

Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan

allotments

greenspaces

where
you
live

the
shops
you
use

play
areas

cycle
paths

Drop-in Event Report
30th April & 1st May 2016

*Produced by Place Studio for
Ross Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group*

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INTRODUCTION

This is the full report of the Drop-in event held in Ross on 30th April and 1st May. The report will be posted on the Neighbourhood Plan website and made available to anybody on request. It is however rather long and more for record purposes than general use so a short summary will also be placed on the website.

The contents of this report are largely verbatim material, with some minimal regrouping of points and analysis as appropriate. There are several sections as follows, each explained more fully at its start:

- Promotion, Format and Attendees
- Results from:
 - The Like/Dislike Post-its exercise
 - The Housing section
 - The Town Centre section
 - The Local Green Spaces section
- Questionnaire and Town Trail
- Visitor feedback
- Miscellaneous comments, contacts etc.

Everything recorded at the Drop-in is included in this report. All text as here, in italics, is explanation and description, everything in plain text is as noted by participants themselves.

Jeff Bishop and Katie Lea, Place Studio



PROMOTION, FORMAT AND ATTENDEES

The Drop-in was intended as a complement to the Workshop held earlier in April as well as an opportunity to confirm key points, add others and generate additional ideas and suggestions. By managing the event as a Drop-in, it would also serve to raise wider awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan, perhaps engage more people.

Promotion

The event was promoted in several ways:

- On the Neighbourhood Plan website.
- On the Ross Events Page of the local website.
- Posters spread in many locations around town.
- Social media, mainly Facebook groups.
- Direct notification to 60 or so people and groups on the project database.



Format

The Drop-in was held on two consecutive days, Saturday 30th April and Sunday 1st May. On the Saturday it was held from 10.00 to 16.00 under the Market Hall in the centre of Ross, on Sunday it was held from 11.00 to 18.00 in a marquee by the river, part of the AONB's overall River Festival. The weather on Saturday was cool, windy but dry. On the Sunday it was still cool and windy (at times) but there was almost continuous if light rain. Based on 2014 experience for the River Festival when the weather was very good, general numbers were considerably lower this year.

Boards were displayed to attract people in, at which point they were met either by a member of the Place team or by someone from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The aim was that all those attending, however briefly, would be given a small handout about the Plan as a whole, also giving the Plan's website address. If people were willing to look and contribute, there were several things they could contribute to and two things to take away – all described fully in the next sections.

Although some of the sections (e.g. Local Green Spaces) were very specific and addressed issues that the Neighbourhood Plan will be able to at least address if not solve, many of the other comments, especially on the post-its, were about issues that the Plan will certainly not be able to address (e.g. dog mess or chop rents). A few were difficult to understand!

Attendees

No formal count was made of those attending, however an informal count agreed by those managing the event suggested around 75 on Saturday and 125 on Sunday, i.e. close to 200 in total. Of these, a few only stayed very briefly (notably on Saturday) but many stayed some time, either reading, contributing or talking to team members.

On both days some of those who came to look were visitors from well outside the town, some were from nearby places such as Walford, most from Ross itself. Some of those attending were asked whether they knew that a Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared. Almost nobody attending on Saturday had any idea about the Plan but many on Sunday were either aware of it generally or had picked it up through Facebook or a poster. Some may have come as a result of mailing to specific local groups but nobody actually mentioned this.

RESULTS

POST-ITS EXERCISE

This was deliberately the thing that was intended to attract most attention most quickly – which it did. There were four boards on easels with the following titles:

- What do you like about Ross ('as a whole' was added verbally)?
- What do you like about Ross Town Centre?
- What do you not like about Ross (again 'as a whole')?
- What do you not like about Ross Town Centre?



Post-its were spread around and people could take one or more, and a large pen, and note their responses to one or more of the questions, placing their post-it(s) on the relevant board. Once there were a good number of post-its up, people could then tick any they agreed with, place a cross if they disagreed with any or add new post-its. The boards stayed up throughout and the many post-its were eventually covered with ticks and crosses. As time went on, people only appeared to add anything further if there were points of particular interest to them or if a key point was missing. In fact new post-its were being added right at the end of the Sunday session!

Inevitably, there were some almost repeats of the same point, some post-its were on the wrong board and related issues became spread around rather than being grouped. The lists below are therefore very basic but have been re-ordered a little to place similar issues together. As highlighted above, many of the points that follow are not addressable in a Neighbourhood Plan directly, in many cases not even indirectly.

What do you like about Ross (as a whole)?

Issue	Ticks	Crosses
Name of the town	4	
Friendly	17	
Great community spirit	7	
Full of history	5	
A nice town	12	
Safe small town, friendly	8	
Small town feel	9	
Safe small town lovely scenery	3	
Scenic (AONB)	11	
I love it here – everyone here is so friendly		
I like everything about Ross	1	

Coming to Ross is like arriving on holiday!	3	
Location - great countryside	9	
Lovely place to grow up outdoors	6	
Scenery, river	16	
The surrounding countryside – wildlife!!	13	
River	23	
Unspoilt riverside	1	
Fresh air!	6	
Location M50 / A40	8	
Regular buses into Ross	1	
Easy to get to / from	9	
Narrow Streets	4	
Market town	6	
Charity shops	1	
Keep and add trees		
Secondary school is known to be good	3	1
Steiner school ¹		
Love eco lights	11	
Cinema		

What don't you like about Ross?

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Ticks</i>	<i>Crosses</i>
Parking on pavements	3	
Traffic	6	1
Traffic Flow	4	2
Proper road crossings needed	3	1
Alton Street – large vehicles/no path/dangerous/no signage	8	
Alton Street – speed and large vehicles	6	
Ring road problem	6	(1 ?)
Poor signage advertising Ross on A40	1	
Missing train station	3	
Tractors and trailers		
Don't hassle market traders		
New parking charges near skate park are bad for business	2	1
Better management of green areas and approach to town – scruffy.	2	
Too much litter (especially by the river)		

¹ The Steiner Academy Hereford is a Steiner-Waldorf Academy school in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, HR2 8DL:
<http://www.steineracademyhereford.eu/>

Riverside badly maintained	5	1
Need more bins follow Disney rules		
Town looks scruffy to visitors (grass and flowers)	1	1
Rosswyn needs to be tidied up	7	
Too many takeaways causing litter		
Gone down in recent years	4	2
People smoking pot in the streets	9	2
People drinking alcohol in the street	4	
Dogs mess	12	
Maintenance of tourist interest	2	
More amenity development of the riverside		
No links to excellent outdoor activities	5	
Cycle path joined up	2	
Not enough festivals / celebratory events	9	
Bring back the 2 nd May fair	2	
Lack of good ideas	1	2
Lack of community involvement of JKHS		
Swimming pool and gym too expensive		
Swimming pool not child friendly	1	1
Lack of policing in town and skate parks (and parking control.	5	
More parks	1	
Better children's play area – Rope Walk	5	
Children's park in Ross north needed.	2	
More houses to be built		
Not enough high value jobs	7	
Few clothes shops for younger people	8	
Shop fronts too modern for area		
Too many charity shops	8	3
More shops open on a Sunday	5	1
More cafes	2	4
Lack of surface on steps from Wilton car park to JK walk path		
Cobbled high street doesn't work		1

What do you like about Ross Town Centre?

