

Planning for Your Future

Consultation at Captains Close Primary School

Introduction

Asfordby Parish Council appointed Planning Consultant Helen Metcalfe to deliver a half-day session at Captains Close Primary School as part of its consultation strategy in the preparation of the Asfordby Neighbourhood Plan. The session took place on 12th July 2012 and 31 pupils age 10 and 11 (year 6) participated. As this school is in the main settlement in Asfordby the children all lived in the parish and offered detailed insights into what they thought of the place.

Format

The format for the session focused on short visual presentations explaining what planning is, how town planning affects us all and why the children's opinions matter to the Parish Council in the preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan. These presentations were interspersed with activities that allowed the children to consider the impact planning had on their lives. The session outline is shown at Appendix 1.

The children drew pictures of what they see out of their bedroom window and the class discussed their drawings. For those children who could see open fields we discussed how planning had protected that land from development in the past and why it may be necessary to consider building on it in the future.

The children were also shown photographs of local buildings like the Parish Hall, the shops in Asfordby and all the play areas and sports facilities in Asfordby Parish which also prompted discussion about why you needed local shops, why you should bother protecting the church and what value the children got from the various parks, play areas and community facilities.

The children then worked in 5 groups with A0 maps provided by Melton Borough Council. Using sticky spots the children were asked to show where they lived (silver stars), if they had relatives in the village where they lived (blue spots), what parks or open spaces they played on (green spots) and where their shops, school, play areas were (yellow spots). The maps showed the three settlements and the countryside around that make up Asfordby Parish. This enabled a discussion (and some explanation) of how the planning system has protected these settlements from expansion (especially the open countryside between Asfordby Hill and Melton Mowbray) in the last 20 years.

The children were then asked to use red spots to show those areas they didn't like and gold stars to show the areas they loved. Each group had to discuss their likes and dislikes and for each red spot or gold star they had to explain their reasoning on post it notes.

The slides used in the sessions are shown at Appendix 2.

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There was no attempt to persuade the children or to lead them to come to any opinion or other. It was made clear that this was an exercise with no wrong answer but that their views and opinions mattered.

Feedback

The maps provide a clear visual record of what the children thought about living in and around Asfordby and the Parish Council will keep the original copies as a visual record for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation. Photographs of the maps are at Appendix 3.

What the pupils of Captain Close pupils said

Like	Dislike
Asfordby Amateurs – it’s a great place to let of energy and to play the base game in the world, football! You can run around here (2)	Parish Hall park – the play equipment is for little kids half pipe broken teenagers hang around in hut and graffiti, radio broken (5)
Mowbray Rangers football ground	Klondike Park – get bullied there
Asfordby Hill park –it’s so fun to play with friends on the swings!	Klondike Park – it’s boring (3)
Princess Square and the small open space on Saxelby Road for playing football with friends (3) (Princess Square – ‘it couldn’t be any closer and I love playing football there’)	Fields around Klondike - the teenagers smoke there
The open space next to the Parish Hall playing fields - we have made dens there	At night open space on Saxelby Road near Captains Close School – teenagers get drunk and smash bottles (2)
The Lakes – seeing all the wildlife there	The garages near the Avenue – teenagers smash things up there, blood on the fence (!) people shout at us there (3)
Klondike Park –meet friends there and it is local (6)	End of Saxelby Road near the by-pass – drugs are passed around here (2)
Our school – we have the best teachers in the world! (2)	Hoby Road on the bend before entering the village – traffic goes too fast
The whole of Asfordby is great! – It’s not too big or noisy and there are lots of friends to play with (2)	Outside the co-op - people who aren’t old enough drink there
Footpaths to the north of the village off Saxelby Road – walking around here is so peaceful	Saxelby Road near Hall Drive – cars drive too fast its dangerous
Fields to the south of Asfordby Storage – there is a big tree here you can climb	Weir – it’s dangerous and there is graffiti on parts of it
Parish Hall Park – playing on bikes and half pipe (4), good for little kids	Main Road – way too busy

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Playing with the cows on field next to Loughborough Road and the by-pass	
Mountain bike area near Asfordby Hill – biking with dad there	
My nana house – she loves me with all her heart!	
Elliot’s House - we have water fights	
The grounds of All Saints church & along Mill Lane – play with friends there (3)	
The fields between Asfordby Amateurs and the village – for walking and playing on with friends and walking dogs (2)	

What do you want Asfordby to be like in 2026?

