

## **Baylham Neighbourhood Plan.**

Report to Baylham Parish Council Wednesday 11th October

It is pleasing to report some progress at last albeit the process remains rather slow!

### **Funding**

At our last Parish Council meeting in July we had only heard a day or so before that the Government had finally released funds for the current financial year to help councils prepare Neighbourhood Plans. The announcement was prompted after some lobbying by our MP who we tackled on the issue at the July Coffee Morning.

This has enabled our consultant, Ian Poole from Places4People Planning Consultancy, to prepare our funding application. Part of which was identifying and securing quotes from specialists able to research, prepare and present surveys on local biodiversity, landscape and heritage assets. The application was submitted on 14<sup>th</sup> September. Expecting some longer delay we were pleasantly surprised to receive approval a week later.

This brings us £9932 as a first slice of funding and will pay for the specialists' reports and some of the consultant's fees. Once this has been spent we are eligible to apply for up to a further £8,000 to cover further costs.

### **Technical Support**

In addition to this we are eligible for technical support in preparing the design guidance section of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is not a direct cash grant but the government agency dealing with Neighbourhood Planning appoints a specialist organisation to work for us to produce the guidance. We have had a first introductory/ exploratory 'Zoom' meeting with them.

### **Why Specialist Studies & Technical Support**

So, what does all this mean? There is a general agreement amongst residents as to what we like about the village. However, it is not sufficient just to say it's nice we want to keep it how it is.

We have to justify and provide evidence to support any statements we put in the Plan. If we want to protect a landscape or view, restrict or allow development or put anything else in the Plan we have to show why it is important, what value it has and any relevant historic or ecological issues. This is why the specialist reports are important as we do not, ourselves, have the expertise to produce them.

The reports will then, hopefully, give us the evidence we need to protect what we value about the village and how we might influence any future development. We will have the opportunity to brief the specialists so have been looking at what residents have told us so far through the consultation exercises to identify the views and landscapes, buildings & structures and their settings (which are not already listed) that the village generally feels are worth protecting.

All of this then feeds into the writing of a draft plan which will be presented to everyone in the village for discussion and comment.

## Key Issues

To give you some idea and get you thinking, here are some maps and photos covering some of the issues. The lines on the map are illustrative only in order to draw out views and ideas. They do not represent any firm proposals.

What **views/ landscapes** should be protected?

What **non-listed buildings and structures** and their settings ought to be preserved?

What areas should constitute any '**Green Spaces**', '**Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity**' (formerly 'Special Landscape Areas') and '**Special Character Areas**' (ex 'Visually Important Open Spaces')?

Where should the **settlement boundaries** be drawn?

Coming back to a **design statement**, this is to provide guidance on the appearance of buildings, not only their scale and materials but their settings and associated works eg boundary treatment, landscaping etc. to ensure any development is sympathetic to the area. It will not dictate what we as individuals can and can't do in relation to our own homes. It will only apply where planning permission has to be sought. Any guidance developed will be subject to full consultation along with the rest of the Plan.

We are still very much in the consultation phase, so if you have a particular view on any of these issues please let us know. We would welcome your input. My report and these maps will be published on the village website for you to look at.

## What next & timescale?

Specialist studies can now start and are likely to take about 2 months.

Developing design guidance, approximately 3 months to completion

Contents of these reports need to be considered and a draft plan drawn up – early New Year.

6 week consultation period following publication of draft plan.

Review and any revisions in light of the consultation.

Plan submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council June 2024 for scrutiny, verification and their approval.

The process is then in the hands of MSDC and may take 5 months from submission to the date it fixes for the residents referendum, so quite possibly the end of next year before we actually have the NP adopted.

Thank you – Any questions?

Jim White

If you have any questions or views on any aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan, would like further information or wish to comment on any of the issues raised above please e-mail us at [baylhampc@gmail.com](mailto:baylhampc@gmail.com) or speak to any Parish Councillor.