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Ticks</i>	<i>Crosses</i>
Range of independent shops	20	
Local shops	11	
Small town feel	11	
Great cafes and good new restaurant	11	
Café Eleganza		
Friendly small local shops	4	
Friendly people	9	
Friendly people / shop owners	9	
Small enough to visit all the shops	8	
Its compact – live and shop here without needing car daily	9	
Compact	3	
Nice and concise		
Good Library	11	
Fabulous library and associated services	6	
Community hospital	6	
Swimming pool and gym	4	1
Lovely local newspaper	2	2
Regular bus into Ross		
Available parking	5	
More car parking spaces than any market town		
Market hall		
Great outdoor amenities – river etc.	2	
Only semi-pedestrianised	3	
Varied architectural styles	7	
Riverside sculptures		
Low crime rate – low insurance premiums	2	
Need more housing		
Town guides		

What don't you like about Ross Town Centre?

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Ticks</i>	<i>Crosses</i>
More independent shops	1	1
Independent shops (lack of)	4	1
Bad shop signage		1
Too few national shops	10	6
Shops too dispersed	1	5
Too many charity shops	11	9

Few shops for young people		
Too many betting shops	3	1
Not enough restaurants	2	10 (??1)
Too many take-aways	1	
Parking/takeaway shops, too many estate agents too.	3	
Down at heel (14 charity shops)		1
Empty shops	17	
A-frames on the pavement		
Pavements	1	
Poor state of roads and pavements	4	
Part pedestrianisation would be wonderful	1	
Hills	2	1
Pedestrian access	1	
Don't like eco lighting – too dark – cant see path when walking	5	4
Lack of good town centre pubs (apart from King's Head)		3
Need a cinema	2	1
Missing cinema and Phoenix theatre (?)	1	1
Cinema? Theatre v. small	6	
No real tourist info	5	2
Not enough to keep people	4	
Better markets	2	
Markets could be more vibrant/have more stalls		
Christmas lights		5
Unkempt (weeds)	4	1
Swimming pool not designed for children	1	1
One-way system	2	5
Traffic congestion at times		
Traffic – HGVs driving through	4	2
Blockage from whole town centre to Rosswyn hotel narrows		
HGVs in centre	2	
Parking – why not free?	7	1
Not knowing where best to park	3	
Town centre workers parking for free on roads around centre blocking roads – but what can be done?		
No proper bus station	1	2

HOUSING

The text on the display board said the following:

NEW HOUSING FOR ROSS?

Last year Herefordshire Council allocated 900 new homes to Ross. 880 have already either been built or have permission, which may suggest we only need to plan for 20 more.

However, national targets are still going up so – **for our own protection** – the Plan needs to consider sites for some more. (That might be close to 3 figures but not much more.)

Sites could be in the Town Centre, elsewhere within the town itself or around the edges of the town.

- In the Town Centre could help to revitalise it but may add to traffic
- Elsewhere in the town could take away a valued green space but be close to the centre
- Round the edges could have the least impact but would be a long way from the centre.

Where do you think any new housing should be?

- In one estate or spread around?
- And where should any development definitely NOT be?

Now give us YOUR views in one or all of the following ways:

1. Make notes on the sheets on the table (*please only use the large pen*).

If someone has already written something you *agree* with, just tick it.

If someone has already written something you *disagree* with, just give it a cross.

If yours is a new comment, just add it.

2. Mark on the map – with a BLUE pen - where you think new housing COULD or SHOULD go.

3. Mark on the map – with a RED pen - where you think new housing COULD NOT or SHOULD NOT go.

The following **general** comments were noted, one having a tick added and two with 'yes' added:

- Overross housing development.
- (Not in) Walford Road side of town unless new traffic management is put in place.
- Under/disused market and Somerfield warehouse site?
- Old Auction site – good for additional housing if/when government bring in new quotas 200+houses, access to JKHS, close to existing new site at Overross.
- No big developers! Should be built by small developers.
- Let people settle on the land in small self-build dwellings, yurts, tepees, boats moored on land.
- Encourage self-sustained living and low impact dwellings.
- Orchard down Cleeve Lane – ancient trees that need protecting.
- Priority should be given to genuinely affordable housing. ✓
- Eyesore site junction of Greytree Road/Trenchard Street – should be zoned for housing.
- Homs Road car park.

- Worry about proposal for nursing home along Alton Road by industrial estate. Better as standard housing.
- Nothing more on Chase Hotel site – but currently a mess.
- No further development in fields south east of town trail till new access to south of town resolved (Gloucester Road, Cross Copse Street, Alton Road) – probably by new road parallel to town trail from Hildersley to Tudorville.
- Stay away from flood plains. (Yes!)
- Keep community garden permanently – not housing. (Yes!)
- Use the buildings over shops more fully.
- Pro new housing off Homs Road.
- Good to see the social housing developments.

A few **specific sites** were marked on the map either in favour of or against housing use (sometimes both) as follows:

Supported:

- Market/Somerfield (as noted above). Either to include the land owned by JKHS or keep that for school use.
- Single field on Archenfield Road/Cleeve Lane.
- Rear of Morrison's as applied for (unsuccessfully) by Tesco.
- Homs Road car park (as above).
- Storage Yard corner of Trenchard Street/Greytree Road.

Supported by some, queried by others:

- Field along Merrivale Lane, opposite end of The Gresleys.

Do not build on:

- Chase Hotel.
- Field at end of Hawthorne Lane (see Local Green Spaces).
- Old orchard at end of Cleeve Lane.

TOWN CENTRE

The text on the display board said the following:

REVITALISING YOUR TOWN CENTRE

This will be a key focus for your Neighbourhood Plan because people have been telling us things such as:

- "There are too many shops, too spread out"
- "There are too many charity – and empty – shops"
- "We badly need another supermarket" and/or ...
- "We certainly don't need another supermarket"
- "We must hold onto all our really local shops"
- "Parking isn't easy – too bitty, poor signs"
- "Traffic can sometimes be a real problem"
- "There are quite a few run-down, almost derelict buildings"
- "Why not pedestrianise more of the area round the Market Hall?"

DO YOU AGREE?

DO YOU HAVE MORE OR DIFFERENT ISSUES?

DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN IDEAS FOR 'REVITALISING'?

If so, write down your thoughts on one of the sheets on the table.

If your issue or idea relates to a specific place:

- grab one of the small 'flags',
- write on it the next number (after looking at other flags already on the map),
- stick your flag on the map,
- then write your number and your comment on the relevant sheet.

The following **general** comments were noted, one having a tick added:

- Keep the Riverside pub as a pub, not housing.
- Reduce traffic in the town centre.
- Clean up the town buildings – market hall (use underprivileged people, eg. prisoners).
- Free car park behind the Fitness Centre.
- Parking cheaper/free to encourage people to stay longer. ✓
- Signage not great (some not correct).
- Too spread out – limit extent and introduce housing.
- Too many planning controls.
- No dogs on football pitches. Areas of grass (eg. around kiddies' play area) should be dog free.
- Signage guides cars in, through and out of Ross (but) need to make sure people find car parks as they drive through so they stop here.
- Market: need to encourage more stall holders and expand, currently too small to really attract people.
- Big children's play area at the Ropewalk – make it a place to come to from out of town. Signpost it to/from the centre.
- Pedestrian area on town centre near Markey Hall would really breathe social life into that area with pavement cafes/outdoor dining.
- Need a proper leisure centre. My family all end up going to Monmouth to use theirs!
- Need places to be out of the rain.

