

**Sawston Annual Parish Meeting**

**Neighbourhood Plan Update**

**What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

From the South Cambridgeshire guidance:

Neighbourhood planning is a way for communities to take a proactive approach to deciding the future of the places where they live and work. Communities can use a neighbourhood plan to help shape the future development and use of land in their neighbourhood. This includes the development of homes, shops, offices and infrastructure.

The Neighbourhood Plan can:

* propose more development than the Local Plan
* identify the most suitable sites for development
* help to determine what type and design of development should take place

Examples of what could be in the Sawston Neighbourhood Plan are therefore:

* housing development
* business/retail park development
* high street development
* infrastructure and highways
* local green spaces and recreation areas

The Neighbourhood Plan cannot:

* propose less growth than in the Local Plan
* prevent any development from ever taking place in an area
* be prepared without community input and support
* be in conflict with national or local planning policies

Why undertake a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan helps set out a community's vision for their area over the next ten to twenty years. Once adopted the Neighbourhood Plan has the same legal status as the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the statutory development plan for the district. It will be used in deciding planning applications for the area.

**What are the steps?**

Development of a Neighbourhood Plan has to be community led and based on the needs and aspirations of the local community. With this in mind, the Parish Council set up a Working Party last February with the following aims:

* to start the process of neighbourhood planning, to engage and work with the local community in the development of the neighbourhood plan
* to ensure the consent of the community is secured at all stages in accordance with statutory requirements

This group has been meeting regularly over the year, and includes representation from Sawston, Babraham and Pampisford Parish Councils, local residents and SCDC. We have been developing an action plan and identifying sources of funding with input from Cambridgeshire ACRE - **Cambridgeshire ACRE** (Action with Communities in Rural England) is the rural community council for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. They reach out to local communities and work with them to shape their futures.

**Application to designate a Neighbourhood Area**

The first step is to designate the neighbourhood area.

Within South Cambridgeshire only Parish Councils can apply for Neighbourhood Area designation. Discussions have taken place with Babraham and Pampisford Parish Councils about whether it would be advantageous to prepare a joint plan, and all three councils have agreed that it would be most appropriate to local needs to prepare our own plans. However, we will be working together on areas of development which are close to parish boundaries, for example the housing developments (H/1b and H/1c) on the Sawston/Babraham boundary.

It was therefore agreed at the Full Parish Council meeting on 13 March 2018 that we proceed with a neighbourhood plan with an area boundary based on the current parish boundary. This application has now been submitted.

The process for approval is that South Cambridgeshire District Council check that we have submitted all the correct information with our application form.  According to the national regulations the application should contain the following:

* a map which identifies the area to which the area application relates;
* a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighborhood area; and
* a statement that the organisation or body making the area application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Act.

SCDC have an agreed council procedure to get an area designated whereby the Planning Portfolio Holder has to formally agree the designation.  As we are proposing the whole of the parish the local planning authority do not have to carry out a consultation and must designate the whole of the area applied for.

SCDC have received the application so we are now awaiting the outcome.

**Content of the Neighbourhood Plan and public engagement**

Another first step is to obtain evidence to help determine the size and type of development in the Sawston area. Last summer we were present at a number of village events including the village fete, Mary Challis fete, Church fete, to talk to residents about whether we should have a neighbourhood plan and also what were the issues in Sawston around housing, traffic, education, environment etc. The people we talked to give overwhelming support for a neighbourhood plan and helped us identify a number of headings for content.

This year we will be repeating this exercise and will have a stand at:

The Challis Garden Open Day - 20 May

Sawston Village Fete – 3 June

St Mary’s Church Summer Fair – 23 June

We are delighted to announce that representatives from the Rural Travel Hubs and Greenways Projects will be joining us at the Village Fete on Sunday 3 June.

We will also be holding a number of drop in sessions at the Parish Council offices and any residents interested in the Neighbourhood Plan are also very welcome at our meetings. A list of dates for your diary is on the back of this report.

We would also welcome the opportunity to attend any other events or local group meetings – please get in touch with your ideas.

Over the summer we will be distributing a leaflet about the Neighbourhood Plan and how you can input and /or help.

**Funding and further evidence**

Once our area has been approved, we can proceed to identify funding applications appropriate to our needs. We will also be undertaking further research to provide an evidence base for our decisions on Neighbourhood Planning.

**Thank you**

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped the Parish Council in getting the Neighbourhood Plan onto the score board, particularly:

Jo and Clare – our Clerk and Assistant Clerk – for all the administrative and technical work

Our residents who have regularly attended and inputted at our meetings – particularly Mike Purdy who has helped us with sensible suggestions through some quite difficult technical processes

Alison Talkington, Siobhan Mellon, David Roberts and Kirstin Donaldson at South Cambridgeshire DC – for their advice and support in the development of the neighbourhood plan and advice on community governance reviews

Councillors from Babraham and Pampisford Parish councils – for their support

Our own Parish Councillors – for their support

I hope that everyone will be able to continue to support the Neighbourhood Plan, and that we will also generate even more interest as the year goes on.

Janet Martin

Chair – Sawston Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

27 April 2018

**Meeting Dates**

* Tuesday 15th May, 7.30pm at the Parish Council Office
* Tuesday 3rd July, 11.30am at the Parish Council Office
* Tuesday 4th September, 7.30pm at the Parish Council Office

**Drop-in Sessions**

* Wednesday 6th June, 12-2pm at the Parish Council Office
* Saturday 30th June, 12-2pm at the Parish Council Office

**Or come and see us at these village events**

* Sunday 20th May -  Challis Garden Open Day
* Sunday 3rd June - Sawston Village Fete
* Saturday 23rd June - St Marys Church Summer Fair