A safe, friendly place where you can hang out with friends

A happy place with lots of laughs!

A place that is friendly to children, wildlife and adults (a pet shop would be a bonus!)

A happy community where neighbours all get on

A place with more things to do (sports clubs, more places to play football)

Same only with no drug places

Summary

The children love living in Asfordby and several of them said they had no dislikes at all. They were working in 5 separate groups but there were many similarities in the comments between the groups. The children value the existing play areas, particularly the small open spaces in the village where they can easily go to play football and/or run around with their friends.

Compared to the Asfordby Hill pupils, many of whom were more dispersed around and outside the parish, more of the Captain’s Close pupils are able to walk to each other’s houses and to go to the parks together to play. The comments show this is extremely important and highly valued by them.

The Klondike Park and the park behind the Parish Hall provoke divergent views. Klondike is used by many of the children as a place to hang out with friends and for this reason they like it. However, the equipment is seen as boring and the anti-social behaviour there (from teenagers) intimidates them. The Park behind the Parish Hall provoked the same mixed reaction; it is a space they can go to meet up but the equipment for older children is broken and the play area is for young children. Interestingly some children did say they loved the open space adjacent to the Parish Hall Park for making dens. Given the tendency for land around Asfordby to become less accessible to the public (the walks around Frisby Lakes for example), the value of protecting these more informal open spaces for children should not be understated. Equally these children love the access they have to the fields particularly to the south of the village and near Asfordby Amateurs where they can climb trees, play with cows and run around!

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The value local children put on being able to meet up with their peers (which at 10 means being able to walk to see each other) can be directly related to planning policy. Over the years infill development has meant the loss of some of these small open spaces within the village¹, those that remain should be protected. The key points in relation to Neighbourhood Plan policy is to ensure that any new development also brings forward small open spaces that children can walk to but where it would be acceptable to play ball games. The recent example of a very modest provision of 'open space' ringed very closely by houses on Houghton Close at Asfordby Hill would not enable the sort of play that these children value.

There are particular areas of Asfordby where the children felt unsafe at times; the garages near the Avenue and land north of the school on Saxelby Road were identified in 3 of the groups. The Parish Council will no doubt be aware of the claim that these are areas where 'teenagers do drugs'. With regard to the garages the design of new housing development should ensure that you avoid areas where there is no 'natural surveillance' or overlooking from neighbouring properties which tend to attract such behaviour.

Several groups highlighted the speed with which traffic travelled along Hoby Road, Main Street and Saxelby Road. Any additional housing growth will add to the movement of traffic through the area and suitable speed reduction measures should be considered.

The children were also asked to show if they had relatives in Asfordby and if so where they lived. Within each group were children who had extended families in the parish. This will be a significant reason why there is a strong sense of community in the village (one girl put a gold star on her Nan's house and the comments is recorded above). In planning terms meeting the different housing needs of people of different ages will also be important in ensuring Asfordby continues to be a mixed community with young families and older people in the parish.

The children's responses to what Asfordby should be like in 2028 focused on a place where they could play safely, where everyone had something to do and where everyone was happy.

