

NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

MENDIP DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET

www.nortonstphilipparishcouncil.co.uk

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Notice of Public Meeting at the Palaret Hall on Wednesday 6th December at 6.30pm

The Parish Council is calling a Public Meeting on 6th Dec at 6.30pm in order to consult on two issues: the forming of a Neighbourhood Plan and a possible lease on the former Roman Catholic Church.

Neighbourhood Plan

At its Meeting on 8th November 2017 the PC resolved to begin preparations for a Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation with the local community is the key to a successful Plan and so initially we are calling a meeting to explain our thinking and hear Parishioners views and ideas. Jo Milling, Planning Policy Officer at MDC will be able to join us and will be happy to answer questions.

A Neighbourhood Plan would set Policies by which any proposed development in the Parish would be assessed. The Plan becomes part of Mendip's Statutory Local Plan and thus carries legal weight, which the previous Parish Plan did not.

A Neighbourhood Plan should reflect national and local planning policy (including housing supply) but provides for planning decisions being made in line with local priorities, recognizing that those who live in an area should be the ones shaping its future. The Plan can last for between 5 and 20 years, and be regularly reviewed. It can also address areas of concern such as community spaces and highway safety.

There will be costs incurred, for example, the services of a Planning Consultant with experience of preparing and submitting Neighbourhood Plans would be needed. We hope to have more information on costs at the meeting. We would, however, apply for grant funding which could be between £9K and £15k, depending upon the scope of the plan. Receipt of grant funding would be important in deciding whether to proceed.

The PC believes that the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan is highly desirable in resisting future unwelcome development. Emerging Government Policy may increase housing supply numbers in the Parish in the not too distant future and a Neighbourhood Plan will enable us to guide and shape any development. Such a Plan can only succeed if it is a result of extensive consultation with those who live and work in the village. This is the first step on that consultative process. We very much hope that you will come to the Meeting.

Former RC Church

In the light of the results of the Parish Council's Village Hall survey in September 2017, The Downside Trust, which owns the former RC Church (RCC), recognises that purchase of the RCC as a community space is unlikely. But in late October, the Trust suggested that leasing the RCC could be a possibility.

At its meeting on 8 November, the Parish Council decided that if there were to be a lease, the lessor should be a community group and that the PC would explain the Downside offer at an early public meeting. If a group were formed quickly which could conclude a lease with Downside, it would be for that group to decide its constitution.

The PC's view is that, in the event of a lease, the RCC should be used principally for activities over and above those which take place at the Palairret Hall. The public meeting on Dec 6th provides the opportunity to discuss the Downside offer and to see whether a group is likely to be formed which could negotiate a lease and whether it could be formed in a timescale acceptable to Downside.

For more information please contact the Parish Clerk:

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