

# Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 16

# Web enabling your plan

April 2013 - Revised June 2015



Neighbourhood planning should be fully inclusive to all within the community and full engagement during the preparation of your Neighbourhood Development Plan will be very important. Therefore, some thought needs to be given to the best way to reach wider groups and removing barriers to those who would not traditionally become involved in parish issues.

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## Introduction

When used well social media can be an excellent way to engage with a wider range of people, particularly the younger generation who often do not engage in parish consultations. However, it is important that this method be used only as an accompaniment to other more traditional methods of consultation, in order to reach as many people as possible, and should not be used on its own.

This guidance note will offer some advice on the use of social media such as web pages, community forums, blogs, and social media such as Facebook.

## Websites

Parish webpages can be a good way of ensuring that all relevant documents are easily accessible. If your parish does not currently have a website, it could be worth considering setting one up. A very good example of a Neighbourhood Planning website can be found at:  
<http://www.eardisleygroupplan.co.uk/>

## Community forums and blogs

Setting up a community forum, either on your current website, or as a stand alone website, can be an extremely effective way of communicating with the public, as this allows discussions to be held between the parish council/steering group and members of the public or businesses within the area. This enables the free exchange of ideas and views, and allows the public to ask questions, and receive a response. It could even be used to exchange ideas on neighbourhood planning with other parish councils and steering groups throughout the county or further afield.

A blog could also be created to keep all within the parish up to date on events and progress as they happen. Blogs are similar to online diaries where news can be posted for others to read and send comments upon. Photographs or comments could be included following the close of an event to demonstrate successes and interest. This will help to maintain interest generated by a successful event to be harnessed and continued.

## Social media

Social media enables the sharing of ideas and allows discussions to take place online and at

that moment in time, when it is not always practical to have face to face or more traditional forms of interaction and consultation. It will also encourage a different audience who may not usually get involved in parish issues for a variety of reasons, to take an active part in the preparation and consultation of your Neighbourhood Development Plan.

For example, a neighbourhood planning Facebook site can encourage discussion and debate to take place. People are able to suggest ideas in a more informal way, whilst they are updating their own personal Facebook profile no matter where they are. This will in turn inform their Facebook friends, and will create a ripple effect with regards to your plan for the community. Many groups are already using social media and talking about things in their community prior to any Neighbourhood Development Plan work commencing.

It is also an excellent way of keeping momentum going and publishing the progress of the plan. Often during plan preparation it appears to those who are not directly involved in drafting the document that 'not much is going on', and social media is an excellent means of regularly updating the community on news.

Online forums can be used to advertise events, gather offers of help and share best practice with other parishes. These will all help to create a sense of identity for your plan and enthusiasm within the community.

All forms of social media are convenient and accessible to an increasing number and range of people which can be the key to successful consultation.

It is a growing way of linking communities, parish councils and organisations and sharing information and ideas.

# *Web enabling your plan*

## **Neighbourhood Planning guidance notes available:**

### **Deciding to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan**

1. Which is the right tool for your parish
2. What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan
3. Getting started
4. A guide to procedures
5. Funding

### **Plan Production**

6. Developing a Vision and Objectives
7. Generating options
8. Writing planning policies
9. Environmental Assessment
10. Evidence base and information requirements
11. Implementation and Monitoring
12. Best practice community engagement techniques
13. Statutory consultees
14. Writing a consultation statement
15. Planning and other legislation
16. Web enabling your plan
17. Using OS based mapping
18. Glossary of planning terms

### **Topics**

19. Sustainable Water Management in Herefordshire
20. Guide to settlement boundaries
21. Guide to site assessment and choosing allocation sites
22. Meeting your housing requirements
23. Conservation issues
24. Recreational areas
25. Renewable energy
26. Transport issues
27. Community Infrastructure Levy

### **Additional Guidance**

28. Setting up a steering group
29. Creating a questionnaire
30. Community facilities
31. Conformity with the Local Plan (Core Strategy)
32. Examinations of Neighbourhood Development Plans
33. Guide to Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendums
34. Tourism
35. Basic Conditions
36. Your plan - Contributing to sustainable development