

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – SOME NOTES TO HELP**

You may have received a poll card for a Referendum on Nov 29<sup>th</sup>, and be puzzled what this is all about. I hope these brief notes will explain.

### **What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

Under legislation passed early in this decade, local areas are allowed to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, which has to be agreed by those living in the area. If this is passed by a simple majority of those voting, it becomes part of local planning policies which the Borough have to consider when looking at planning applications.

It is worth noting that such plans can only deal with planning matters – i.e. they cannot make reference to the number of doctors or shops etc., and it has to help meet government targets on house-building, so cannot simply say “no new houses”!

The Parish Council formally began this process just over two years ago - you may recall a questionnaire which was sent out to all properties. From the responses, we looked at those areas which had been brought up as concerns, and began to develop these into policies – from the outset, the Plan was focused on what Villagers wanted. Regular updates in the TORC and online have since followed.

### **Why should I support it?**

The Parish Council believes that you should vote “yes” at the Referendum for several reasons:

- It gives the Parish more control over planning decisions in the Village
- It is based on the concerns expressed by Villagers in several areas
- It does this for 15 years, from now through to 2033
- We receive an increased proportion of CIL money (see below) to spend on infrastructure in the Village.

### **Are there any drawbacks?**

We do not feel that there are. We should note that it is not as comprehensive as we would originally have wished – for details see below – but do not believe that this is a sufficient reason to reject the Plan.

### **What does this Plan say?**

The Plan begins with an explanation of why we wanted to have such a plan, and then moves onto specific policies:

1. Allocates land near Poppyfields for new building, with a limit of around 40; beyond there should be additional benefits to the Village.
2. Limits some secondary development.
3. Restricts the type of housing on the Poppyfields site.
4. Seeks to prevent second homes by preventing housing being designed specifically for that market. It leaves room for this to be expanded on – see below.
5. Comments on wanting “high-quality” design, using local materials, matching current housing in the Village.
6. Ensures that gardens are at least equal to the size of the building.
7. Ensures adequate off-road parking.



8. Protects any heritage assets.
9. Supports the improvement of the public right of way network and the AONB, and access to both.
10. Encourages pedestrian access to the centre of the Village.

Community Aims encourage the best possible environmental standards in housing design, an increase in green space in the Village and further work on the second homes issue.

### **What do I do now?**

We encourage you to find out a little more. Copies of the Plan will be available from the Office and in some local shops, as well as on the web.

You could attend one of these:

- Drop in sessions at the Office on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> (1000-1300) and Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November (1400-1800).  
A more formal presentation with Q&A, on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm in the Methodist Church – light refreshments will be provided.

And remember to vote **yes** on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Voting, by all electors of Snettisham, is at the Memorial Hall, or by postal vote.

### **Additional Information:**

#### **What is CIL?**

This is the Community Infrastructure Levy, a new way of paying for things such as schools, roads etc. in the area affected by development. It is charged on all new properties approved after February 2017. Parishes get 15% of this to pay for other community facilities, but, if there is an approved Neighbourhood Plan in place, this is increased to 25%.

#### **How did we get to this stage?**

We presented a first draft of the Plan at meetings in January last year, and, following further consultation and redrafts, it was submitted to the Borough Council in April 2018. The conclusion of their process was reference to an external planning examiner. It has to be said that we were disappointed in the number of revisions on which he insisted before allowing the Plan to go to referendum.

In order to allow the process to continue, there were two areas in particular which we felt it vital to pursue, to reflect the issues which Villagers had stressed as important from the outset. First, that if a larger number of houses were proposed, there should be a significant additional benefit to the Community (i.e. over and above any mandatory financial contributions). Second, that the issue of restricting second homes could not simply be left out, as the examiner suggested. In both of these areas, we are grateful to the Borough Council that they agreed, and, unusually, they have amended the examiner's comments to reflect our concerns.

Of course, we are happy to answer any questions you may have at any time, but in the meantime, all of the documentation for the referendum is available online at the Borough Council website.

Simon Bower, Parish Clerk, 29/10/2018

