

Alwoodley Neighbourhood Plan

ALWOODLEY PARISH COUNCIL ARTICLES FEATURING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

All articles were published in the Alwoodley Announcer, magazine of the ACA, distributed to their members and available at their premises. Those up to and including January 2015 were published in the Really Useful Guide to Alwoodley (later called Covered Magazine) which was distributed throughout the area.

JULY 2013

As mentioned last month, Cllr Dave Kent did not wish to stand for re-election as Chairman of the Parish Council and at our meeting in May Cllr Lyn Buckley was unanimously elected to serve as Chairman for the next twelve months. We offer Lyn our congratulations and full support.

Our recent Newsletter contained information about Neighbourhood Development Plans and whether it would be beneficial for Alwoodley to have one. We invited you to contact us if you wished to join a forum to discuss this in more detail. Several people have shown an interest and a couple of informal meetings have already taken place. If you are interested in having a say on how you would like Alwoodley to look in the future, then please get in touch with us and come along to a meeting. This is something that concerns everyone in the Parish so the more people who are involved, the better.

The Parish Council is considering ways to mark two very different events next year. 2014 is the centenary of the outbreak of World War One and we would like to commemorate this in some way. The population of the Parish was much smaller in those days, but we know that several local men served in the war. As part of the ongoing enhancement of King Lane we hope to plant a flowerbed, together with some seating, which will be dedicated to the memory of those who served. Other projects are also being considered.

On a lighter note, the Tour de France will be coming through Yorkshire next year. On the first day it actually passes along one boundary of the Parish. We are currently exploring ways we can celebrate this.

SEPTEMBER 2013

The beautiful weather in July was very welcome, but the newly planted trees on King Lane suffered. Several of the Parish Councillors were on watering duty to keep them refreshed and we would like to thank the residents on King Lane who kindly let us use their water.

The Neighbourhood Plan group is also flourishing and meets once a month. Its full title is the Alwoodley Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which although rather cumbersome is self-explanatory. New members are always welcome and if you are interested but don't want to attend meetings then you can be a "virtual" member and receive updates by email. Please contact our Clerk for more information. There will shortly be a page for the Group on the APC website.

The next meeting of the APC Planning Committee will be on Mon 2nd Sept at 6.30pm followed by the Parish Council meeting at 7.30.

OCTOBER 2013

Neighbourhood Plan Group

They now have their own email address and can be contacted on alwoodley.np@gmail.com

JANUARY 2014

Allotments in Alwoodley are no longer a dream! The plans have been approved by Leeds City Council and we are now waiting for solicitors to prepare the lease. Finally things are coming together. Visit <http://www.alwoodleyallotmentassociation.org.uk/#> for more information.

The Neighbourhood Plan Application for Designation has been submitted to LCC - you can view it on their website <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Alwoodley%20Parish%20-%20Application%20for%20Designation%20Revised%205.11.13.pdf>

The application for a second takeaway on The Avenue has been refused. As permission was recently granted for a fish and chip shop on the same parade, we were well aware of residents' concerns about this proposal. The Parish Council and Ward Councillors also strongly objected to this application and we are delighted that it has been turned down.

So many people have enjoyed the Leeds University inspired wildflower bed on King Lane that the Parish Council has decided to expand this idea. The project was part of an experiment on pollination, bees and insects, but also the visual effect was stunning. We have arranged for three further beds to be planted up the West side of King Lane, including land at the corner of the Village Green opposite Tesco.

The beds will be what the Parks and Countryside Dept. call a perennial mix of wildflowers which will last for three years. These beds should be in flower by next summer and should make a terrific splash of colour, as well as making the bees happy!

MAY 2014

The World War One Commemorative Flowerbed has now been planted and after a few delays, the sundial has been installed in the centre. We are delighted with it and we hope others will be, too. The bed has been planted to provide a display of poppies, lavender and spring and autumn bulbs throughout the year. A bench will be installed within the next few months and, in spite of the traffic on King Lane, we hope it will provide a quiet spot for people to sit for a moment or two. The grass is now being prepared for the wild flower beds and they, too, will provide bright and colourful displays of flowers.

We are delighted that Leeds City Council has rejected the Government Inspector's criticism of the Core Strategy and confirmed that they will continue to follow a brown field first approach to development which prioritises the use of previously developed land wherever possible and commits to protection of the Green Belt is the right one.

