

Walberswick Parish Plan: Report of the Steering Group to the Annual Parish Meeting

13.04.2017

Introduction

The Parish Plan comprises two documents: the Village Survey carried out in 2011 and the Action Plan published in October 2012. The Action Plan summarises a series of objectives and recommendations in response to issues arising from the survey. The Parish Plan Steering Group oversees the development of the Plan: it has no executive powers but aims to work in collaboration with the Parish Council, the Common Lands Charity and others, to achieve the objectives.

Review

1 Sea and River Defences

See report from Blythe Estuary Group

2 Planning and Development Control

The Planning Advisory Group was set up in September 2014 at the request of the Parish Council to assist in responding to planning applications referred for consultation by SCDC. The establishment of such a group was a recommendation of the Parish Plan. The group comprises members of the Planning Working Party with professional experience of planning and architecture.

The group's brief is to assess applications against national and local planning policy and to report its observations to the Parish Council. The council will use the reports at its discretion and continues to be responsible for commenting to the planning authority.

Since its inception PAG has considered more than 40 applications of which 23 were reviewed in the past year. In all but a few cases the group's comments were incorporated in the Council's response. The exceptions resulted from the council being unable to pass the necessary resolution, either because it was inquorate or where no meeting had been called.

The latter point must be addressed if the Council's voice is to be heard by the planning authority. In many cases the deadline for comment does not correspond with the bi-monthly cycle of meetings of the Parish Council. Additional meetings will be required to enable comments to be submitted within the due date.

Copies of PAG reports are posted on the Walberswick Village website under Planning. Thanks are due to Kay Ungless for ensuring this happens efficiently. Earlier reports were attached to the minutes of Parish Council meetings.

3 Affordable and Sheltered Housing

The Housing Working Party report of 2014 (see WPP webpage) confirmed the view that helping young people to find affordable accommodation in the village and enabling the elderly to remain at home for the rest of their lives were desirable and widely supported objectives. The report also set out reasons why conventional provisions such as sheltered housing and housing association estates were not feasible in Walberswick.

As an alternative, discussions have been held with the Common Lands Charity to see whether the Trust could provide more flexible housing assistance in the village. This could take various forms: practical, financial, the provision of advice or some other service, depending on the needs of the time and the resources of the Charity.

Further discussion is required to activate this idea.

4 Traffic and the 20mph limit

The 20mph speed limit has now been implemented thanks to the persistence of Councillor Michael Gower.

5 Environmental Issues

The Environmental Working Party has previously produced a report on the competing uses of the beach during the summer holidays and the desirability of restricting dogs, windsurfing, fighting kites and other disturbing activities from a section of the beach during July and August. The proposal could be developed in partnership with the Parish Council having first established that the idea would be welcomed by the village.

6 Access to the Dunes

The Parish Plan Survey of 2011 included a request for some form of disabled access to the dunes so that wheelchair users could get a view of the beach and the sea. This can be achieved by extending the existing boardwalk from the Cliff Field car park to a viewing platform at the crest of the dunes. The proposal will have the additional benefit of channelling public access away from the plantations of marram grass.

A quotation is in preparation after which funding contributions will be sought from, amongst others, Waveney District Council who own the land and have offered a grant towards the cost of the project. WCLC will undertake fund raising and provide financial support in the meantime.

7 WPP and PAG Membership

The members of the Parish Plan Steering Group are: Peter Byrne (resigned 30.03.2017), Ben Cardwell, Frank Duffy, Alan Gomm, Alvin and Vivien Hunt, John Nichols and Chrissie Reeves.

The members of the Planning Advisory Group are: Paul Bradley, Frank Duffy, Alan Gomm, Alvin Hunt, Brian Martin, Brian Morton, John Nichols and Bill Ungless.

Thanks are due for their work on behalf of the village through the year.

In particular, I would like to thank Peter Byrne, who has resigned from the Steering Group after 7 years of good service, for his diligence, knowledge, wise council and good humour.

John Nichols
Chairman Parish Plan Steering Group.