The following **site-specific** comments were noted, some having ticks added:

1. Palma Court – like to see as coffee shop, sensory garden, meeting space, public square. ✓
2. Tidy up the big roundabout near Labels – easier to access Brook End Street.
3. Is the old chapel the best place for a drug addiction centre?
4. No safe pedestrian access to/from town centre.
5. Improve teens' leisure facility.
6. Try £10 a year parking for residents, (as in Malvern)
7. Make car parks free again if you want more people (and business people) to visit Ross-on-Wye. ✓✓
8. Pedestrianise Broad Street (traffic can go along Eddie Cross Street). ✓✓✓
9. Market traders are put off coming to our town because of the way they are organised (see how Kempeley do it). ✓
10. Better signage of motoring and pedestrian routes around town. Signage re. rights of way at top of Eddie Cross Street is confusing. ✓
11. Prioritise a pedestrian right of way at Eddie/Wye/Wilton/High streets. And 5-ways.

LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The text on the display board said the following:

LOCAL GREEN SPACES

- The Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan can 'designate' what are called '**Local Green Spaces**'.
- This protects them – for you - from future development.
- But it's not quite that easy!
- In order to qualify

- *A Local Green Space must be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.*
- *It must be demonstrably special to that community in terms of any or all of:*
- *Beauty*
- *Historic significance*
- *Recreational value*
- *Tranquility*
- *Richness of wildlife*
- *It must be local in character and scale, not an extensive tract.*
- *It can't apply to any land that has planning permission for development.*

- PS. You can't designate all the currently empty fields all around town!

Here's what to do if you know of a space that fits the above:

- Talk to one of Neighbourhood Plan Team about your suggestion.
- If appropriate, fill in a form.
- A group linked to the Plan Team will contact you.
- They will help you (and your neighbours) to provide good evidence about historic significance, wildlife etc.
- The Team will have to decide if the proposal is likely to get support when the Neighbourhood Plan is formally 'examined'.
- If so, they will contact the landowner to notify them. The landowner can object but it is the Examiner who decides.
- If not – very sorry but we will let you know.

Five potential Local Green Spaces were suggested, all by people living close to them. They were:

1. Field at end of Hawthorne Lane.
2. Field at the rear of houses, between Firs Road and Falaise Close.
3. Field on the corner (to the north) along Duxmere Drive.
4. Tennis Courts and Pitch and Putt on Ashfield Park Road*.
5. The Chase Hotel site.

** This is already noted as an Asset of Community Value.*

The field at the end of Redwood Close was also noted but had already been identified prior to the Drop-in.

The following comments were noted, some with ticks added, although these were primarily about open space generally, not suggested Local Green Space designations:

- Make more use of our green areas, eg. have a monthly market. ✓

- Community use of some of the Chase Hotel land?
- Reduce dog mess on playing fields.
- The universal problem of litter and dog mess. ✓✓✓
- Some coppicing along the riverbanks.
- No building!
- Improve children's playgrounds.
- Reduce the issues around holding events.
- Don't cut all the grass by the riverside to 'lawn' height'. ✓
- Picnic benches on the Ropewalk.
- Speed along Walford Road.
- Permaculture principles applied to designs.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND TOWN TRAIL

Two things were available at the Drop-in for people to take away and do:

- A general **Questionnaire** picking up on main Plan issues. This could be completed and returned to the Library by mid May.
- A problem-solving Town Centre Trail. This was intended to be challenging but also interesting and enjoyable while also generating views about the town centre. This could also be completed and returned to the Library by mid May.

Both of the above will be promoted and used further following the Drop-in.

VISITOR FEEDBACK

It was a last minute decision to try to use the first Drop-in event to ask some questions of visitors to the town (and/or the River Festival). 8 questions were drafted, as below. These had to be asked quickly because those being asked were not local residents with an interest in the Neighbourhood Plan. Not all were asked on each occasion (those not asked are shown as N/A below). 13 people (mostly pairs) were 'interviewed'.

A. What brought you to Ross-on-Wye today?

1. Visit relatives, River Festival
2. Booked hotel, found Festival was on, just visiting
3. Friend at canoe event
4. Looking for place to live, Ross in on the shortlist
5. Knew about River Festival
6. Staying at local hotel (in Weston-under-Penyard), knew about Festival
7. Son came a few years ago and liked it
8. Family nearby
9. Regular shopping but here overnight
10. Shopping
11. Weekend away, chose local B&B
12. With a group of 7 or so, caravanning
13. Came camping long time ago and remember liking it
14. On route to elsewhere. This is our usual place to stop for breakfast and a stroll.
15. To shop / stroll about and enjoy the history. It's a relaxing place and easy to get to from Cardiff where we live.

B. Have you been here before?

1. A couple of times
2. No
3. No but drive past
4. Yes, couple of times
5. Loads of times – use the gym
6. No other than 20 years ago
7. Yes – 2nd or 3rd time
8. Yes, many times
9. Weekly
10. Every weekend
11. No
12. Only passed through
13. Yes but long time ago
14. Around 20 times
15. Yes

C. What for on that/those occasions?

1. As per A above
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. Day trips
5. Shopping (rather than Gloucester)
6. N/A
7. Moved nearby, wanted to see new places
8. Walking
9. Shopping
10. Go to bank, meet friends in cafe, mooch around
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. N/A
14. On route to visiting relatives
15. Shopping / strolling

D. How did you travel here? Where from?

1. By car to relatives then lift
2. Car from Berkshire
3. Car from Malvern
4. Car from Kington
5. Car from Hereford
6. Car from north of Cardiff
7. Car from Malvern
8. Car from Reading
9. Car from Torfaen
10. Car from Mitcheldean
11. Car from Exeter
12. Car from Worcester
13. Car from Northampton
14. Car from Reading
15. Car from Cardiff

E. If by car, where did you park?

1. Sports Centre car park
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. By the theatre
5. By river
6. Car park by Aldi
7. N/A
8. Car park by Aldi
9. Car park by Aldi
10. Dante's car park
11. By Police Station (2 hours max.)
12. On caravan site – close to centre
13. Sainsbury's
14. By the swimming pool
15. On street near the market

F. What makes Ross an attractive place to visit?

1. Picturesque
2. Easy journey, picturesque, pretty, first town in area off main road, nice river, Festivals, lots of independent shops
3. Looks lovely, seems to have lots to explore, quite compact
4. Close to great countryside, river, small market town, facilities, location/access (M50 etc.)
5. Smallish town, more personal, place for walks (in area around), independent shops, quieter, more rural, attractive, concise
6. Country feel, independent shops, quaint, compact, bijou. Church spire is a landmark
7. Independent shops
8. Not too strung out, good place to stop for breakfast, liked the old bakery (now gone?)
9. Quality of shops, food/cafes, good selection, jewellers – and independent
10. Friendly people, shops
11. Seems nice, river, walks
12. Market town, pubs, restaurants, clean and tidy
13. Nice to walk in, nice lanes etc., walks in countryside, lovely town, close to the Forest of Dean, independent shops, (refreshing without nationals), feeling of Englishness
14. The River Wye and the independent shops
15. History, atmosphere, river

G. Are there things that are less attractive about it?

1. One-way system
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. Sound of A40
5. N/A
6. Narrow streets for cars
7. Hills
8. 6. Car park by Aldi

9. Occasional lout
10. Parking outside of town, costly in centre
11. Not really
12. Lack of street signs
13. N/A
14. No
15. Needs more of a range of shops and the market is a disappointing.