We note that an appeal has been lodged with Planning Inspectorate against the decision to refuse the application for a takeaway on The Avenue. At the time of writing no date has been set for the hearing, but details can be found on the Planning website.

We are hoping to install a third boundary stone at the corner of Harrogate Road and Nursery Lane, on the grass verge by the Royal Mail Sorting Office. Also, on Eccup Lane there was a very old stone which, from 1796, marked the boundary of what is now Alwoodley Parish. It is currently lying

forlornly in a field after it fell sometime after 1974, but if permission is granted by the Harewood Estate whose land it is on we would like to reinstate it to mark the northern boundary of the Parish.

And finally, a reminder that there is still time to return the Neighbourhood Development Plan survey included with our Newsletter last month. If you've put the survey on one side to think about and complete later, you still have time to complete it before 16th May, so act now to have your say in the future of Alwoodley Parish. If you have lost your survey you can obtain another form by emailing alwoodley.np@gmail.com or by ringing 2695512

JUNE 2014 Report of APM

We are always grateful when residents take the trouble to attend the Annual Parish Meeting.

Some people come to raise an issue, but most just to listen to what we and others have to say and generally show an interest in our work. As in previous years our APM last month was very well attended. One of the purposes of the APM is for the Parish Council to report on its activities over the previous twelve months and Councillors spoke about the individual projects they had been involved with. We also had three speakers who we would like to thank for giving such interesting, informative talks and for answering questions from the audience.

Vicky Nunns from Leeds City Council explained, amongst other things, how being able to call our local field a village green will give residents a feeling of ownership of their area. We also heard from John Ellis, a local resident who is a member of The Ramblers Association and is carrying out a survey of the footpaths in the Parish to report on their condition. He was happy to report to our meeting that nothing untoward was found although some were muddy in parts which is to be expected in wet weather.

Finally, David Burgess gave an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and advised that there had already been a very large number of surveys returned with more expected. There are vacancies on the Steering Group if anyone would like to join them, or you can be a virtual member and receive email updates. He would be happy to give talks to local groups and listen to their views.

Full Minutes of the APM will be on our website.

The Parish Council is very aware that the majority of projects are centred around the King Lane area. We would love to be able to put significant projects in other areas of the parish but there is very little space available. We have been given some ideas which are being considered, and would ask everyone to let us know what you would like in your area. If it is feasible then we will give it consideration.

We have just had notification from Yorkshire Water that essential improvements are to be carried out at Eccup Reservoir which will involve the closure of a road and footpath diversions. The water levels will have to be lowered to allow this work to be carried out, but will return to normal once it is complete. There are more details on our website.

SEPTEMBER 2014

Due to re-organisation, Alwoodley is now part of the Wetherby Neighbourhood Policing Team joining Harewood, Shadwell, Moortown and other places on the Alwoodley/Shadwell side of the Ring Road. We also come under the remit of the Wetherby Crime Panel.

Cold Calling has long been a problem for local residents and Cold Calling Zones are, for various reasons, proving difficult to set up. However we have been given a supply of small labels for residents to put on their front doors to discourage unwanted callers, also attached is another label with a reminder to check the caller. Please contact us if you would like one.

We are pleased to see that the beautiful weather has, of course, encouraged many people to use the Village Green for playing, picnicking or just sitting and reading. However, with the extra use comes extra litter and during nice weather they tend to fill up more quickly than they can be emptied. If the bins are full, please take your litter home with you! We know that most of you already do.

After many comments by residents about how lovely the wild flowerbed down by Sainsbury's was last year, the Parish Council decided to fund three within the Parish this year and we are pleased that they are looking absolutely stunning. We have noticed several people taking photographs and have already received quite a few compliments. Our WW1 flowerbed is also looking pretty and the new bench has now been installed and already appears to be well used.

The results of the Neighbourhood Plan Survey sent out with our Spring Newsletter are now starting to be collated. This involves a lot of work by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (or Steering Group) as we had such a large response, and we will be giving details in a future article. Meanwhile, if there is anything you would like to see in your part of the Parish please get in touch, we would like to hear your ideas.

