



EDLESBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

EDLESBOROUGH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GETS A YES! FROM PARISHIONERS.

'If I were you I wouldn't start from here!' This punchline of the joke about asking for directions could have been given to Edlesborough Parish Council's initiative to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

Faced with a situation where there was no effective control on new housing developments, the opportunity to develop a plan that would introduce control seemed to be the right thing to do. The starting point however was a parish of residents that was largely opposed to any development. All the surveys conducted prior to the starting point of this initiative had clearly demonstrated that there was little or no desire for new housing.

The opportunity to have a stronger local say in local developments seemed to be the right way. It came with a clear statement from AVDC that whatever happened we had to have a minimum number of new houses most of which would need to be in Edlesborough Village under AVDC rules. So, we began with a situation where AVDC said 'this is the number' but you, Edlesborough, get to propose what is developed and where if you produce a Neighbourhood Plan that meets the rules laid down by the government.

Selling this was difficult and right to the end of the campaign it seemed that some residents still thought that saying NO to the plan was the same as saying NO to development ignoring the fact that we had a mandatory number to develop. Nothing could be further from the truth. Without a plan there would be no limit and it can be seen from current development applications that the number of houses that developers want to develop far exceeds the maximum number in our plan.

Fortunately, a significant number of people got the message and many volunteered to help develop and shape the plan. The Parish Council thanks those who gave up a considerable amount of time as part of a Steering Group that worked for 18 months to create the plan.

The Edlesborough Parish Neighbourhood Plan: -

- Limits the number of houses,
- Puts constraint on the type of developments,
- Includes design criteria
- Specifies locations.

In addition, it applies a Settlement Boundary that further limits development outside the boundary of both Edlesborough and Northall. (A settlement boundary for Dagnall was unnecessary as it already benefits from Metropolitan Green Belt protection).

With a plan approved by both an independent examiner and AVDC, the final part of the process was to take it to all parishioners in a referendum on the 5th October.

Having spent over two years since the start of the process the Parish Council was prohibited, under the law, from campaigning for a YES vote. Fortunately, once again, parishioners stepped up to the challenge and a new group came together to form a YES Campaign group. These members had to pay all expenses relating to the campaign and had to commit to a considerable amount of time preparing and delivering flyers as well as a devoted effort to knock on doors to explain the situation. Edlesborough Parish Council thanks all those in the YES campaign for their significant effort.

It didn't help that a leaflet containing inaccurate information, from those opposed to the plan, was delivered to households in Edlesborough village just days before the referendum.

The requirement was for a simple majority of those that voted and the result was a resoundingly positive response. **88% said YES!**

I speak for the Parish Council, The Steering Group and the YES Campaign group to give a big THANK YOU! to all those who voted for the plan.

AVDC will now build our requirements into their Local Plan.

Alan Williams
Chairman
Edlesborough Parish Council