)
- I can't get a house in Asfordby; there are only 16 in the parish and 100 people on the waiting list, it is no easier in Melton (man in early 20's)
- If there is any development around the gun range (for tourism etc.) you must protect the popular trees
- The development of windfall sites [in fill sites around the village] has meant Asfordby has lost its character
- There has been a loss of activities for young people, there used to be a youth club but the site is now built on, you used to be able to fish but now you need to be members etc. (second generation Asfordby resident reflecting on what future his son had in Asfordby.)
- Is the affordable housing going to local people (we don't think it is), how well

managed and monitored is this? New residents living in social housing do not maintain the properties very well. (Lady referring to new housing development including affordable housing on the western edge of the village).

- There is a lot of anger about how the walk around Frisby Lakes has been blocked off by the landowner as part of his development of holiday lodges. Some people could see the economic value in attracting visitors to Asfordby but the majority were very cross about it. 3 women refused to participate in the consultation because they felt the parish had been powerless in this matter so 'what was the point?'

Consultation Findings - What the voting wall told us

The voting wall listed the statements that had been agreed at the stakeholder session on 29th May. People were asked to say if they agreed with it (**green spots**) or disagreed with it (**red spots**). The statement and the vote results are shown below. Where the numbers do not tally with the numbers on the signing in sheet this is due to families or groups discussing and voting in one block. Where additional comments were made next to the statement these have been added as bullet points in the box next to the statement to which they refer.

1. Local facilities like shops, schools, pubs, community halls are important and need maintaining in Asfordby.

31 green

100% agree

2. Asfordby needs to allow some housing development to keep local services, like schools, pubs, shops and doctors going in the future.

21 green, 6.5 red (the half red was because they half agreed!)

76% agree

3. Housing could be acceptable on the north of the village next to the by-pass.

7 green, 17 red

29% agree

4. The open fields between Asfordby Village, the Valley and Asfordby Hill need protecting to stop the settlements merging.

24 green, 6 red

80% agree

5. Land should be allocated for housing around Asfordby Hill to expand its population to support the school and other services (e.g. community buildings, a shop).

15 green, 7 red

68% agree

6. The redevelopment of Asfordby Storage Depot for housing would be OK.

23 green, 6 red

79% agree

- South of the site should be kept open
- I think this area could be for small businesses and local facilities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be developed for housing but with some small business units 	
<p>7. New housing should link with existing areas via footpath and road networks. 25 green, 1 red</p>	96% agree
<p>8. Development should be built to high energy efficiency standards. 26 agree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar panels built into new build (public and private sector) 	100% agree
<p>9. Asfordby needs to plan for more businesses so that there are more jobs for local people 27 green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree but where? Support and funding needs to be provided so that small businesses survive 	100% agree

Summary

Asfordby people love their village and recognise and value the range of facilities it does have; this is what they like about living in Asfordby. Some very elderly participants (aged 91 and 86) had seen enormous change in the village but still valued the local amenities like the shops, doctors and church.

People love the walks in the surrounding countryside and the loss of access to Frisby Lakes has caused considerable frustration. This concern that people have less freedom to enjoy the land around where they live was also reflected in the experiences of younger people. A dad talked about growing up in Asfordby and having a youth club to attend (which was closed and the land redeveloped for housing) as well as being able to fish and play in areas that are now members only or completely out of bounds.

Young people value the open space near Asfordby Hill for playing on their bikes, doing jumps and exploring and care should be taken to ensure that this sort of activity remains accessible to local children if development is proposed around Asfordby Hill.

In proposing growth in Asfordby the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to maximise developer and other contributions to help maintain local footpaths and use legal agreements to avoid any further loss of local footpaths where they are not officially public rights of way.

Young people want a better skate park, they know they don't use the existing one very much but that is because it needs repairing. There is still a lot of interest in having a skate park and this is another proposal that the Neighbourhood Plan could look to support.

The discussion with the man in his early 20's about the difficulty he was having in finding any rented property in Asfordby that he could afford was insightful. The social cost of not meeting local housing need will impact on the provision of services by 2026 if some housing development is not accepted. Clearly the issue is what sort of housing, how much of it and where and it is hoped that by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan Asfordby Parish can empower local people to get involved in these decisions that will affect their community.

