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| **Oakley’s Neighbourhood Plan**  The Parish Council has recently registered with the Borough Council to start its own Neighbourhood Plan and has set up a sub-group consisting of Parish Councillors and interested residents. The sub-group will develop the Neighbourhood Plan over the next 2 years.  **What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**  The Government has placed a new emphasis on planning at a local level. A key component of this new approach to planning is the Neighbour-hood Plan. This new type of plan will mean that local communities will have the opportunity to shape the future of their area.  It is similar to the Village Plan that we completed in Oakley in 2005 with the difference that the processes are much more specific and that the whole of our community will have to agree to the plan through a referendum of registered voters.  Once agreed, the Neighbourhood Plan is incorporated into the Bedford Borough “Local Plan”. Unlike the Village Plan planning decisions will have to conform to it, so it is an important document.    **What period will the Neighbourhood Plan cover?**    The Plan is expected to be completed by 2016 and it will cover the period from 2016 to 2032.  **What sort of things can a Neighbourhood Plan include?**  Typical things that a Plan can include are:   * Development of housing including affordable housing – how much, what type and location * Provision for local businesses * Transport and access - including issues around roads, cycling, walking, buses and access for disabled people * The development of schools, health & lei-sure facilities, community and youth centres * The design of new buildings * Protection and creation of open space, nature reserves, allotments, sports pitches, play areas, parks, planting of trees * Protection of buildings and historic assets * Renewable energy projects | **What is a Neighbourhood Plan not allowed to do?**  A Neighbourhood Plan cannot conflict with strategic policies in the Bedford Borough “Local Plan”.  It cannot be used to prevent development that is included in the “Local Plan”.  **Why has the Parish Council decided to start Oakley’s Neighbourhood Plan now?**  We have decided that now is the right time to begin our Neighbourhood Plan because Bedford Borough Council is also starting the new Borough “Local Plan”. We believe that it is in the best interest of our community to be positively involved in the development of plans which will affect the future of our village and that by being involved we can influence the outcome.  **Who will be involved in the Neighbourhood Plan?**  It’s our objective that all residents will have the opportunity to have their say and participate in the Plan making process. There will be a very wide consultation process through public meetings and events, workshops and questionnaires, notices in this Parish Council Newsletter and the notice boards, meetings with community organisations and leaflets.  We really hope that residents will join us to help create the Oakley of the future.  If any resident would like to join the sub-group or would be interested to help with specific issues please contact me, Jane Walker.  *Page 1 of 1 February 2014* |