Plan Your Ideal Town

As a round up activity and to enable the pupils to consolidate some of their learning about what makes a well-planned place, their final activity was to design their ideal town based on the good planning principles that had been discussed during the session. They were also told to think about what they liked about living in and around Asfordby and to ensure they planned these features into their ideal town. The children enthusiastically engaged with the task saying it was really good fun. It also gave them some insight into the task Asfordby Parish Council faces; the children commented 'it is quite hard if you have to work together because we kept

¹ Ref: Jubilee Day Consultation June 2012

disagreeing and having to start again'. However, the 2 groups that won the small prize were those who worked collaboratively. Photographs showing the children in action doing the map work and planning their ideal town are shown at Appendix 4.

Concluding Remarks

The children at Captains Close Primary School know their local area very well and contributed a lot of local knowledge and a young persons' perspective to help the Parish Council understand what 10/11 year olds like and don't like about living in and around Asfordby. The sessions provided a valuable insight into how children perceive their area and what they value. These things must be understood and cherished to ensure that they are not lost in any development proposals for the future. Their likes and dislikes related principally to outdoor (and largely unsupervised play) which is quite different from the responses you might get in a school in a more urban setting. Their genuine love of how they live in Asfordby, meeting up at parks to play with their friends makes you very aware of the importance of planning carefully the future growth of Asfordby to ensure this quality of life is maintained for ensuing generations.

These pupils, more than the Asfordby Hill children, also highlighted the fact (or at least the perception) that teenagers seem to have nothing to do in Asfordby and it would be very informative to run a consultation with 13-18 year olds to seek their views.

As the timescale for the implementation of policies in a Neighbourhood Plan will impact more on the current children and young people than any other group (any provision of affordable housing for example, maybe the only way they are able to live in Asfordby when they grow up,) it is very important that they feel part of the Neighbourhood Plan process. The involvement of the Captain's Close pupils, all of whom lived within Asfordby, has enabled them to make a significant contribution at an early stage in the policy making of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is suggested that the children are kept informed of the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan, especially any policies that are formed in part by the outcome of this consultation process.

Helen Metcalfe
July 2012

Appendix 1

Planning with People

Planning the future of Asfordby

- 1.05** **Who are we and what are we here for?**
- 1.10** **What is town planning and how does it affect your life?**
- 1.20** **Activity 1: Can you describe the view outside your bedroom window?**
- 1.30** **Feedback: what do you see and how have planners affected that?**
- 1.35** **What is the point of town planning? How has planning affected Asfordby?**
Look at some photos of Asfordby
- 1.45** **Activity 2: Let's look at maps of Asfordby**
Can you find where you live, your school, where you play, where the shops are?
- 2.00** **Activity 3: You show me**
Can you put your likes and dislikes on the map?
- 2.00** **What do you want Asfordby to be like in 2026?**
- 2.20** **Break**
- 2.30** **Can you design your ideal town?**
Think of all the things you like about your area, think about all the planning issues you have considered this morning. Using models can you create the ideal town? Work in groups.
- 3.15** **Close and award prize to winning group.**

Appendix 2

How do you want Asfordby planned?



Planning
with People

Why are you here?

- What do you want Asfordby to look like in 2026?
- The parish council needs your help to write the Asfordby Plan
- It's your life that will be affected
- I want your ideas, so I can tell the council what you think!



Planning
with People

How can you help Asfordby Parish Council?

- Listen and learn about what town planning is
- Describe what you can see from your bedroom window
- Look at maps of Asfordby and tell us what you do and don't like about it
- If you were town planners what would you do?
- Can you design your ideal town, can you show us how it should be done!

Planning
with People

Rules!

- Get stuck in
- Team effort
- Ask questions



Planning
with People

WHAT THINGS ARE PLANNED?



How has town planning affected you?

- What can you see from your bedroom window?
- Can you see other houses, parks or fields?
- Town planning has decided where the houses should go ...
- ...and has stopped the fields around Asfordby being built on...



Planning
with People

What is around you?

- Draw or describe what can you see from your bedroom window?
- 10 minutes
- Be prepared to share with the class what you see every day
- Do you like your view?



Planning
with People

What is the point of town planning?

- It shapes the places where we all live and work and the country we live in.
- Good planning means we get the right building in the right place at the right time.



