



## 2016 / 17 Budget Consultation

### ***(e) Neighbourhood Plan***

The Annual Parish Meeting in July was overwhelmingly in favour of continuing with the Neighbourhood Plan, and a very well attended meeting in September to launch a second phase of work on the plan confirmed this wish. The Parish Council has created a Community Forum to provide greater input into the Neighbourhood Plan from the people of Watlington than was achieved before, and we are now resuming work on the plan. This reorganisation has meant that we have lost at least six months from the planned schedule, and the new approach means that the remaining work will take longer than previously planned and will now continue right through next financial year.

While most of the work is done by volunteers we do need a limited amount of paid administrative support and will also need to pay for publicity and for document production. In addition it is possible that we will need some specialist support for particular topics. The Community Forum has not yet met and will really get going at about the same time as we need to decide on our budget for next year, which makes any decision very difficult. On the other hand we have been told (by our MP no less) that external funding could be available for specific tasks should we need it.

The Parish Council's Steering Committee for the NP has decided that funding for administrative support and for preparation and publication of documents should be requested together with a sum for as yet unspecified specialist support. It recommended that the level of administrative support be continued at the current level giving a cost of £4,500. While this is the biggest single item identified, additional costs associated with preparation and printing of publications, office expenses, advertising and use of venues will probably cost in the region of £2,000. Some of these costs can be met from previous budget allocations which remain unused because of the six month gap in productive work on the plan.

The amount needed for specialist advice will be limited to a "seed" amount that will be used to generate match funding from other sources when these become available. The exact sum that for this seed will need to be decided in discussions between the NP Steering Committee and the Finance Committee taking into account any opinions from the Community Forum.