

Annual Parish Meeting

Report on the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Have you ever looked at a development and wondered how on earth it got through planning?

As you will be aware, decisions about planning in Walberswick are currently made by the Planning Department in East Suffolk Council. When making their decisions they must adhere to government and local planning policies. For more local detail they could refer to Walberswick's Parish Plan and Conservation appraisal – these two documents have the benefit of having been compiled by residents of Walberswick and contain specific detail about Walberswick. However in terms of influence on planning decisions they have proven to have very limited power. In 2011 the Localism act introduced the concept of the Neighbourhood Plan which gives communities statutory powers to shape how their communities develop; developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Walberswick will mean that we have a powerful statutory tool to ensure that the East Suffolk Council are required to make decisions that align to what we, the residents, want for our village. The previous excellent work done on both the Parish Plan and by the Safe Spaces team will also be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan which will effectively develop them into something that now has legal standing.

The Neighbourhood plan will set out planning policies that are bespoke to our own village – using a combination of consultants with specific expertise and the village's local knowledge of what makes Walberswick special, we will develop a set of bespoke policies against which the East Suffolk Council planners won't just reference but will have to ensure the planning meets.

Producing a Neighbourhood plan has 3 main stages:

1. Preparation – This is where we gather everyone's thoughts on what makes Walberswick so special and how we want it to develop in the future; what is important to you to protect or develop. We will develop detailed reports on the ecological, environmental and architectural features that make Walberswick what we love and gather everyone's opinions on what direction we need to take.
2. Writing the Plan – drafting a plan that meets the basic conditions and consulting with you all to ensure that it delivers on what we found was wanted and needed at the first stage.
3. Bringing the plan into force – As you may have realised by now, this is not just a piece of external red tape but a plan that is developed and formed from the opinions of the people that live in Walberswick. Having consulted with you to finalise the plan, it is up to you to vote it in at a referendum from which time it will become part of the planning policy structure that the planning department must adhere to when making decisions about our village.

The decision to make a Neighbourhood Plan for Walberswick was confirmed at a Parish Council meeting in May 2021 and a Steering Committee was formed to undertake the survey. The Steering Committee currently consists of Andrew Lewis, Josie Bassinette, Paul Bradley, Mark Knight and Rebecca Whiting. We launched the preparation stage of developing the Neighbourhood Plan with two Drop in Sessions on 5th and 12th September 2021 at the Heritage Hut. This was an early opportunity for people to come and discuss what the plan means and to start to gauge people's priorities. But do not worry if you missed it – we will be giving regular updates in the Walberswick Parish Council Meetings and you can give us your thoughts to some key questions either by email or

at the Annual Parish Meeting. On-going consultation with the residents of Walberswick is also an important part of the process of developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan, so expect to hear much more about it over the next 18 months or so. Even better, if you live here and have some time to give to the project then please let us know and you could be part of the team.