



OLIVER'S BATTERY PARISH COUNCIL

(Article published in 'Community News', November 2014)

One of the jobs of any parish council is to represent the interests of the whole community. Understanding the needs of different groups in the community is an important part of our role as councillors. We have a responsibility to be well informed, especially about diverse local views. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is through the creation of a **Parish Plan**.

A Parish Plan for Oliver's Battery

In summary, a Parish Plan:

- Consults our community in a thorough and systematic manner. (Through a combination of focus groups, in-depth interviews, workshops at public meetings, neighbourhood and specialist group questionnaires,) It gives everyone an opportunity to have their say.
- Provides detailed and unbiased information on issues of importance to our local community, giving statutory authorities, like the Parish and City Councils, information about the needs and views of a community. It provides useful evidence when applying for funding for projects.
- Helps individuals and organisations be prepared for questions or issues which arrive about changes or threats to local services and activities.
- Helps people to become more involved in what goes on around them, providing a vision of the community in the future and a defined plan of action to show how this will be achieved.

Oliver's Battery Parish Plan will involve a whole range of activities such as large public meetings and small group discussions. Focus groups and in-depth individual interviews will survey attitudes and opinions across all the groups of people that make up our community. Public workshops will enable people to share opinions and ideas about what they like about living in Oliver's Battery, what they don't like, and things that can be improved. There may be researchers at the shops, or knocking door to door. We will be consulting younger people, from both primary and secondary schools. A Parish Questionnaire will provide the hard statistical data that can be analysed and interpreted, and the findings fed back to the community and an action plan agreed.

Our Parish Plan will take a while to complete. Around eighteen months is generally thought to be the average. Activity will start in the **New Year**. We will be asking local residents to take part in **Focus Group discussions**. These groups will provide us with the first evidence of community opinions about living in Oliver's Battery, what needs to be changed or developed and what needs to be maintained or protected. In **Spring and Summer**, we will be following this up with **public meetings and discussion groups**. We hope that these events will allow people to get together, meet other residents and put forward ideas in a social and informal atmosphere. By the **Autumn**, we will be ready to deliver the **Parish Questionnaire** to every household. By **Christmas**, we will have analysed

the results, and have an outline **Action Plan** for the future. By **Spring 2016**, the detailed **Parish Plan** will be published, giving us a clear plan of development for our community for the coming years.

Our Parish Plan will need people to undertake a wide range of roles such as interviewing, leading workshops, designing, distributing and collecting questionnaires, publicity, etc. You can get involved. People with a whole variety of skills will be needed, so join in, meet some neighbours and have some fun. Find out what makes your community tick and have your say.

The parish council has appointed Connie Leach to lead the development of the Parish Plan and she can be contacted by email at cllr.leach@oliversbattery.info for further information and to register your interest in being involved.

Brian Mitchener - Chair Oliver's Battery Parish Council

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