

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

17.04.2014

After the difficulties of the Parish Council over the past eighteen months, and with new councillors elected, the partnership required to implement the recommendations of the Stage 2 Report of the Parish Plan can now be developed. Meetings between the Steering Group and the Parish Council are being arranged to consider the following matters:

### 1 Sea and River Defences

The flooding of Robinson's Marsh by last December's storm surge vividly demonstrated the weakness of the river banks and the vulnerability of houses in The Lea. In view of the Environment Agency's policy to abandon all maintenance within the next 15 years, the Parish Council, together with the Common Lands Charity, will be encouraged to find alternative ways of strengthening flood defences, in particular by supporting the scheme for raising the banks first proposed by the Blyth Estuary Group in 2009.

### 2 Planning and Development Control

The Planning Working Party submitted a comprehensive response to the draft appraisal of the Walberswick Conservation Area, published last summer by Suffolk Coastal District Council. The majority of our comments were incorporated in the final document which was approved by SCDC in December 2013. The revised appraisal will strengthen planning control in the Conservation Area.

Other recommendations of the Stage 2 Report will be developed after discussion with the Parish Council including a review of the Conservation Area boundary, a survey of significant trees in the village and the establishment of an informal Planning Advisory Group to assist councillors in the assessment of planning applications.

### 3 Affordable and Sheltered Housing

The Housing Working Party has been engaged in researching alternative ways of providing affordable and sheltered housing in the village. Discussions have been held with the Common Lands Charity, SCDC, and the Fox's Trust in Southwold. SCDC's enabling officer, having previously carried out a housing needs survey in Walberswick and the surrounding villages, confirmed that there is sufficient evidence of need in the village, particularly of one and two bedroom units. It is intended that, with the participation of the Parish Council, a report will be produced later in the year setting out a strategy for action.

### 4 Traffic, Parking and Public Transport

The Steering Group will develop with the Parish Council the proposals outlined in the Phase 2 Report to reduce traffic speed and improve pedestrian safety in The Street and to better enforce parking regulations.

## 5 Environmental Issues

The Environmental Working Party is preparing a series of papers for discussion with the Parish Council about beach management, litter and dog bins, 'Good Neighbour' advice for the tenants of holiday lets, light and noise pollution and the impact of pig farming.

The group is also looking at issues of sustainability and local energy generation and will publish a report on the subject in the autumn.

## 6 Health

A defibrillator has been provided outside the village shop.

The lack of active Community First Responders is a cause of concern. The Health Working Party is considering how to encourage more volunteers.

## 7 Business and the Internet

High speed broadband is currently being installed in the village and should be operational in June, giving much increased capacity to the local network. The Steering Group will continue to monitor progress.

## 8 Communications

The Steering Group posts twice yearly progress reports on its webpage. The next report will be published in October.

Reports from the Youth Group and the Village Hall Management Committee are now published independently of the Steering Group. Bulk buying of heating oil is managed by Community Action Suffolk (formerly Suffolk Acre) and no longer a concern of the Steering Group.

John Nichols  
Chairman