Planning
with People





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[Type text]



[Type text]

Tell me what you think!

- These are your maps to help the parish council understand what you think about living in and around Asfordby
- Put the name of your school on and your names and ages around the edge
- Follow the instructions carefully, make sure you use the right coloured spots and stars



Planning
with People

Likes and dislikes

- What do you like about living in or around Asfordby?
- Are there things to do, places to go?
- Where do you go for fun? (indoors and outdoors)
- What do you dislike about where you live? (whether it is in Asfordby or not)
- What would you do to improve the area?



Planning
with People

Likes and dislikes

- Can you put your likes and dislikes on the map?
- **Red spots = dislike**
- **Gold stars = like**
- Use post it notes to explain what you mean
- Everyone must write down one like and one dislike
- If you don't live on the map tell me where you live and what you like and don't



Planning
with People

Now you are town planners!

- Imagine you are aged 24/25
- What sort of place do you want to live in?
- What sort of place do you want Asfordby to be?
- What would you change about where you live to make your life better?
- What would you change to make life better for 10 year olds in 2026?



Planning
with People

Planning your ideal town

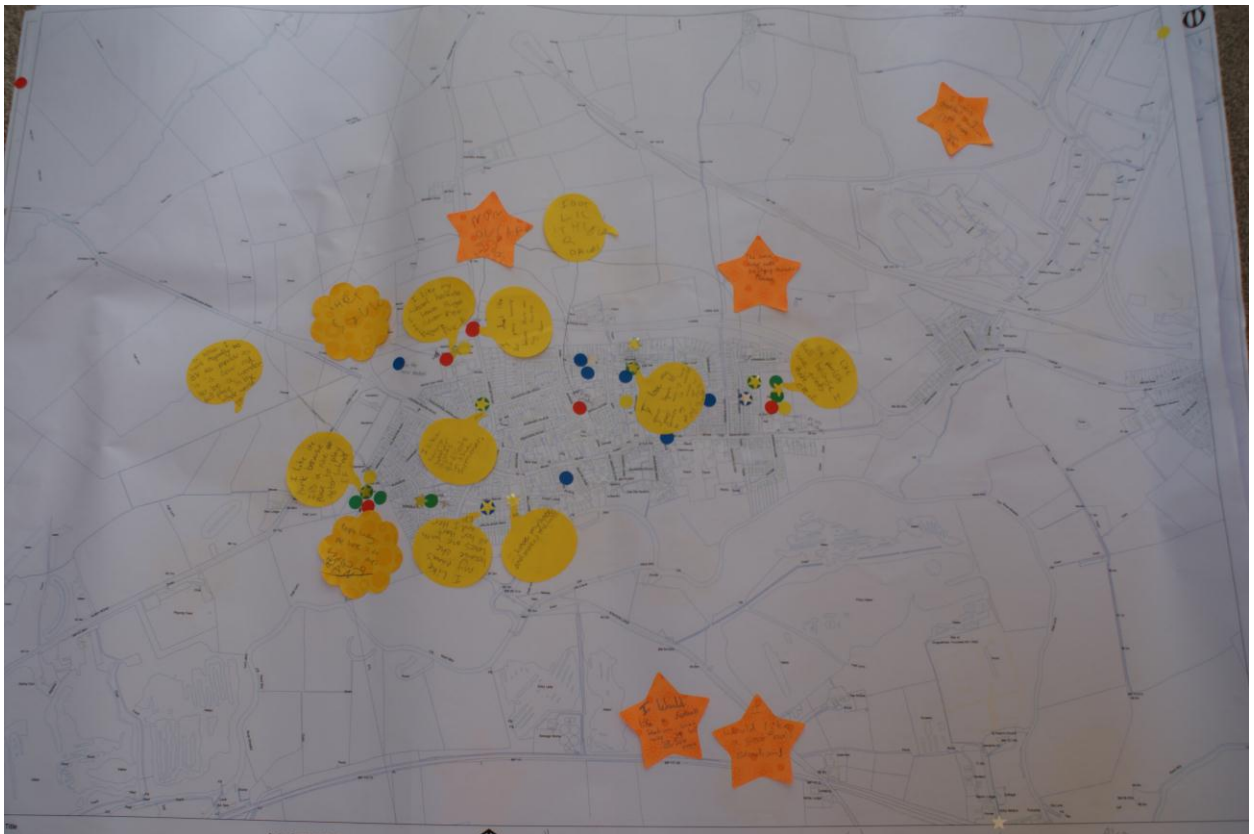
- Where will you live?
- Where will your mum and dad work?
- Where will you go to school?
- Where would you go shopping?
- What about other things, libraries, cinema, doctors?
- What will your town look like?
- Will there be trees?
- What will the buildings look like?
- How will you get about?