H. What would make it better for you as a visitor (other than as answered above)?

1. Clear parking in town centre, pedestrianisation
2. N/A
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. Nothing – it keeps reinventing itself
6. Not much needed
7. N/A
8. Keeping the local character
9. Keep the architectural character –the town's soul
10. More regular events/activities in the centre
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. N/A
14. If the lovely independent shops were retained and there were more
15. A better market?

Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan

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DROP-IN 2 FULL REPORT **6th August 2016**



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INTRODUCTION

This is the full report of the Drop-in event held in Ross on 6th August. The report will be posted on the Neighbourhood Plan website and made available to anybody on request. It is however rather long and more for record purposes than general use so a short summary will also be placed on the website and circulated to all those who signed in on the day.

The contents of this report are largely verbatim material, with some minimal regrouping of points as appropriate. There are several sections as follows, each explained more fully at its start:

- *Promotion, Format and Attendees*
- *Results from:*
 - *Theme and Topic sheets*
 - *Theme Priority sheets*
 - *Annotated Maps*
 - *Comments Books*
 - *Postcards from 2013.*

Everything recorded at the Drop-in is included in this report. All text as here, in italics, is explanation and description, everything in plain text is as noted by participants themselves.

Jeff Bishop and Cleo Newcombe-Jones, Place Studio

PROMOTION, FORMAT AND ATTENDEES

By August, a large amount of preparatory work had been done on all possible aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan so the main intention of this second Drop-in was to check the emerging proposals with the wider public and then, if appropriate, to refine them. By managing the event as a Drop-in, it would also serve to further raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Promotion

The event was promoted in several ways:

- *On the Neighbourhood Plan website.*
- *On the Ross Events Page of the local website.*
- *Posters spread in locations around town.*
- *Social media, mainly Facebook groups.*
- *Direct notification to all those people and groups on the project database.*
- *A float in the Carnival parade – see next section.*

Format

The Drop-in was held in a marquee on the Ropewalk as part of the annual Ross Carnival. As part of the promotion of the event and the Neighbourhood Plan in general, a float about the plan formed part of the Carnival parade around the town, ending at the Ropewalk. The float was very simple, just large banners on the side of a van.



The Float that went round in the Carnival procession

On this occasion it was decided to ask people entering the marquee to sign in, the main aim of this being to enable the team to notify people about next stages. Signing in also made it possible to send all those on the list a copy of the short report of the event. People were also encouraged to sign in with the offer of a 'lucky draw' of 4 prizes of £10 each. Those signing in received a badge (enabling the team to check who had and had not signed in), sets of sticky dots for the Theme Priority exercise and a postcard for the future.

Having signed in, people were directed first to the **Theme and Topic** sheets, then to the **Theme Priority** sheets, then to the **Maps** and finally to the **Postcards from 2031** sheets. **Comments Books** were also available for any additional or different comments. (All of these are explained fully below.)

Two people from Place Studio and one from the Steering Group were present at all times. Three other Steering Group members helped at various times. The session took place from 2pm (when the floats arrived) to 6pm, although some people came in earlier if they were already at the Ropewalk. There was also a (staffed) table with activities for children.

Attendees

55 people signed in. Many of these were couples or even families and quite a few chose not to sign in. The total number passing through was probably close to 100. The striking feature was the amount of time people spent – typically 30 minutes, sometimes longer - going through all the exercises and, in many cases, talking at length to those managing the event.

Children drawing
(while parents contributed!)



RESULTS

THEME AND TOPIC SHEETS

The work in advance of the Drop-in had generated a number of themes for both the future of the Town Centre and of the Wider Town. It had also generated a number of aims – almost proposals - for each theme. These proposals had been tested with two working groups of local people so the main purpose of this exercise was to check that the coverage of aims and proposals was widely supported; people were not being asked to say yes or no to them.



Sheets about the Town Centre were placed on one side of the marquee, those about the Wider Town on the other side. A large sheet was on display for each theme and, within each theme, 4 or 5 aims/proposals were noted. People were asked to add post-its if they wished to amend, elaborate or query any of the aims/proposals listed.

The main themes follow below, with the specific proposals within each theme in the left hand boxes and any comments by respondents in the right hand boxes. Some comments were clearly in the wrong boxes so have been relocated.

ENHANCE THE TOWN CENTRE ENVIRONMENT

<p>1. Make the centre a welcoming, safe and secure place where people are encouraged to spend time.</p>	<p>Pedestrianise the whole town centre and make appropriate parking provision. Keep town centre clean!! Yes please.</p>
<p>2. Improve the centre's appearance through high standard design referencing historic local styles.</p>	<p>Really enhances other market towns.</p>
<p>3. Improve the appearance of the town centre by introducing more greenery (trees, planters etc.) and varied public art.</p>	<p>And maintenance - you need quality plants and sculptures, not cheap stuff.</p>
<p>4. Protect important views out of and into the town centre, eg. by the Man of Ross pub.</p>	<p>The views are part of the attraction of the town. Yes please. Views from A40 to church important to maintain. Promote visits to the prospect - fab views. View from High street to the river and beyond very important.</p>

<p>5. Encourage appropriate renewable energy and energy saving initiatives throughout the town centre, eg. photovoltaic panels.</p>	<p>Excellent practical and positive idea - see Frome. Good idea. Lets put solar panels on all new build!</p>
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ENABLE MORE TOWN CENTRE LIVING

<p>1. Encourage housing development on currently empty, derelict or unused land.</p>	<p>Need accessible housing in the town centre. Increase parking for residents. Affordable housing please.</p>
<p>2. Enable more people to live over shops.</p>	<p>This would improve the appearance of the town and make these buildings viable.</p>
<p>3. Design new housing to enable people to work from home.</p>	<p>Yes. Affordable housing/starter homes for young locals.</p>
<p>4. Encourage development of self-build housing.</p>	<p>Most important of all development.</p>

SUPPORT THE TOWN CENTRE ECONOMY

<p>1. Support existing and welcome new, independent businesses, including shops, cafes and market traders.</p>	<p>Less charity shops. Encourage more industry/shops. Coffee shops cafes to open in the eve for a place to go that is not a pub. The shops are mainly charity shops we need more individual attractive businesses.</p>
<p>2. Encourage and support creative new uses where this adds to the vitality of the centre.</p>	<p>Chapel Creatives would like to lease the old chapel on Cantilupe Road as it is and not change it into an arts base. This will be an asset to the town. Children's cinema so parents can have a couple of hours to themselves.</p>
<p>3. Support and ideally expand the amount and frequency of the street market.</p>	
<p>4. Create a distinctive 'brand' to Ross Town Centre for locals but especially visitors.</p>	<p>Too many charity shops.</p>

