

Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan

Background document **BD2** - Workshops and Community Engagement

Introduction to BD2

Following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, Boughton under Blean and Dunkirk Parish Councils together agreed that a neighbourhood plan should be pursued. Once the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parishes of Boughton under Blean and Dunkirk had been agreed, the group have endeavoured to keep the community involved and seek their views to ensure their ideas and opinions are taken on board where possible. This was undertaken in a variety of different ways, hoping to capture the interest of everyone as it was acknowledged that not everyone in the community would be able or wish to attend what could be seen as formal meetings in the village hall.

Initial communication with the community

A leaflet (Appendix I) was distributed to all households in both parishes outlining the proposal of a neighbourhood plan and gave details of public meetings held on 8/5/2013 (Boughton Annual Parish Meeting) and 20/5/2013 (Dunkirk Annual Parish Meeting) where the views of the community would be sought. For handout at the meeting see Appendix II.

The leaflet outlined:

- What is a Neighbourhood Plan?
- Why would we want to have one?

The feedback from the first meetings was incredibly positive.

Formation of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Following the public meetings, a further meeting took place on 13 June 2013 – all those who had left their contact details at the open meetings were invited to attend.

This meeting agreed a “list of tasks” which was circulated requesting volunteers to undertake some of the roles which would form the steering group.

Working groups were set up with the aim of consulting with the community and collating data on various aspects which were considered to be key, e.g. Transport & Access, Environment, Social & Community, Economy.

An application for designation of the area (the Boughton and Dunkirk Parishes) was subsequently submitted to Swale Borough Council. There followed a 6-week statutory consultation period and the approval for the designated area was granted on 19 September 2013.

Questionnaires/Surveys

The following Questionnaires/surveys have been undertaken to gain views of the community.

Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire May 2013 see BD4

- This was an initial questionnaire which sought to gain the views of the whole community on a range of topics as identified by the working groups.
- Hand delivered to all households in Boughton and Dunkirk.
- Notices were posted in local shops/noticeboards.
- There were options to return the form by pre-paid envelope/drop to the village shop/complete online via the website.
- The results of the questionnaire and housing needs survey were published on the website.

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Housing Needs Survey October 2014 see BD6

- This survey was to identify specific housing needs in the parishes.
- Hand delivered to all households in Boughton and Dunkirk.
- Notices were posted in local shops/noticeboards.
- There were options to return the form by pre-paid envelope/drop to the village shop/complete online via the website
- The results of the questionnaire and housing needs survey were published on the website.

Parking Survey July/August 2015 see BD4

- The results of the questionnaire had identified that parking along The Street was an area of concern for residents and it was therefore agreed to establish the views of those most affected who live nearby.
- Hand delivered to residents in The Street and immediate neighbouring roads.
- There were options to return the form by pre-paid envelope/drop to the village shop/complete online via the website.
- A parking survey/count was also undertaken (counting parking spaces available at various times of the day/different days of the week).

Business Monitor Survey December 2015 see BD7

- The aim of the survey was to establish the views of local businesses, identify any perceived constraints, and any likely changes in business requirements.
- The survey was sent to all businesses in the community, this included all businesses, from those running a business from their home, to farms, shops, pubs.
- The questionnaires were hand delivered with options to return the form by pre-paid envelope/drop to the village shop/complete on line via the website.
- Where there had not been a response by the deadline given, the businesses were contacted directly and assistance given to complete the form where needed.

Workshops

Workshops were run by Planning Aid England.

The workshops were advertised in the local community magazine, details on the website and by email to those on the mailing list. They were open to everyone to attend.

Site selection and site assessment 17 January

- Identifying sites suitable for possible future development for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Stella Scrivener, Planning Aid Consultant, ran the workshop and talked through the process of site selection and site assessment. The workshop also included site visits to look at sites which could be used as examples.

Policy Writing 18 February

- Advice on writing Planning Policies for the Neighbourhood Plan.

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- Stella Scrivener, Planning Aid Consultant, ran the workshop. It included examples of other Neighbourhood Plan policy documents to look at different formats and how to include the key points.

Community Surgeries

Community surgeries were held at the two village halls, local post office, garage (see appended schedule)

A display was on view showing the latest stage of the plan, what had been achieved and what still needed to be done.

The dates were advertised in the community magazine, details on the website and email out to those on the mailing list.

The aim of the surgeries was to keep the community updated on an informal “drop in” basis. The surgeries at the post office/garage were aimed at those who may not have the time to attend a more formal meeting at a village hall. The village hall exhibitions were timed to coincide with other events taking place (e.g. Pilates) to capture those already in the village hall.