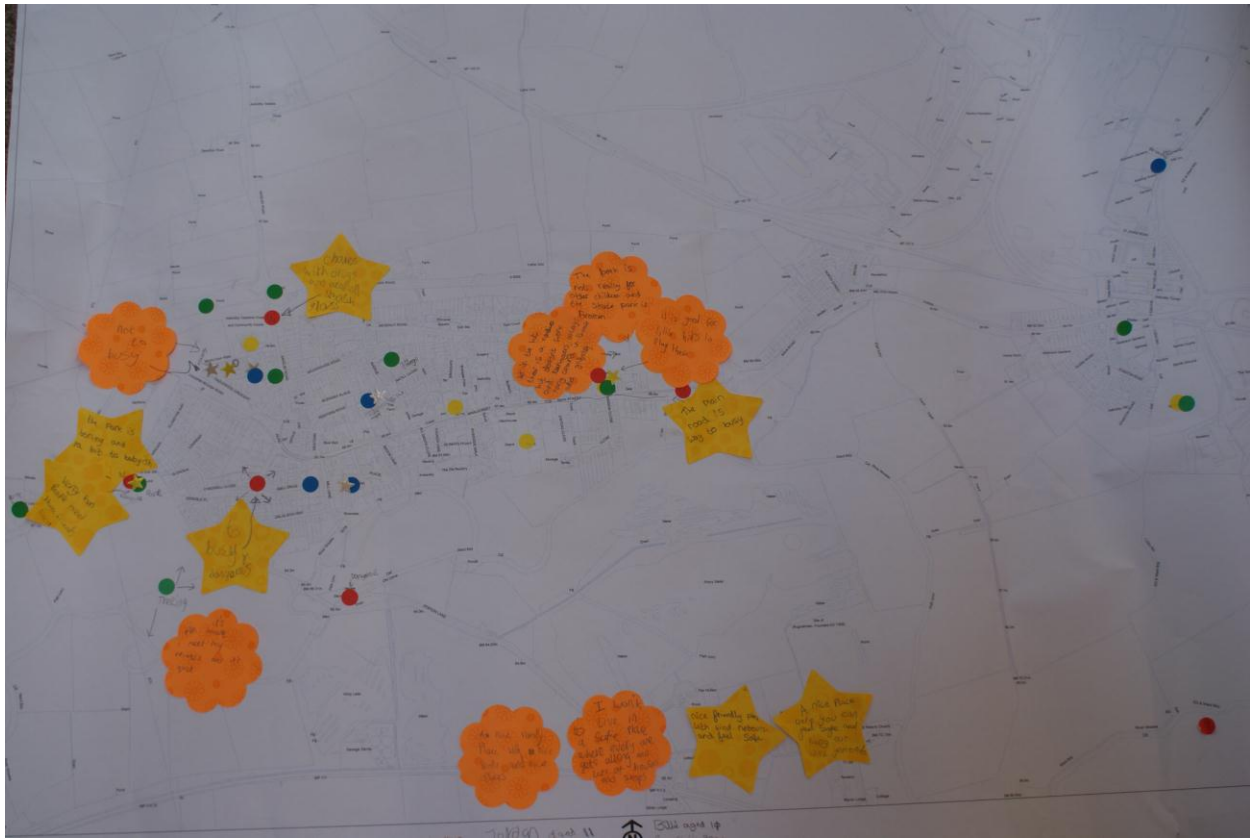
Planning
with People

Appendix 3

The Map Work



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Appendix 4

The children in action!



