



BENTWORTH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - PUBLIC MEETING 28th NOVEMBER 2017

As parishioners are aware, the Parish Council has embarked on the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Bentworth. A Steering Committee has been established and consultants have been appointed to assist and advise. So far, two public meetings have been held, in October 2015 and December 2016 to brief parishioners on what is involved. There have also been regular updates in "The Villager". This is to inform you of a further public meeting to be held in November and to encourage you to attend.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

To remind you, a Neighbourhood Plan is a relatively new way for local people to influence the planning and development of the area in which they live and work. It lasts for 15 years and should:

- develop a shared vision for a village or town
- advise where new homes, shops, offices and other development should be built
- influence how much housing should be built, and of what type
- identify and protect important local green spaces or other treasured assets.

Once approved, our plan will have some force in setting out what development is acceptable in our parish and for what reasons. Developers and local authority planners will have to take notice of it. Without a Neighbourhood Plan, we will have little control over any development that takes place.

Our Neighbourhood Plan must comply with East Hampshire District Council's (EHDC) Local Plan and the government's wider policy of sustainable development. This means that it is inevitable that some new housing will have to be built in Bentworth in the future. We can influence development, not stop it altogether. The Local Plan currently envisages that about twelve dwellings be constructed on a site at the corner of Church Street and Ashley Road (1.2 hectares). Since the Local Plan was published, five additional sites have been approved by EHDC. But this does not mean that all six sites will be developed.

Having a Neighbourhood Plan in place will help us form a view as to which is the best site (or sites) for development and ensure that such development is suitable for the parish.

What Progress Has Been Made?

In October 2016, the Steering Committee sent out a Questionnaire, the aim of which was to capture the initial views of parishioners. The response was excellent and we used the results and the views expressed at the well-attended second Public Meeting to prepare a draft Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. This draft was refined after further feedback from parishioners and now looks like this:

Vision for Bentworth in 2028

The parish of Bentworth, part of which is a Conservation Area, is an oasis of calm, a refuge from the rapid expansion of neighbouring Four Marks and Medstead. It retains a rural character, being surrounded by beautiful countryside of farms and woodlands, with fine trees and hedgerows. There are good views and a number of protected local green spaces. There has been a modest increase in housing stock, which includes some smaller homes. All new homes are varied in style, are sustainable and are built to the highest possible standards. There are low levels of pollution. The parish has a strong sense of community.

Objectives

1. To respect and conserve the distinctive character of the landscape, natural environment and historic assets of the parish.
2. To incorporate new development seamlessly, respecting the parish's rural character.
3. To ensure new development encompasses a range of size, style and design to match the eclectic mix of existing dwellings.
4. To ensure that views across the countryside are maintained.
5. To conserve areas of local green space for use by the community.
6. To provide a modest increase in homes, including smaller homes.
7. To minimise pollution.

Over the last few months the Steering Committee have drawn on the draft Vision and Objectives to review the six sites, which are potentially available for development. EHDC have assessed the sites for their suitability and we have obtained a Sustainability Assessment from our planning consultants.

We have also started work on drafting the policies, which will be incorporated in the Neighbourhood Plan. Again, these are based on the draft Vision and Objectives.

What Happens Next?

We are holding a further Public Meeting in the Jubilee Hall at 7:00pm on Tuesday 28th November (doors open and drinks and mince pies will be served at 6:30pm). At this meeting we will provide details of the six sites now potentially available for development and seek the views of parishioners on the relative merits of the sites. We will also brief parishioners on the next steps in the process. Everyone will have a chance to air their views and ask questions. You will be invited to express your preference as to the most suitable site(s). This will be the last public meeting before we make our final recommendations, so we would welcome as many parishioners as possible.

How to get further information?

For further background on the issues to be discussed at the meeting, we would strongly encourage you to look at the Parish Council website <http://bentworthparishcouncil.org/> where you will find the following materials:

Parish Council Charter for Neighbourhood Plan	Map and plans for the sites under consideration
EHDC Local Plan allocation for Bentworth	Map showing Settlement Policy Boundary
Minutes of all Steering Committee meetings and of previous Public Meetings	"Constraints Map" showing listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, etc
Questionnaire and analysis of results	Map showing proposed Protected Green Spaces
Draft Vision and Objectives	Housing Needs for Bentworth
EHDC pro forma for each of the sites	Frequently Asked Questions
Sustainability Assessment of all the sites by Navigus planning consultants	Bentworth Parish Plan 2008

If you have questions about the process, you can send us an email at neighbourhoodplan@bentworthparishcouncil.org. Alternatively, you can contact any member of the Parish Council or the Neighbourhood Plan team. For anyone who does not have access to a computer and/or would like hard copies of the background materials, please contact Colin Brooks.

PLEASE NOTE THE DATE OF THE PUBLIC MEETING IN YOUR DIARY: TUESDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2017. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE.

David Hawes
Chairman, Bentworth Parish Council

Boyd McCleary
Co-ordinator, Steering Committee