

Understanding a Neighbourhood Forum

Key Terms:

Neighbourhood Area (Area)



Our Area covers Knowle Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) - as agreed with Solihull Council and following formal resident consultation. Our Area is highly unusual due to its very large size, with c. 20,000 population, and its spread across two Wards.

Neighbourhood Plan (Plan)



Introduced as part of Localism Act in 2011. A way for a community to come together and set down how they want their Area to develop. Plans are typically undertaken by Parish Councils. If successfully completed, a Local Authority must recognise the resident-defined Plan when making planning decisions for that Area.

Neighbourhood Forum (Forum)



None of our three villages has ever had a Parish Council. In this case, the law allows residents in an Area to set up a Forum specifically to create a Plan. This is what we in KDBH did in 2015.

A Neighbourhood Forum...



IS NOT a Parish Council (PC):

- A PC is a long-established, statutory body, part of local Government
- It is responsible for, and makes decisions on, running aspects of community management
- It receives income raised through Council Tax
- It has formally elected, fixed term Parish Councillors
- It has paid staff, eg. Parish Clerk



IS NOT a Residents Association (RA):

- A RA is generally long-established and well recognised in a community, eg. the Knowle Society, the Dorridge and District Residents Association
- Has no legal standing or authority / responsibility for community management
- Seeks to represent local views across a range of community matters Funded by resident subscriptions
- Run by community spirited local volunteers who want to help protect and improve their village



IS a Legally Instituted Body (NF):

- Introduced in 2011, relatively few set up - we're unique in Solihull. Not well understood; often confused with the role of a PC or RA.
- Legal status - but NOT part of local government. No decision-making powers.
- Seeks out and represents local views relating to Plan creation for new development only.
- Receives no annual income. Limited grant assistance during Plan development only.
- Run by community spirited local volunteers wanting to give residents greater say in how their Area develops