ENSURE A WELL CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE TOWN CENTRE

<p>1. Make it easier to get into and around the town centre by all modes of transport.</p>	<p>Park outside town and shuttle bus.</p>
<p>2. Provide safe, convenient, well-signposted ways to get to centre car parks.</p>	<p>Signage is poor at present.</p>
<p>3. Improve the safe usability of the centre for pedestrians, cyclists and those facing mobility challenges.</p>	<p>Small 12 seater bus to run around town from Morrisons to Boots every 40 mins/hr 10-3.</p>
<p>4. Encourage appropriate – preferably no - charges for town centre car parks.</p>	<p>No fee parking brings trade. No charges in town centre car parks would massively help accessibility. Parking charges are high compared to nearby towns such as Newent and Coleford. Offer free 30 mins. or even 15 mins. in town centre car parks. Wardens used to come to Ross twice a week now they are 24/7. Not much good for tourism if their memory is a parking ticket</p>
<p>5. Introduce centre-wide traffic management, perhaps different one-way routes etc.</p>	<p>Think up a traffic system which doesn't mean going ¾ way round town to get to Walford Road. Liked the suggestion of 2 lane Gloucester Road near Edinburgh wool shop so that traffic can go up High St. and down Broad St. at the same instance, travelling from east towards Market House.</p>

PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS OF THE TOWN CENTRE

<p>1. Ensure existing community services and facilities, such as the library, are retained and enhanced.</p>	<p>Somewhere for 12-18 year olds to hang out safely. Keep our library - use it! Keeping the library is a priority.</p>
<p>2. Encourage the development of a cinema within the centre, either on its own or within a broader arts centre.</p>	<p>Art centre with NT live screenings would be fantastic. Arts centre with cinema would make Ross loads better. Why can't Ross-on-Wye be a centre of arts like Hay-on-Wye is to books. Join Herefordshire as a Cultural City.</p>

3. <i>Improve facilities and the environment near/round the bus station.</i>	Save our library. Use our library - put on internet teaching in the evening.
4. <i>Do more to highlight the town's historic and cultural assets to visitors.</i>	So many artists. Join them together. Join Herefordshire's bid for Cultural City 2020.

ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE WIDER TOWN

1. <i>Link existing green spaces, gardens etc. to create green corridors for visual benefit and wildlife.</i>	Cheap, easy and invaluable to wildlife.
2. <i>Ensure high standards of locally distinctive design and construction in all new developments.</i>	
3. <i>Protect and enhance historic and heritage assets.</i>	Yes! Great - a distinctive town.
4. <i>Protect and reinforce the setting of the town in the landscape and key views in and out.</i>	Important for tourism and town morale!
5. <i>Introduce initiatives to work towards Ross becoming a 'carbon neutral' town.</i>	Need good transport links.

DELIVER APPROPRIATE NEW HOUSING IN THE WIDER TOWN

1. <i>Deliver a small and appropriate amount of new housing over and above the 900 homes allocated.</i>	Yes! More affordable housing.
2. <i>Control over-developments in residential gardens.</i>	Stop all building of new houses in gardens. Yes - this leads to insidious changes to neighbourhood over time.
3. <i>Set standards of locally distinctive design, layout, access etc. specifically for new housing.</i>	

4. Encourage development on previously used land.	Very important Developing existing properties that are currently derelict into retirement apartments etc.
5. Encourage innovative solution such as self-build, community schemes, eco-housing etc.	Affordable housing! Eco housing should be developed to make homes more economical to run. Community scheme - Chapel Creatives

SUPPORT THE WIDER TOWN'S ECONOMY

1. Encourage starter units, shared serviced accommodation etc. for new businesses.	Brilliant - support new local initiatives.
2. Retain existing employment except where inappropriately located.	Important!! Especially new housing - we need employment locally!!
3. Encourage the retention of small shops in town neighbourhoods.	Lower taxes for small independent shops to help them survive.
4. Encourage and support home-working.	
5. Refuse further proposals for major out of town shopping.	Absolutely!!! We have empty shops!! Yup. Definitely out-of-town developments wreck town centres.

ENSURE THE WIDER TOWN IS WELL CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE

1. Support, promote and develop local bus, minibus and coach services.	Priority (8 ticks) National/local government financial support for ring-a-ride community transport scheme. Save our buses.
2. Provide clearer signage into and around the town from main roads and strong 'gateways' to the town.	This is important so that visitors can get around the town easily. Yes!

3. Improve walking and cycling access into and around the town and into the surrounding countryside.	This is very important in the planning of new housing estates.
4. Ensure new developments maximise the ease of walking/cycling access into the rest of the town.	Important!!
5. Introduce appropriate forms of traffic calming in residential neighbourhoods.	Priority. Particularly in areas where there is already too much on road parking.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS OF THE WIDER TOWN

1. Designate (and hence protect) Local Green Spaces of significant community value.	Green spaces are what helps to attract people to our beautiful area. Very important to keep the green spaces.
2. Improve existing and develop new allotment areas and play areas.	E.g. on Greytree Ropewalk play area - what happened to it?
3. Retain existing social/community facilities around the town.	Ross has a wonderful community spirit!! Chapel Creatives will be a great community asset.
4. Diversify town-based events for residents and visitors.	Priority.
5. Improve broadband accessibility.	Important. Definitely.

THEME PRIORITY SHEETS

Having seen all the specific proposals under each main theme (for Town Centre and Wider Town), people were then asked to offer their thoughts on the relative priority between the different themes. They were each given two sets of 10 sticky dots, one for Town Centre, one for Wider Town.

The sheets on the back wall of the marquee listed the five main themes and people were asked to spread their 10 dots wherever they wished – perhaps all 10 against one theme, 5 against just two themes, 2 in each. Most but not all people did this; some placing their dots elsewhere. The results, ranked according to number of dots, were as follows:

WIDER TOWN	Number of dots	TOWN CENTRE	Number of dots
<i>Environment</i>	158	<i>Environment</i>	130
<i>Social/Cultural</i>	141	<i>Social/cultural</i>	113
<i>Economy</i>	122	<i>Economy</i>	91
<i>Accessibility</i>	80	<i>Accessibility</i>	89
<i>Housing</i>	30	<i>Housing</i>	81

MAPS

Two maps were on display; one showing the whole town, the other focusing mainly on the town centre. Post-its had been added to highlight sites suggested to date for housing, for play areas and for Local Green Spaces to possibly protect. People were invited to comment on these proposals and to highlight allotment sites. People could also add any other comments using post-its. Most comments were by just one, two or a few people; something to bear in mind when considering the comments that follow. The points made were as follows:

- The suggested Local Green Spaces were supported by most people, including some previously suggested for housing.
- Protection was also sought for the Community Garden.
- An additional Local Green Space was suggested where Lakeside Drive comes close to Merrivale Road.
- The old Somerfield warehouse site and the site on the corner of Ashburton Road and Gloucester Road were both supported for housing.
- Two sites suggested by landowners for housing were not supported: the field south west of the PGL offices* and the land of the Chase Hotel. (* This is outside the AONB.)
- A comment was made about not having more housing to the south west of town, notably along Archenfield Road/Cleeve Road, because of access problems into and through town. Comments were made about focusing any development to the east.
- The only new suggestion made for the land behind Morrisons (known as Broadmeadow and/or Phoenix Yard) was as a Lido. Several people queried the appropriateness of part of this for a Travellers' site.
- There were queries about the loss of allotments on Cawdor Gardens and a suggestion that the old playground at Berryfield might be better as allotments.
- Someone queried the fact that the two doctors' surgeries are within around 100 metres of each other, neither being close to the north of the town or the large amount of new development (notably Overross).
- Comments were made about the need to protect the old railway line (now path), about managing the river and riverside better and about the need to resurface Walford Road.
- Two potential developments were mentioned, for Christ Church in Edde Cross Street and Chapel Creatives in the Old Chapel (formerly Registry Office).

