

Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as at 02-10-23:

This FAQs is a “living” document/webpage. As Stonesfield residents ask questions about the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan, we will endeavour to capture and answer these questions here. If you cannot find the answer to a question you may have about the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan process, please do contact the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group via email on: info@stonesfieldplan.com

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory planning document. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their community. Neighbourhood plans should reflect what development residents of the neighbourhood want or don't want. If adopted, the planning authority must have regard to the Neighbourhood Plan when determining any planning application.

Find out more on the Neighbourhood Planning website here: [Neighbourhood Planning - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)

How long will it take?

3-5 years. Stonesfield Parish Council formally agreed the terms of reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at their meeting on 12th January 2022. The Steering Group terms of reference can be read here: [Parish Council sets terms of reference | Stonesfield Parish Council](#)

Why does it take so long?

As the Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory planning document, it must go through all the procedures laid down by the law e.g. consideration by an independent “examiner” before it can be approved. These all take time.

Why does Stonesfield need a Neighbourhood Plan? What's the point?

It is hoped that having a neighbourhood plan will make it more likely any development in the parish will be what the residents want and more likely that development the residents do not want does not happen.

Stonesfield is in the Cotswolds AONB. The village is surrounded by beautiful countryside, some of it designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Green spaces will be a key aspect of Stonesfield's Neighbourhood Plan. Local green spaces are a specific kind of land designation which can protect these assets from development.

Residents may want there to be at least some modest number of more genuinely affordable housing of various kinds on suitable sites in Stonesfield. If so, a neighbourhood plan may make it clear to the planning authority that this is what local people want.

Do other nearby villages and towns have Neighbourhood Plans?

Yes! Please visit the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) “Made Neighbourhood Plans” webpage to read these: [Made neighbourhood plans - West Oxfordshire District Council \(westoxon.gov.uk\)](#)

Who is on the Steering Group?

The Steering Group members are listed on the terms of reference: [Parish Council sets terms of reference | Stonesfield Parish Council](#)

Can I help the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group?

Yes please! If you would like to volunteer to assist the Steering Group any time throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process, please do email: info@stonesfieldplan.com

What is the Neighbourhood Plan Village Survey?

The Village Survey was delivered to every household at the end of February 2023. In it, all residents age 16+ were asked to say what sort of housing you would like to see in the village, what transport and other resources you value, and which green spaces you want to protect from development.

Why was it helpful for me to have completed the survey?

Without the responses to the Village Survey, the Steering Group cannot draft the policies to be contained within the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan. These policies will stand as the village's statement of how residents want Stonesfield to develop: what sort of houses residents need, how they should look, what land residents would like protected, what infrastructure residents think needs to be provided.

How long was the survey open for?

The survey was open from 1st March to 7th April 2023.

Are the results anonymous?

Yes. We have not asked for any identifying individual personal data within the Village Survey.

I've completed the Village Survey, what happens next?

The steering group will collect and analyse all answers and draft the Neighbourhood Plan containing policies in accordance with what residents of Stonesfield parish want.

Where can I read the Village Survey results?

The Steering Group started analysing the results in April 2023. The full survey results are available online here: [Introduction to the Survey results | Stonesfield Parish Council](#) and a printed copy put in the Stonesfield library in April. A village meeting was held on 19 June 2023 to present the results including a look forward to the next stages of the Plan. The presentation from this village meeting can be viewed here: [Presentation from 19 June meeting | Stonesfield Parish Council](#)

How is the Neighbourhood Plan written?

Members of the steering group and any suitably experienced volunteers will draft the policies. Therefore, if you have any relevant experience, e.g. if you have done it before elsewhere or if you have experience in drafting planning documents for local planning authorities and think you could helpfully participate, the steering group will be delighted to hear from you.

What other information sources are used in writing the Neighbourhood Plan?

The steering group will use relevant information for example: –

- i. any government or local planning authority housing targets which affect Stonesfield;
- ii. figures showing the extent to which Stonesfield has or has not met its fair share of these;
- iii. evidence, if there is any, of demand for workplaces within Stonesfield;
- iv. evidence of the existence of community facilities in Stonesfield and comparison with such facilities in similar communities;
- v. evidence from the recent census;
- vi. evidence from consultation with local residents and businesses;
- vii. evidence of local heritage e.g. housing design within the conservation area;
- viii. the availability of local transport services and links

Once the Neighbourhood Plan is written, what happens next?

Once the draft Neighbour Plan is written, there will be public consultation with residents and businesses in Stonesfield who will be able to comment on the draft plan.

Once the feedback from Stonesfield residents and businesses has been collated, an amended draft plan will go to the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC). WODC will carry out a further public consultation process.

WODC will then appoint an independent “examiner,” e.g. a planning inspector. He/she will consider the draft plan and associated material and may hold public sessions to consider representations. The examiner will write a report to WODC recommending refusal, amendment, or approval.

If the District Council is satisfied the draft plan complies with legal requirements, it will hold a referendum for everyone living in the parish of Stonesfield. Residents on the electoral role will be asked whether or not they want the Neighbourhood Plan to become part of the District Plan.

When will the Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan referendum be?

We do not know yet when this will be – we will update this information as soon as a date is set - but it will be widely advertised well in advance. It depends on how long it takes us to submit the finished draft, how long West Oxfordshire District Council takes to consider it, how long the Examiner takes to prepare his/her report etc.

How many votes are required for the Neighbourhood Plan to be approved?

If more than half those voting vote “YES” the Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development plan for West Oxfordshire. The planning authority will then be required to have regard to it in deciding whether to grant or refuse any planning application for development on land in the parish of Stonesfield.

Do you have a Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan question that has not been answered here?

If yes, please email the Steering Group: info@stonesfieldplan.com