OCTOBER 2014

We found the public consultation carried out in August a great help in deciding on the range of equipment for the outside fitness area. We were able to discover which pieces were the most popular with people and which were of little interest. In addition, members of the public suggested some items which we hadn't included in our original specification, so we feel that the final choice is very much what people want to use. Because there has been such enthusiasm about this with people telling us that they can't wait to use it, we hope to have it installed before the end of the year. There will be at least one special "open day" with a fitness instructor demonstrating and offering advice on how to use each piece of equipment. The Parish Council has also finalised the details of a sign to mark the Village Green. Both projects are subject to approval by Leeds City Council.

We understand that some people would like amenities closer to where they live and we have asked for ideas in earlier articles. Nobody has responded, but we have been looking closely at comments made in the Neighbourhood Plan survey. For example, some people have said they would like a playground, but finding somewhere that is not so near to houses that it would cause annoyance but also not too isolated is a challenge. The main problem is that in spite of Alwoodley Parish being a rural parish - *and we must emphasise we are referring to Alwoodley Parish only and not the greater Alwoodley area* - there is only one significant piece of "open" land that can be used, the Village Green. The Parish Council will be discussing the survey results later in the year.

Planning! If you receive a communication from Leeds City Council about plans for a house near to your property and you are not happy with what is proposed please make sure that you send your comments to them as quickly as possible. You only have a limited amount of time for your objection or comment to be taken into consideration. This is your only chance to make your views known.

NOVEMBER 2014

There are some months when members of the Parish Council are either busy working on projects or actually seeing these projects completed. And then there are other months when we impatiently wait for the go-ahead from third parties to see something we've spent time on come to fruition. This is one of those months!

We held several long discussions with LCC about the outdoor fitness equipment and as mentioned last month this has now been approved by the Parish Council. Now the project is facing delays as there appears to be some uncertainty as to the need for planning permission before it can be installed. We are now waiting to hear from the Planning Dept. about this and by the time you read this article either a planning application will have been made (if necessary) or we will have ordered the equipment. We are still hoping it will be installed before Christmas so nobody will have any excuses not to keep their resolutions to get fitter in 2015 - free of charge!

After the wonderful response we had to the tree lights on the Village Green last winter Alwoodley Parish Council has decided to fund lighting in a second tree, this time near Alwoodley Gates. These tree lights seem to lift everyone's spirits when the clocks change and the nights draw in. Unfortunately there are fewer trees to choose from this year. The lights have to be powered from nearby lampposts and new regulations have been brought in reducing the distance allowed between trees and lampposts with the result that many of them are now not close enough.

Still on the subject of trees, the replacements for the diseased trees on Primley Park Avenue have now been ordered and it is hoped they will be planted later this year. We know that some people will be sorry to see the old trees go, but if left they will become dangerous and will eventually have to be removed anyway.

There are currently two appeals in progress against refusal for planning applications on Alwoodley Lane, the Parish Council feels that both applications are inappropriate for the area and hope the appeals will be dismissed.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group have now collated all the replies to the survey that many of you completed and we will be working with them in December to finalise the draft plan. This will take into consideration many of the points you have raised and we hope that the plan for discussion will be ready for delivery to every household in the Parish early next year. In the meantime you can see a summary of the survey on our website and all our noticeboards. We would like to thank the Steering Group for all their hard work to date.

JANUARY 2015

The comments from the survey sent out last spring have now been separated into those items which the Parish Council may be able to deal with and those which can be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group brought the draft plan they have been working on to the December meeting of the Parish Council and we discussed the content in depth with them.

Neighbourhood Plans need to be worded positively, follow strict guidelines and fulfil many criteria and it is important that ours is as well drafted and worded as possible before moving on to the next stage. It was a long meeting but interesting and productive and the members of the Parish Council would like to thank the Steering Group for producing such an impressive piece of work.

Over the last year or so West Yorkshire Police has gone through many changes, some of which have resulted in boundary changes. Some boundaries have been extended and some have been removed. West Yorkshire Police is working more closely with many more Community Partnerships including the Wetherby Crime Panel (which covers Alwoodley, amongst other areas.) In view of these changes it was felt that the Crime Panel name should also be changed to bring it more into line with other Partnerships. So Wetherby Crime Panel is now called "The Crime Prevention Panel - Outer North East

Leeds". Obviously this is a longer name than before, but it reflects the area we come under with Leeds City Council.