Band/Quiz Night

This event took place on 7 March 2015 at Boughton village hall. It combined fundraising event with a fun evening of music and quiz, together with raising awareness of the neighbourhood plan. The quiz was the usual general knowledge etc but also included a section on the Neighbourhood Plan. The event was very well attended and raised £600 toward funding.

Open Public Meetings/Exhibitions

Two public exhibitions were held on 14 November (Boughton Village Hall) and 18 November (Dunkirk Village Hall).

- The aim was to update the community on progress so far.
- They comprised an exhibition showing draft plan and policies.
- Advertised in the community magazine, leaflets, posters, website, newspaper article

Community Groups

Direct contact/survey took place amongst the following community groups during March 2015. A member of the NP team spoke to the community groups to ascertain their views and future requirements and possible involvement in developing the Plan.

Groups included Boughton Choir, Scouts, Medau, Magpie Playgroup, Intersept Fitness, Boughton Football Club, Boughton Art Group, Dee Dee's Nursery, Boughton Cricket Club, Breakfast & Late Club (Children), Boughton Bell Ringers, Boughton Golf Club

Meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Group

Regular meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan group were held on a monthly basis and all those on the mailing list, including both parish councils, ward councillors were invited to attend. The details of these meetings were communicated by email and the website.

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Community Magazine

Regular articles have appeared in the magazine:

The most recent was a request for more people to be involved and help with the final documents, prior to submission.

Community Magazine for Boughton and Dunkirk. Issue 358 November 2020

The Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan

The Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan has been the subject of extensive consultation locally, which developed a vision of how we all want the area to be. From that, a draft plan is now being knocked into final shape.

Strategically, the message of this Plan is that both the villages feel they are under siege. The pressure comes from two directions – increased traffic and proposed housing developments. With this in mind, extensive consultation has taken place, to build a common vision and set of key principles:

- That, in line with the present Swale Local Plan, the more strategic housing needs of the area would have to be met in the larger settlements within Swale. Boughton and Dunkirk would have very limited new development, sympathetic in scale, design and sustainable location to its village setting.*
- That in 2031 Boughton and Dunkirk will be parishes where those who work or grow up here can afford to live, with a limited amount of new housing to meet local needs, where families can raise children and the elderly can remain in the small rural communities they have long been part of, with access to necessary education, health and leisure facilities.*
- That we maintain and protect our identity as a community separate from Faversham, Whitstable and Canterbury, with green open space between the settlements.*
- That the modest rural settlements of Boughton and Dunkirk will become an increasingly sustainable community, whose historic and natural heritage has been documented and protected from inappropriate development and high volumes of vehicular through-traffic.*
- That Boughton and Dunkirk, will offer a wide range of services to serve the residents of the two parishes, with the multiple benefits of their countryside setting.*

The Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan, if approved by a joint parish referendum, will be a statutory document which, once adopted, forms part of the Local Development Plan and will be used by Swale Borough Council to determine planning applications along with the Council's other policies for housing and economic development.

Work to get the plan to its final stages of drafting and consultation needs sustained effort, and more help is needed.

If you think you can assist, please get in touch with Cllr Jeff Tutt (751634), who chairs the working group, or one of the other members of the team - Cllr Terry Fitchett (751377), Peter Williams (751171), Julian Owen (750203).

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Appendix I

WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

It is a new type of planning document prepared by local communities under the Localism Act 2011. A neighbourhood plan is researched and developed by the local community and provides policies and sites for which development in their community will happen. It gives local communities the chance to influence and have their say over what development happens, and what it looks like in their neighbourhoods. Once adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the development plan for the area and must be given significant weight by Swale Borough Council, when it determines planning applications in Boughton and Dunkirk. The plan can be detailed or general, depending what local people want.

The key is that the Neighbourhood Plan will help determine the future development & design of our communities for the next 15 to 20 years.

WHAT WILL A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DO?

A Neighbourhood Plan will influence Swale planning policies, making them more relevant and acceptable to Boughton and Dunkirk. It will also contain planning policies just for Boughton and Dunkirk and will certainly allocate sites for particular uses such as recreational, employment or residential.

WHO WILL PREPARE OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

The Neighbourhood Plan is initiated by Boughton and Dunkirk Parish Councils and prepared by volunteers from both villages working together for the benefit of the whole community.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Come to any of the meetings listed below or contact the chairman of either Boughton or Dunkirk Parish Council.

Dunkirk Village Hall:

Saturday 18 May, meeting start 10.30am

Monday 20 May, meeting start 7.30pm

Boughton Village Hall Library:

Saturday 18 May, meeting start 2.30pm

Wednesday 22 May, meeting start 7.30pm

Terry Fitchett: 01227 751377

John Peto: 01227 751757

End of Appendix I - First flyer

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Appendix II Handout at public meetings.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan.