POSTCARDS FROM 2031

What was intended as a final task for participants was to look ahead and focus on one thing that, above all, might make the real difference to Ross by the year 2031 (15 years away – the life of the Neighbourhood Plan). Everybody who signed in received a postcard that said: "It's 2031 and now Ross is even better because...". They could complete this sentence by writing on their postcard and then displaying it on a sheet on the wall. The messages from 2031 follow below in no particular order. Many of these covered or addressed two or more of the themes introduced earlier.

- It joined with Herefordshire Cultural City application to be a centre for Arts in 2020. It is now thriving and tourists come from far and wide to support the local community.
- The river environment an important amenity for the town and visitors, has areas supporting biodiversity, educational materials, views, as well as facilitating events and schism activities.
- The parks in Ross want to be upgraded and better facilities.
- It should be cleaned. No empty shops. More retail. Less charity shops. Church land and river bank more maintained.
- The town centre is a nice green place to hang out and have a great day out.
- Serious strategies to create sustainable employment. Opportunities in Ross for local people.
- There are neighbourhood social communities everywhere! Better road and pavement services.
- There is a massive zip-wire from the top of town to the bottom.
- It has a great range of housing. Its schools are excellent, with facilities. To help children/young people to develop their skills and talents (Ashfield Park rebuilt to be even bigger and better. Eco school?). It has super and well-supported clubs and groups. It has great green spaces and walking.
- An out of town park&ride allows people to visit/work in the town without cluttering it with cars.
- Town centre economy is booming. There is a more sensible one-way system that doesn't penalise Walford Road residents travelling from Hereford.
- A safe, accessible and friendly environment for all.
- It has an attractive and distinctive town centre and surrounding area attractions. Small independent businesses attract shoppers.
- Less able people have reasonably priced access door to door, for GP, dentist, shopping using supported transport schemes.
- Ross is Ross on Wye, and greater focus and amenities around the river. Innovative non-flooding structures which inspire health and well being.
- We realise we need less shop space in centre of town and release some shops to revert to housing. Also more affordable self-build housing.
- Encourage people to live and work within walking distance of the town centre.
- Less traffic, safer places to cross the road, there are better shops and lots of activities for families.
- The town centre is a place that people want to come - safe pedestrianised, cosmopolitan.
- The town centre is vibrant, modern and accessible. Pedestrianised with available housing and modern, appealing and independent businesses to revitalise the community and town centre.

- Address the issue of parking on roadside Tudor Rise.
- We have a larger, welcoming multinational community with excellent pedestrian access and a regular bus service across the town. Population 20,000+. More houses please.
- The people who were asked to include themselves and their ideas from this generation were listened to. Parking made easier in and around town centre. Businesses welcomed to the peripheries of the town. Councillor Lerego serving her third term as mayor. (In 2031 to give me some time off.)
- Great affordable housing. Plenty of car parking spaces in town. Multi-cultural acceptance.
- The town centre is kept clean and tidy and has well kept flower beds manicured grasses for locals and repents to enjoy. The roads into town - Archenfield, Walford, Ledbury are well maintained. The recycling skip is open 7 days a week. Ross has an incredible lido manned by volunteers. The library is open and busy. Every year the summer carnival! Xmas carnival and Xmas Fayre is a massive event drawing in tourists and creating a happy vibrant community spirit. The sculptures and fountains look splendid.
- It would be nice to see better shops in rather than charity shops. It would be nice to see a bigger market.
- Bring living accommodation into long term empty shops. Gives people more of a sense of ownership. Encourage small start-ups to make Ross a place people want to come because it is not full of large chains. Sort out traffic flow by old Rosswyn - and get Rosswyn sorted!! And clamp down on drugs/antisocial behaviour.
- Town centre parking has been improved. Out of town development has been halted. The library is thriving and the roads are good.
- Ross is now more green than ever and its economy is great.
- It is a greener town with plenty of social activities for people of all ages. The small local businesses are thriving as people can access them easily. The town is not overpopulated.
- The community spirit will increase when councillors listen to and act upon what people want. Less charity shops and cafes and more attraction to the town centre.
- Ross encourages a vibrant arts and crafts movement with a continual learn ethic.

OTHER COMMENTS

This section covers comments made in the Comments Book and points noted by team members during conversations.

Comments Books

Written comments made were as follows:

- To site a travellers site in a town next to a visitors caravan park will stop visitors coming to Ross. Also will make more mess for the Town Council to clear up.
- Archenfield Road cannot cope with more housing estates being built. The traffic struggles at times as it is. Best place is opposite the new estate to the Gloucester Road off the roundabout.
- Interesting that a large proposed housing development on Cawdor Gardens and the fields and old railway line has not been highlighted! As for proposed

allotment site it is a huge shame in the council that people who had allotments on Cawdor Gardens were given notice 2(?) years ago but still they are not used for anything else (they could and should have been used for the last 2 years). (NB. A planning application in 2013 to make access was refused.)

- Why create new allotments (at expense to tax payers) when the old ones could have been protected?
- Borders and flower tubs - ask Ross Societies if they would be prepared to take responsibility for one (or more) and maintain/plant them. Tewkesbury are doing this.

Conversation Comments

- *The Neighbourhood Plan should include more about the river: access to it, views to it, activities to maximise its use (eg. canoeing) etc.*
- *There should be more on biodiversity and specific things on sustainability.*
- *The proposed new building for Christ Church could be linked to developments of part of the car park to its rear.*
- *Other housing sites seem possible and need to be checked, including ownerships.*
- *Some form of 'branding' would help Ross (as it has for Ludlow and food). The leading suggestion to date is to focus on Vintage or Retro (ie. 1950s/60s etc.) goods, arts, events and so forth (which would also help to change the image of the charity shops).*
- *More is needed on historic aspects: archaeology, listed buildings etc. One particular one is the straight line from the old hill fort on Chase Wood to the river: use/celebrate in some way? Other old routes and turnpikes are traceable and could also be promoted.*
- *The idea of pedestrianisation received varied comments with no real conclusion about the routes that traffic would take if parts were closed off.*
- *As well as protecting the old railway line in town, it should be opened up more fully beyond the town, notably towards Goodrich. (As of now, there are no plans by Herefordshire and Sustrans to extend the routes from Chepstow to Monmouth.)*
- *For the issue above, and for others, it would be sensible for the Ross group to meet Neighbourhood Plan people in the parishes surrounding Ross.*

Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan

allotments
greenspaces
where you live
the shops you use
play areas
cycle paths

DROP-IN 2 FULL REPORT **6th August 2016**



*Produced by Place Studio for
Ross Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group*

engage • design • deliver

place

INTRODUCTION

This is the full report of the Drop-in event held in Ross on 6th August. The report will be posted on the Neighbourhood Plan website and made available to anybody on request. It is however rather long and more for record purposes than general use so a short summary will also be placed on the website and circulated to all those who signed in on the day.