The Panel attends many events in the community and is looking for more volunteers to assist with their crime prevention work. If you are interested in becoming involved please contact the.clerk@alwoodleyparishcouncil.org tel: 075 320 11269 or lyn.buckley@alwoodleyparishcouncil.org or write to us at Alwoodley Parish Council, 60 The Avenue, Leeds LS17 7NZ

JUNE 2015 (report on APM)

Cllr Buckley introduced the guest speakers Sergeant Simon Garbutt and his colleague, PSCO Tiff Greensmith, David Burgess (Alwoodley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan), Carol Burns and her colleague, Barbara Bailey from MAECare and Roger Gilbert from Walkabout and the Friends of Adel Woods.

Sgt Garbutt spoke about the work of the Neighbourhood Police Team and among other things, explained about a new initiative to kick start the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. David Burgess gave a very interesting update on the progress of our Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan and a display was available for residents to look at after the meeting. Maecare is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and have just opened a new activity centre. Carol and Barbara thanked the Parish Council for its recent grant and explained about their work aiming to address isolation, including a new pilot group to try and encourage people to get to know their neighbours and another to start helping people to connect with family and friends using social media.

JULY 2016

You will shortly receive, or may have already received, a letter advising you of the consultation period for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The consultation period runs from 1st July to 31st August and this is your opportunity to comment on the policies proposed in the Plan. In addition, we are holding an Open Day at the ACA on 14th July from 9.30 in the morning until 7.15 in the evening when you will be able to ask questions or raise any concerns with representatives from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

If you are unable to attend, a copy of the plan together with a questionnaire will be available on our website and further copies will be kept in the Bar at the ACA.

Ground preparation for the allotments will be going ahead shortly and we understand there are a few plots available. If you would like to join the Allotment Association then please contact them via their website

<http://www.alwoodleyallotmentassociation.org.uk>

The Parish Council is considering running a Best Kept Front Garden competition. This is still in the very early stages and is unlikely to go ahead until next year, but we are keen to know if there would be any interest in the scheme. Would you like to enter your garden or nominate a particularly attractive garden that you've seen? Let us know. It was suggested that we run a Worst Kept Front Garden competition as well for those people who use their front gardens as receptacles for rubbish and items they don't want in their houses! We can't do that, but we hope publicity for the competition might make them change their ways.

After a request from a resident we have asked Yorkshire Water if they would provide information boards at Eccup Reservoir about the many species of wildfowl that can be found there.

SEPTEMBER 2016

Just a brief article from us this month as we don't meet during August.

Provided the weather was dry on 15th August there should now be marked parking bays outside the shops on King Lane. We hope these, together with signs indicating a one-way system, will reduce the number of traffic problems there. If it did rain on the 15th then this work will be re-scheduled.

After last year's disappointing show, the wildflower beds are looking lovely again. The Parish Council has agreed to fund the beds again next year.

Many thanks for all your comments on the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The Steering Group and the Parish Council are already working through them.

OCTOBER 2016

The work of the Parish Council Planning Committee can sometimes be disheartening. Trying to retain the character of the Parish in the way that we, and many of you, would prefer often feels like an uphill struggle. In addition to applications for average, unexceptional extensions that form the majority of what we receive, we are now seeing an increase in applications for demolition or alteration of bungalows to be replaced by large houses.

We can see why people would want to do this, but are concerned that the stock of bungalows in the Parish will be diminished at a time when more and more people, nationally, not just locally are wanting to move out of large family houses and downsize to smaller properties. There are a good number of bungalows in the Parish but if the trend for demolishing them and replacing them with large houses is allowed to continue unabated who knows where this will lead.

We also raise objections to extensions or alterations to houses which are distinctly out of character with their neighbours. Sometimes the planning officers agree with our objections and sometimes they don't. On occasion the planning officer will object on the grounds that a proposal does not fit with the street scene, citing the Council's own Householders Design Guide and other planning guidelines only to be overruled by City Councillors on the Plans Panel.

The Planning Committee is not opposed to innovative architecture in the Parish, even though personally some of us may not always like it. Our concern is how it looks in the context of its location. For example, do we want something that would look more at home in a small business park sited on a tree lined street of traditional houses where it would stand out like a sore thumb? And if it's allowed to happen will it set a precedent and will similar applications prevail? Some streets in the Parish are more suited to contemporary architecture than others and we do try to be even handed with our objections, referring to the Householders Design Guide and keeping within LCC's planning guidelines.

Our Neighbourhood Plan does try to address some of these questions, but even here neither we, nor residents have the final say in the planning policies for the Parish.