**Oakley Neighbourhood Plan Report for the Oakley Annual Parish Meeting May 2020.**

The Plan is now officially Oakley Neighbourhood Development Plan.

On the 23rd of March 2020, Bedford Borough Council “made” (brought into legal force) the Oakley Neighbourhood Development Plan. The plan is now part of the development plan for the Bedford Borough Council.

This was a result of the referendum on the 27th of February 2020 when more than 50% of those who voted were in favour of the plan being used to help to decide planning applications.

How did we get there? - The Oakley Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) Group was a subcommittee of the Oakley Parish Council and comprised parish councillors and residents of the village.

Over 3 years, they undertook consultations on how you would like the village to develop and what you felt was important to you as a village community. They commissioned Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity to conduct a housing survey and engaged a consultant, Urban Vision, who guided us through the legal parts of forming the NDP and successfully brought us to the examination stage. Different members of the group went through government guidance, Bedford Borough Local Plan policies and background papers to put together the plan so that it could proceed to examination. It was examined by the independent Examiner Wendy Burden, who determined that subject to modifications, the plan met the basic conditions and should proceed to referendum.

The Oakley NDP is now a statutory planning document and planning applications in the future must take into consideration the policies within it. Bedford Borough Planning Officers must also take into consideration those policies when making their decisions on planning applications.

Recently when a planning application came forward for houses in Pavenham Road, The NDP group and the Parish Council were able to use the Oakley Neighbourhood Plan to object to that development.

The Future – The NDP group will continue to monitor the plan for the Parish Council and continue to respond to the emerging Borough Local Plan, reporting their findings to the Parish Council for their consideration.

Thank you to the members of the group for successfully piloting the plan through the different stages. The professionalism and the care they took over many years shows their dedication to Oakley Village. Thank you to the residents who responded to consultations and gave advice and support during this time. Thank you to the officers of the Bedford Borough Council who read through the document several times and who responded to questions and gave advice freely. Thank you to the Oakley Parish Council who supported the NDP and also contributed greatly to the successful outcome.

Cllr Pat Olney Chairwoman of the Oakley Neighbourhood Plan Group