The contents of this report are largely verbatim material, with some minimal regrouping of points as appropriate. There are several sections as follows, each explained more fully at its start:

- *Promotion, Format and Attendees*
- *Results from:*
 - *Theme and Topic sheets*
 - *Theme Priority sheets*
 - *Annotated Maps*
 - *Comments Books*
 - *Postcards from 2013.*

Everything recorded at the Drop-in is included in this report. All text as here, in italics, is explanation and description, everything in plain text is as noted by participants themselves.

Jeff Bishop and Cleo Newcombe-Jones, Place Studio

PROMOTION, FORMAT AND ATTENDEES

By August, a large amount of preparatory work had been done on all possible aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan so the main intention of this second Drop-in was to check the emerging proposals with the wider public and then, if appropriate, to refine them. By managing the event as a Drop-in, it would also serve to further raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Promotion

The event was promoted in several ways:

- *On the Neighbourhood Plan website.*
- *On the Ross Events Page of the local website.*
- *Posters spread in locations around town.*
- *Social media, mainly Facebook groups.*
- *Direct notification to all those people and groups on the project database.*
- *A float in the Carnival parade – see next section.*

Format

The Drop-in was held in a marquee on the Ropewalk as part of the annual Ross Carnival. As part of the promotion of the event and the Neighbourhood Plan in general, a float about the plan formed part of the Carnival parade around the town, ending at the Ropewalk. The float was very simple, just large banners on the side of a van.



The Float that went round in the Carnival procession

On this occasion it was decided to ask people entering the marquee to sign in, the main aim of this being to enable the team to notify people about next stages. Signing in also made it possible to send all those on the list a copy of the short report of the event. People were also encouraged to sign in with the offer of a 'lucky draw' of 4 prizes of £10 each. Those signing in received a badge (enabling the team to check who had and had not signed in), sets of sticky dots for the Theme Priority exercise and a postcard for the future.

Having signed in, people were directed first to the **Theme and Topic** sheets, then to the **Theme Priority** sheets, then to the **Maps** and finally to the **Postcards from 2031** sheets. **Comments Books** were also available for any additional or different comments. (All of these are explained fully below.)

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SUPPORT THE WIDER TOWN'S ECONOMY

1. Encourage starter units, shared serviced accommodation etc. for new businesses.	Brilliant - support new local initiatives.
2. Retain existing employment except where inappropriately located.	Important!! Especially new housing - we need employment locally!!
3. Encourage the retention of small shops in town neighbourhoods.	Lower taxes for small independent shops to help them survive.
4. Encourage and support home-working.	
5. Refuse further proposals for major out of town shopping.	Absolutely!!! We have empty shops!! Yup. Definitely out-of-town developments wreck town centres.

ENSURE THE WIDER TOWN IS WELL CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE

1. Support, promote and develop local bus, minibus and coach services.	Priority (8 ticks) National/local government financial support for ring-a-ride community transport scheme. Save our buses.
2. Provide clearer signage into and around the town from main roads and strong 'gateways' to the town.	This is important so that visitors can get around the town easily. Yes!

3. Improve walking and cycling access into and around the town and into the surrounding countryside.	This is very important in the planning of new housing estates.
4. Ensure new developments maximise the ease of walking/cycling access into the rest of the town.	Important!!
5. Introduce appropriate forms of traffic calming in residential neighbourhoods.	Priority. Particularly in areas where there is already too much on road parking.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS OF THE WIDER TOWN

1. Designate (and hence protect) Local Green Spaces of significant community value.	Green spaces are what helps to attract people to our beautiful area. Very important to keep the green spaces.
2. Improve existing and develop new allotment areas and play areas.	E.g. on Greytree Ropewalk play area - what happened to it?
3. Retain existing social/community facilities around the town.	Ross has a wonderful community spirit!! Chapel Creatives will be a great community asset.
4. Diversify town-based events for residents and visitors.	Priority.
5. Improve broadband accessibility.	Important. Definitely.

THEME PRIORITY SHEETS

Having seen all the specific proposals under each main theme (for Town Centre and Wider Town), people were then asked to offer their thoughts on the relative priority between the different themes. They were each given two sets of 10 sticky dots, one for Town Centre, one for Wider Town.

The sheets on the back wall of the marquee listed the five main themes and people were asked to spread their 10 dots wherever they wished – perhaps all 10 against one theme, 5 against just two themes, 2 in each. Most but not all people did this; some placing their dots elsewhere. The results, ranked according to number of dots, were as follows:

WIDER TOWN	Number of dots	TOWN CENTRE	Number of dots
<i>Environment</i>	158	<i>Environment</i>	130
<i>Social/Cultural</i>	141	<i>Social/cultural</i>	113
<i>Economy</i>	122	<i>Economy</i>	91
<i>Accessibility</i>	80	<i>Accessibility</i>	89
<i>Housing</i>	30	<i>Housing</i>	81

MAPS

Two maps were on display; one showing the whole town, the other focusing mainly on the town centre. Post-its had been added to highlight sites suggested to date for housing, for play areas and for Local Green Spaces to possibly protect. People were invited to comment on these proposals and to highlight allotment sites. People could also add any other comments using post-its. Most comments were by just one, two or a few people; something to bear in mind when considering the comments that follow. The points made were as follows:

- The suggested Local Green Spaces were supported by most people, including some previously suggested for housing.
- Protection was also sought for the Community Garden.
- An additional Local Green Space was suggested where Lakeside Drive comes close to Merrivale Road.
- The old Somerfield warehouse site and the site on the corner of Ashburton Road and Gloucester Road were both supported for housing.
- Two sites suggested by landowners for housing were not supported: the field south west of the PGL offices* and the land of the Chase Hotel. (* This is outside the AONB.)
- A comment was made about not having more housing to the south west of town, notably along Archenfield Road/Cleeve Road, because of access problems into and through town. Comments were made about focusing any development to the east.
- The only new suggestion made for the land behind Morrisons (known as Broadmeadow and/or Phoenix Yard) was as a Lido. Several people queried the appropriateness of part of this for a Travellers' site.
- There were queries about the loss of allotments on Cawdor Gardens and a suggestion that the old playground at Berryfield might be better as allotments.
- Someone queried the fact that the two doctors' surgeries are within around 100 metres of each other, neither being close to the north of the town or the large amount of new development (notably Overross).
- Comments were made about the need to protect the old railway line (now path), about managing the river and riverside better and about the need to resurface Walford Road.
- Two potential developments were mentioned, for Christ Church in Edde Cross Street and Chapel Creatives in the Old Chapel (formerly Registry Office).

POSTCARDS FROM 2031

What was intended as a final task for participants was to look ahead and focus on one thing that, above all, might make the real difference to Ross by the year 2031 (15 years away – the life of the Neighbourhood Plan). Everybody who signed in received a postcard that said: "It's 2031 and now Ross is even better because...". They could complete this sentence by writing on their postcard and then displaying it on a sheet on the wall. The messages from 2031 follow below in no particular order. Many of these covered or addressed two or more of the themes introduced earlier.

