

Saturday morning 14th November, we held a progress update on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) at the village hall. More than a hundred parishioners came along for the session. The format consisted of a presentation by Steve Ridgeon of the NP Leadership Group, followed by a comprehensive Q and A session.

Steve gave a review of the work done since the last open meeting in February and highlighted the development of our preferred local policy and liaison with South Downs National Park Authority and other agencies and expert bodies.

The presentation made clear how policy was informed by the expressed wishes of local people and local workstreams such as the analysis of Housing Need. The preference and requirement for small (3 to 5 unit) sites with smaller (2 and 3 bedroom) homes was very clear.

The audience then took the helm and raised a comprehensive battery of questions. These included the importance of drainage and flood control, economic viability of sites, the protection afforded by the settlement boundary and the present status of same, use of green space demarcation as a further protection mechanism, the status of windfall development, optimal size of sites and management of development 'creep'.

Chris Patterson, our local SDNPA planning officer, fielded the more technical questions and gave clear and comprehensive answers to all of them. The rest were adeptly fielded by EMPC Chair, Alan Redpath or farmed out to other team members.

The audience was unanimous in its strong appreciation of the work done to date and of its wish for the project to continue through to the referendum, now planned for June 2016.

A copy of the presentation and related information can be found on the village website at <http://www.eastmeon.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>