It is perhaps strange, but useful, to initially say what a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is not.

It is not a NIMBY charter, nor can it be used to stifle or create disincentives development within a community.

It cannot be in conflict with the new Local Plan (LP) that is currently being developed by Swale Borough Council (SBC) nor can it prevent developments that have already been included in their plans. In line with Government guidelines, the SBC Plan will be evidence led and will have a large element of sustainability in any development as noted in the

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will promote environmental protection and contribute to the integration of environmental, social, and economic considerations.

Swale's Bearing Fruits draft core strategy (www.swale.gov.uk/bearingfruits) has been developed through their 'pick your own' (www.swale.gov.uk/pyo) consultation.

This SBC document along with planning and supplementary planning policies will be in place for the next 20 - 30 years. They are ongoing and will become the final LP.

As a general rule NP's cannot conflict with EU requirements or the Human Rights Act 1998. They must also be in line with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and the planning policy in the NPPF.

Within these parameters it can state where and what type of development we wish to see. It could promote more development than is already included in the LP, whether housing or commercial (and this could include changes to the village envelope). It could put in place specific design standards that are felt to be important and in keeping with the area and which would over-ride those of the LP.

It is also evidence led, fully inclusive and will, after drafting, consultation and external examination, be subject to a referendum where a simple majority of voters would carry the day. Having said this, it is such a powerful document, locally produced, discussed, amended, and agreed so that any plan that does not comply with local wishes will simply fail.

The simple headlines of the process:

- 1). *Process instigated by parish councils.*
- 2). *Neighbourhood area designated.*
- 3). *Plan prepared by local communities with Swale Borough Council support and advice.*
- 4). *Community engagement.*
- 5). *SBC check for legal compliance.*
- 6). *Independent check.*
- 7). *Referendum.*

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8). Neighbourhood Development Plan adopted by local authority.

Some of the specific issues may include:

Develop housing, including affordable housing or bring vacant or derelict housing back into use.

Provide space for businesses to set up or expand.

It can look at all issues on transport, roads and access including cycling, walking and access for the disabled.

It can provide for development of schools, places of worship, health, leisure and entertainment, community and youth centres and village halls whilst putting some restriction of certain types of development and change of use. i.e. avoiding too much of one type of use.

The design of buildings could be part of the policy to ensure there is cohesive design throughout the area with specific exclusions within one area that would be perfectly acceptable in another part of the district.

Where there are open spaces trees can be planted, nature reserves, allotments, sports pitches, play areas, parks and gardens can be enhanced or created.

Protection can be given to important buildings, historic sites such as the radar mast or archaeological remains. Policies can also promote renewable energy projects, such as solar or wind if we feel there is a need or space that could be successfully used.

It is important to remember that a NP will only be developed to give the most to our communities if it is prepared in concert with SBC. They have been charged by Government to supply help and officer time in the preparation, consultation, submission (followed by an independent examination) onto a referendum or referenda and adoption - this means inclusion into LP.

Moving forward.

It should be appreciated that this is not an exercise for Parish Councils, but a completely inclusive document for the whole community. All comments will be equally valid, but it may well be more difficult to find or establish contact with some minority groupings. Parish Councils can lead the process, enabling it to move forward through their direct contacts with SBC.

There must be representation from:

Residents and/or resident groups. Organisations within the communities i.e. Bowls, cricket, knitting groups, football, choirs, playgroups, lunch-clubs, cubs, guides, rambles, etc. etc..

Businesses and/or their organisations or trade bodies. In fact, all and any who want to help plan for the future in a positive way.

Our challenge is to collect these groups to form a steering team. It is essential that we are able to reach as many people as possible and allow the group to grow as more are involved. This will include meetings, workshops, fun events, coffee mornings, leaflets and questionnaires, the Parish

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websites and Parish magazine, social networking (Twitter and Facebook) and the local press. All this before we start!

Our neighbourhood area has been designated to include both Parish boundaries and submitted to SBC who will advertise the option for six weeks and then, hopefully, allow consultation to begin. From this point we can then decide what tasks and timeframes we need to work within; what resources we require, what people and skills we already have within the community and what is available from SBC.

We then need to ask questions as to what is required in the area. What's good and what's bad at the moment and what could be improved. Some things could be made better when looked at again in a different way, and the more input we have the more diverse points of view we would cover. All this would also be part of any evidence used to underpin a NP document

Face to face meetings along with questionnaires would be useful at this point. Perhaps the housing survey we have details on could also be a useful exercise at this time.

This would include the need for flats, houses, and business opportunities along with open space policy, outdoor all-weather free to use play areas and wildlife protection.

End of Appendix II - Handout at public meetings.