- It joined with Herefordshire Cultural City application to be a centre for Arts in 2020. It is now thriving and tourists come from far and wide to support the local community.
- The river environment an important amenity for the town and visitors, has areas supporting biodiversity, educational materials, views, as well as facilitating events and schism activities.
- The parks in Ross want to be upgraded and better facilities.
- It should be cleaned. No empty shops. More retail. Less charity shops. Church land and river bank more maintained.
- The town centre is a nice green place to hang out and have a great day out.
- Serious strategies to create sustainable employment. Opportunities in Ross for local people.
- There are neighbourhood social communities everywhere! Better road and pavement services.
- There is a massive zip-wire from the top of town to the bottom.
- It has a great range of housing. Its schools are excellent, with facilities. To help children/young people to develop their skills and talents (Ashfield Park rebuilt to be even bigger and better. Eco school?). It has super and well-supported clubs and groups. It has great green spaces and walking.
- An out of town park&ride allows people to visit/work in the town without cluttering it with cars.
- Town centre economy is booming. There is a more sensible one-way system that doesn't penalise Walford Road residents travelling from Hereford.
- A safe, accessible and friendly environment for all.
- It has an attractive and distinctive town centre and surrounding area attractions. Small independent businesses attract shoppers.
- Less able people have reasonably priced access door to door, for GP, dentist, shopping using supported transport schemes.
- Ross is Ross on Wye, and greater focus and amenities around the river. Innovative non-flooding structures which inspire health and well being.
- We realise we need less shop space in centre of town and release some shops to revert to housing. Also more affordable self-build housing.
- Encourage people to live and work within walking distance of the town centre.
- Less traffic, safer places to cross the road, there are better shops and lots of activities for families.
- The town centre is a place that people want to come - safe pedestrianised, cosmopolitan.
- The town centre is vibrant, modern and accessible. Pedestrianised with available housing and modern, appealing and independent businesses to revitalise the community and town centre.

- Address the issue of parking on roadside Tudor Rise.
- We have a larger, welcoming multinational community with excellent pedestrian access and a regular bus service across the town. Population 20,000+. More houses please.
- The people who were asked to include themselves and their ideas from this generation were listened to. Parking made easier in and around town centre. Businesses welcomed to the peripheries of the town. Councillor Lerego serving her third term as mayor. (In 2031 to give me some time off.)
- Great affordable housing. Plenty of car parking spaces in town. Multi-cultural acceptance.
- The town centre is kept clean and tidy and has well kept flower beds manicured grasses for locals and repents to enjoy. The roads into town - Archenfield, Walford, Ledbury are well maintained. The recycling skip is open 7 days a week. Ross has an incredible lido manned by volunteers. The library is open and busy. Every year the summer carnival! Xmas carnival and Xmas Fayre is a massive event drawing in tourists and creating a happy vibrant community spirit. The sculptures and fountains look splendid.
- It would be nice to see better shops in rather than charity shops. It would be nice to see a bigger market.
- Bring living accommodation into long term empty shops. Gives people more of a sense of ownership. Encourage small start-ups to make Ross a place people want to come because it is not full of large chains. Sort out traffic flow by old Rosswyn - and get Rosswyn sorted!! And clamp down on drugs/antisocial behaviour.
- Town centre parking has been improved. Out of town development has been halted. The library is thriving and the roads are good.
- Ross is now more green than ever and its economy is great.
- It is a greener town with plenty of social activities for people of all ages. The small local businesses are thriving as people can access them easily. The town is not overpopulated.
- The community spirit will increase when councillors listen to and act upon what people want. Less charity shops and cafes and more attraction to the town centre.
- Ross encourages a vibrant arts and crafts movement with a continual learn ethic.

OTHER COMMENTS

This section covers comments made in the Comments Book and points noted by team members during conversations.

Comments Books

Written comments made were as follows:

- To site a travellers site in a town next to a visitors caravan park will stop visitors coming to Ross. Also will make more mess for the Town Council to clear up.
- Archenfield Road cannot cope with more housing estates being built. The traffic struggles at times as it is. Best place is opposite the new estate to the Gloucester Road off the roundabout.
- Interesting that a large proposed housing development on Cawdor Gardens and the fields and old railway line has not been highlighted! As for proposed

allotment site it is a huge shame in the council that people who had allotments on Cawdor Gardens were given notice 2(?) years ago but still they are not used for anything else (they could and should have been used for the last 2 years). (NB. A planning application in 2013 to make access was refused.)

- Why create new allotments (at expense to tax payers) when the old ones could have been protected?
- Borders and flower tubs - ask Ross Societies if they would be prepared to take responsibility for one (or more) and maintain/plant them. Tewkesbury are doing this.

Conversation Comments

- *The Neighbourhood Plan should include more about the river: access to it, views to it, activities to maximise its use (eg. canoeing) etc.*
- *There should be more on biodiversity and specific things on sustainability.*
- *The proposed new building for Christ Church could be linked to developments of part of the car park to its rear.*
- *Other housing sites seem possible and need to be checked, including ownerships.*
- *Some form of 'branding' would help Ross (as it has for Ludlow and food). The leading suggestion to date is to focus on Vintage or Retro (ie. 1950s/60s etc.) goods, arts, events and so forth (which would also help to change the image of the charity shops).*
- *More is needed on historic aspects: archaeology, listed buildings etc. One particular one is the straight line from the old hill fort on Chase Wood to the river: use/celebrate in some way? Other old routes and turnpikes are traceable and could also be promoted.*
- *The idea of pedestrianisation received varied comments with no real conclusion about the routes that traffic would take if parts were closed off.*
- *As well as protecting the old railway line in town, it should be opened up more fully beyond the town, notably towards Goodrich. (As of now, there are no plans by Herefordshire and Sustrans to extend the routes from Chepstow to Monmouth.)*
- *For the issue above, and for others, it would be sensible for the Ross group to meet Neighbourhood Plan people in the parishes surrounding Ross.*

ROSS-ON-WYE CARNIVAL

Saturday 5th August
2017



Ross Carnival Drop-in 2017-08-05
on display for comment:
Draft plans, policies, allocations and green spaces



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Ross Neighbourhood Development Plan

REPORT: Ross Carnival presence

2018-08-04

This event again took place as part of the Ross Carnival. On this occasion it was not so much a consultation event as focused on awareness-raising about the settled proposals in the plan that would be submitted for formal community-wide consultation starting in a few weeks.

There was again a small display in a marquee at the main Carnival field during the afternoon of 4th August outlining three main topics: the policies that would be included in the plan, the local green spaces, and the development site allocations proposed.

Members of the Steering Group and Town Council Staff were present at all times and helped the 80 or so people who attended (many of whom were new to the process) to understand the plan, its purpose, outcomes etc.



The team ready for action



Browsing the Plan

No new issues were raised, but the recurring question of 'what service provision will follow all these new homes?' was raised again in most of the conversations. We explained that the NDP is concerned only with planning issues and that in most instances 'the market' would determine the later delivery of any additional services. Having said that, we were also able to point to some of the criteria-based policies and to the related projects that had been identified and that could support Plan policies.

Melvin Reynolds, 2018-08-13