

Neighbourhood Plans - a Summary

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

In very simple terms, a Neighbourhood Plan is:

- A document that sets out planning policies for the neighbourhood area – these planning policies are then used by the Local Planning Authority to decide whether to approve planning applications.
- Written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, rather than the Local Planning Authority.
- It is an important and powerful tool that gives the community powers to direct the right type of development, in the right place.

It can be used to:

- Develop a shared vision for the neighbourhood.
- Choose where new homes, shops, business and other development should be built.
- Identify and protect important local green spaces.
- Influence what new buildings should look like.

Stages and Timescale

Putting a Neighbourhood Plan together involves various stages of consulting those who live and work here, gathering opinions, and using them to generate planning policies for the village.

- The first stage is to gather together views of the village to put together a “Vision and Objectives” document which sets out broadly what we want as a village. This is the stage we are currently at, and we need as many opinions as possible so please complete your form and hand it in!
- We will use the information we receive from you to draft the “Vision and Objectives” document. You will all receive a copy of it with the next Fram News, and will have the chance to comment and give feedback on it.
- Once the Vision and Objectives document has been finalised, we look at the options for meeting those objectives. We will have input from a planning consultant at this stage, who will assist us in drafting policies to put the objectives into practice.
- Once the policies have been drafted, and any further comments taken on board, we will publish the draft Neighbourhood Plan for the village, We expect this to be done by Spring 2020. This document will be sent to each of you, and there will be a 6 week period of consultation where you can make comments and give feedback.
- Once the plan has been finalised, we submit it to the Local Planning Authority who then carry out their own consultation period and appoint an independent examiner who will check that it meets all of the legal requirements.
- The final stage of the process, and one of the most important, is a village referendum. You will all have a chance to vote on the final Plan, and if a majority vote in favour, it will be adopted as part of the planning strategy for the village. This will give it legal force, and the Local Planning Authority will have to take account of it when making planning decisions affecting our village.

Who is working on the Neighbourhood Plan?

- The Neighbourhood Plan process is being guided by the Steering Group (Allison Davis, Laura Findlay and Steve Buckley), on behalf of the Parish Council. We also have a number of others working with us who have kindly volunteered to assist with the process.

Common Concerns

- What is the point in having a Neighbourhood Plan? Won't it be ignored?

The short answer is no. Once a plan has passed the referendum stage, it becomes a legally recognised document. The policies it contains will carry as much weight as any other statutory consultee (e.g. the Environment Agency) meaning that the Local Planning Authority must take account of what is contained within the plan. That isn't to say that occasionally overriding circumstances may mean that the plan cannot be followed, but on the whole, the policies within the Plan will be followed.

- We have tried to do this before in the village and it didn't work.

A few years ago, a similar effort was undertaken, to carry out a Village Appraisal, and it was not completed. The Neighbourhood Plan is a different process, introduced in 2012, which carries legal weight (unlike a Village Appraisal). There is no reason why this process cannot be completed successfully, and indeed many neighbouring villages have completed theirs successfully recently. We intend to do the same!

- It doesn't matter what I think, the decisions will be made by other people.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be a collective effort involving everyone who lives here and we want to hear from as many people as possible. The Steering Group are here only to guide the process, not to decide what goes into the Plan itself. The ideas, opinions, and comments all need to come from all of you.