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## **NEWMARKET VISION E-NEWS LETTER MAY 2015**

See p. 4 for details of the community consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, to be held on Tuesday 9 June, 6-8pm at the Memorial Hall

A number of meetings were postponed due to the elections in May and we've therefore taken the opportunity to give you an update on three items concerning Newmarket that are very topical and will require consultation, communication and community engagement in the very near future.

- **The Health of the High Street from Economic Development Planning and Growth**
- **Business Improvement District (B.I.D.) from Economic Development Planning and Growth**
- **Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan (NNP)**

### **THE HEALTH OF THE HIGH STREET ~ a shop survey analysis**

The health of the high street is a key indicator to the health of the local economy. This is why the Economic Development team at West Suffolk conducts a monthly survey of the region's town centres and commercial districts. With a total of 283 retail/commercial units in the town, Newmarket is the largest town centre in Forest Heath and the second largest in West Suffolk (behind only Bury St Edmunds).

Indeed, for a town of its size Newmarket is punching well above its weight, and this is reflected in the diverse quality and quantity of businesses on its high street. With almost 57% of all businesses in the town centre classed as independent (less than 5 branches), compared to 31.8% nationally, Newmarket also retains a unique identity and character in contrast to the proliferation of so-called 'clone towns' across the UK.

Though Newmarket has not been immune to the nationally challenging context for town centres, its high street has responded well to the crippling effects of the recession, with only 14 units now vacant within the town centre. This represents a vacancy rate of 4.9%, well below both the regional (6.4%) and national (10.4%) averages. This is also lower than other local towns such as Bury St Edmunds (6.5%) and Haverhill (5.2%).

The Economic Development team continues to keenly welcome and support any new or prospective businesses to Newmarket. To find out more about what support is available please contact 01284 757114 / [economic.development@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:economic.development@westsuffolk.gov.uk).

## **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (B.I.D.)**

You may, or may not know, that a group including many key local Newmarket business people, along with public sector partners, has recently been established to oversee the formal process that needs to be undertaken to determine whether or not Newmarket would like to have a Business Improvement District (B.I.D.). This "B.I.D. Stakeholder Task Group" is being supported through the process by a specialist firm of B.I.D. consultants, the Mosaic Partnership.

Mosaic, along with the Stakeholder Task Group will be organising a number of activities and holding public/business consultation events and workshops during the summer months leading up to a confidential vote later in the year when the businesses within the designated B.I.D. area will be asked to vote to determine if they support the formation of a B.I.D. in Newmarket. If supported the B.I.D. in Newmarket would operate for a five year period before another vote took place to determine if it was retained.

Essentially, B.I.D.s are an effective way in which local businesses can take control and improve their trading environment by identifying and delivering projects and initiatives that improve their area as a trading centre / place of business. Since September 2004 there have been over 170 successful BIDs in the UK, which over the next 5 years will bring in £300 million of funding that will be invested in a wide variety of projects to "improve" those areas – all under the control of local businesses in those areas.

If you would like more information on the prospective Newmarket B.I.D. you can visit the website [www.newmarketbid.com](http://www.newmarketbid.com) and **right now the B.I.D. Stakeholder Task Group are very keen to identify what issues and potential projects a Newmarket B.I.D. might need to look at.** They have therefore created an opportunity for businesses within the currently proposed area to inform them of their views and opinions via a survey that can be accessed via the homepage of the [www.newmarketbid.com](http://www.newmarketbid.com) website or via the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NewmarketBID>.

The survey is still open but any business can contact the supporting consultants, the Mosaic Partnership directly via the "Contact us" page of the website or follow this link ( [www.newmarketbid.com/contact/](http://www.newmarketbid.com/contact/) ) if they wish to get involved and express their views. The Stakeholder Task Group is keen to hear from as many businesses as possible. More information on the prospective B.I.D. and its progress will be included in future newsletters."

## **NEWMARKET'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Since 2011 the Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) has been an aspiration for the Market Town of Newmarket. This was when the Localism Act set out a series of measures with the potential to achieve a substantial and lasting shift in power away from central government and towards local people. These included reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective, and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally. Since 2012 local communities have been able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) for their local area. It may contain a vision or aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities or allocation of key sites for specific types of development. It can therefore deal with a wide range of issues that the community feel are important for the future of Newmarket like housing,

employment, heritage, open space and transport but it **must** meet the **Basic Conditions** for Neighbourhood Plans which are specified by law. The NNP therefore.....

- must be appropriate having regard to national policy
- must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
- must be compatible with human rights requirements
- must be compatible with EU obligations.

Provided a NHP is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority of those who vote, then Forest Heath District Council will bring it into force within the district's planning policies, making it a formal planning document.

Newmarket Town Council is the qualifying authority for Newmarket's Neighbourhood Plan (NNP). This means that the NNP will be owned and led by the town council.

The process of achieving a Neighbourhood Plan for Newmarket has already involved a huge amount of dedication and work from those in the community that, through the terms of reference resolved by the Town Council in January 2015 are now the Steering Group who will take the NHP forward to the community. The Steering Group is made up of members of the community from all walks of life in Newmarket, with a wide range of expertise, who have volunteered to oversee the NNP come to fruition for the benefit of all who live and work in the Town. The Steering Group is supported by Town, District and Suffolk Councils with guidance from councillors and officers but ultimately the NNP belongs to Newmarket.

This work is a natural progression from the work of the Community Planning Delivery Group. However, the process to achieve a Neighbourhood Plan for Newmarket focuses on a number of key steps, set out below:

- [1] IDENTIFY area for DESIGNATION – a 'red line' needs to be drawn around the area within the NNP
- [2] DESIGNATION of Neighbourhood area (CONSULTATION and COMMUNITY engagement for 6 weeks)
- [3] IDENTIFY issues and aims (with COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)
- [4] DEVELOP Proposals, Policies, Appendices (ongoing COMMUNITY engagement and CONSULTATION)
- [5] WRITE Policies Appendices Documents for NNP

**A neighbourhood plan should address gaps or provide further detail rather than duplicating existing policies.**

[6] PROPOSE NHP to the COMMUNITY for 6 weeks of CONSULATTION

[7] SUBMISSION TO Local Planning Authority

[8] EXAMINATION OF NHP BY INSPECTOR

[9] MODIFICATION if required

[10] REFERENDUM

[11] **NEWMARKET'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN** can then be used to determine planning applications and guide planning decisions in the neighbourhood area.

Newmarket's NNP is now at the initial Designation phase [1], so **Tuesday, 9 June 2015** is the date for a Consultation on the Area Designation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Newmarket.

The Consultation is to be held in the Memorial Hall in the High Street Newmarket between 18:00 and 20:00, where members of the Steering Group will be available to guide you through the initial process of defining the designated area.

A factor that needs to be considered is that some of Newmarket is in Cambridgeshire, this has huge implications as it would require involvement across two administrative boundaries. There is also a requirement to consult with surrounding Parishes, it might be that some or all of the surrounding Parishes are undertaking their own Neighbourhood Plans in which case they could not be included in the Plan for Newmarket as areas are not permitted to overlap.

Once the area of the NNP has been agreed through Consultation then the truly hard work and delegation begins.....

Watch this space!