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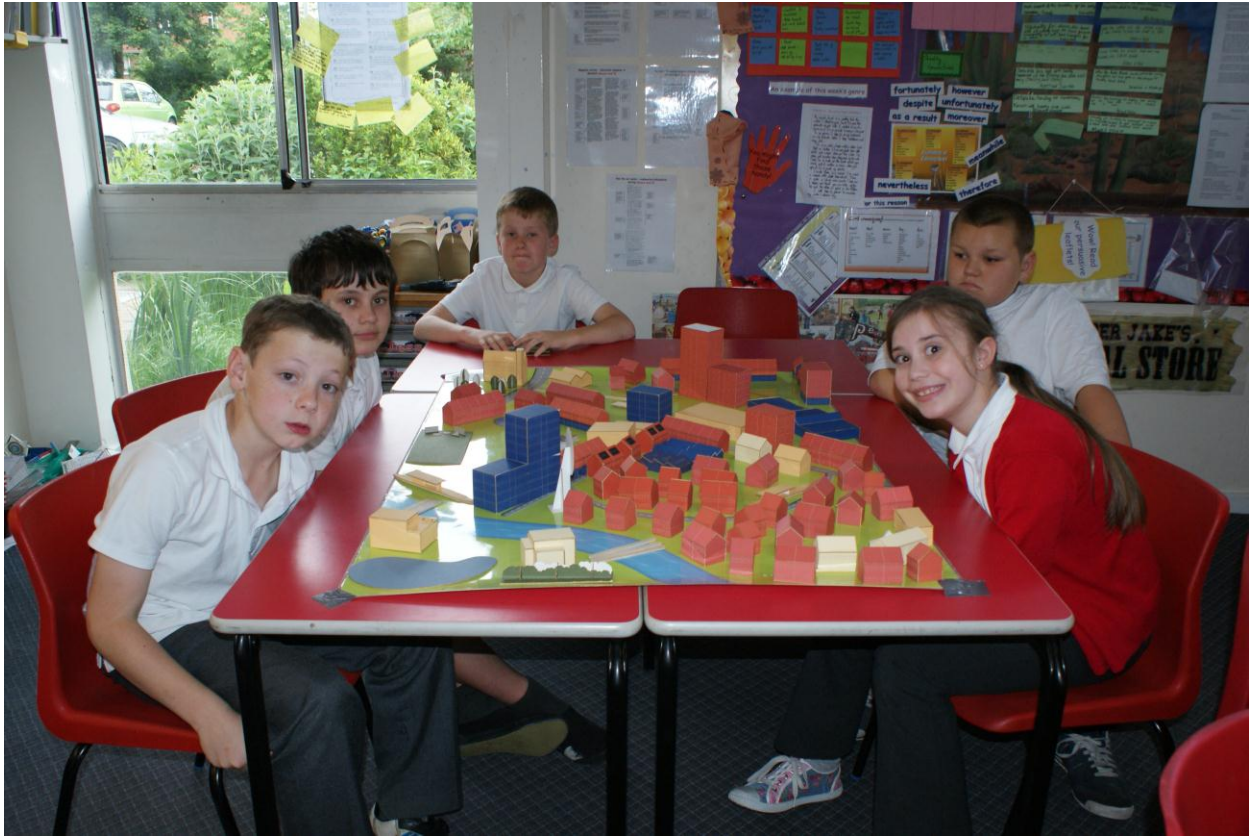
Planning their Ideal Town



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