The voting results showed a poor response to the idea of building on land to the north of Regency Road but there was more support for developing land around Asfordby Hill. Development of the storage depot was supported although some provision for small businesses on the site was suggested by several people.

Concluding Remarks

The Jubilee Day event was an outstanding success for the organisers despite torrential rain for most of the day the parish hall was packed with people. The turnout shows how active and committed the people of Asfordby are when asked to give their time to things that are of interest to them.

The Parish Council are advised to prepare a communication and consultation strategy that finds ways to tap into the energy the community exhibited on a wet Jubilee Day. However, the idea of tagging on consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan to this community day was a good one as it did raise the profile of the Plan amongst people who had not otherwise been involved so far. Other opportunities should be sought (Harvest Festival and Christmas celebrations perhaps) to consult when the Plan is further developed.

Helen Metcalfe
June 2012

Where should the houses go?



Voting on the Statements

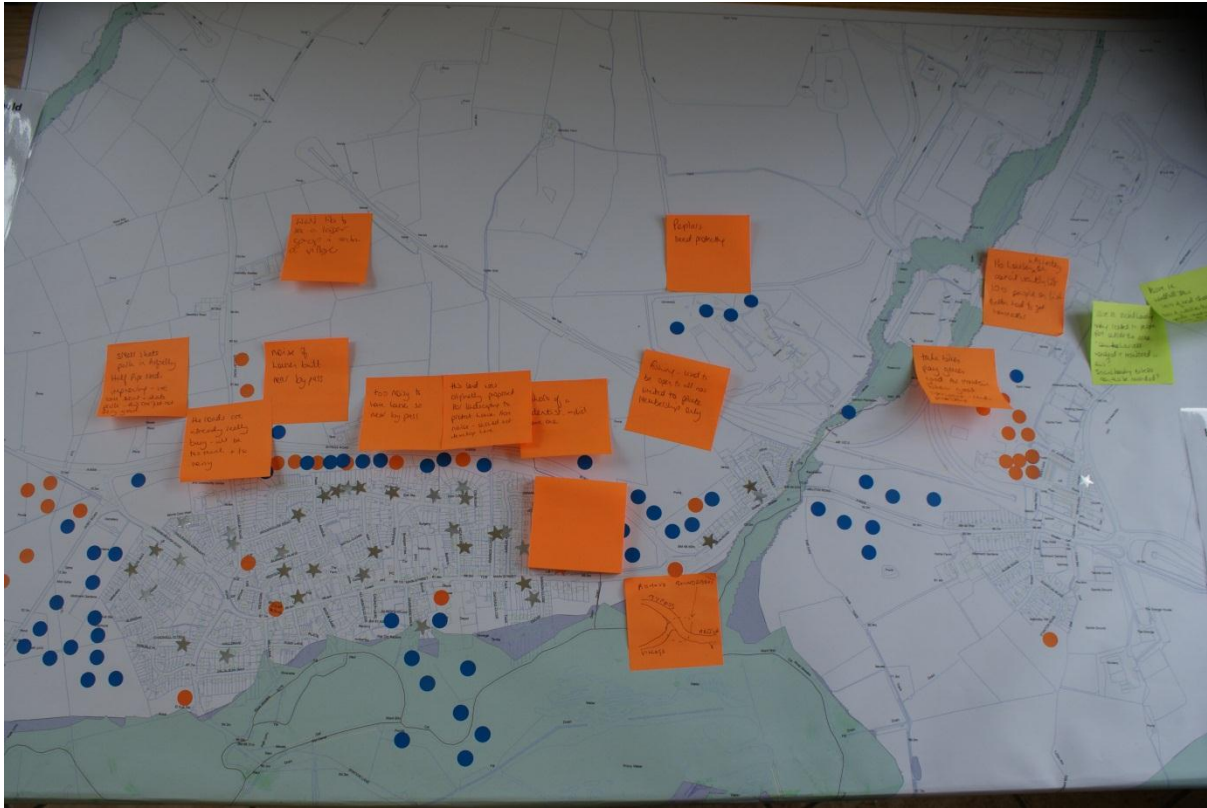


Plan Your Ideal Town



Appendix 2

Map showing areas that could be developed (**orange**) and areas that should be protected from development (**blue**) Silver stars are where people live



Voting wall

