

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

The Update for the last issue reported that Nicholas Johnston of the **Bantham Estate** had attended our Steering Group meeting on 11th January and presented his draft proposals for the Estate. Full details were of course minuted and posted on the Parish Website.

Some of his ideas were pretty radical and raised a considerable amount of interest, both in the local and national press. A number of journalists subsequently contacted us and we issued them with the following statement:

"As a major landowner in the parish, it was important for the Steering Group to hear about possible plans and ideas from the Bantham Estate. At the moment, these plans are very much at the conceptual stage and there has been no formal planning application. It is very early days and our immediate aim is to continue putting together our neighbourhood plan and to keep residents informed of progress.

It is not our position to either endorse or oppose any ideas from the Bantham Estate. Our job is to help the community have a say in shaping and directing sustainable development in the parish. Ultimately, it will be the decision of the local planning authority, guided by the neighbourhood plan that will determine the future of the parish.

The position of the Steering Group was further clarified by the letter which I wrote to the Kingsbridge Gazette, which was reported in full in their 3rd March edition and which read as follows:

In answer to your question: It was agreed between Mr Johnston and our Project Director Sue Crowther that Mr Johnston would attend our next scheduled meeting to share with us his plans for the future of the Bantham Estate. He told us at the meeting that he had in preparation for the meeting studied the results of the Housing Needs Survey and the Questionnaire (which are freely available on the Parish Website) and that his plans purported to respond to the aspirations of the Parish as disclosed by the responses to that Survey and Questionnaire. I have to say that his analysis of those responses is materially different in many respects to our analysis of them.

Turning now to the new draft **Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan** (JLP), at the Steering Group meeting on the 1st March we were fortunate to receive a presentation by our District Councillor Judy Pearce, who is a member of the Joint Steering Group preparing the JLP.

The JLP covers the years 2014 - 2034 and this parish falls within the policy area known as the **Thriving Towns and Villages** (TTV), which includes West Devon and South Hams (except the Plymouth Urban Fringe) and excluding Dartmoor National Park, which is preparing its own Local Plan.

Under the JLP, the TTV area will accommodate 7,700 new homes, and South Hams has a target of 4,500 new homes. These figures are then broken down according to rank: the Main Towns; Towns and Key Villages; Sustainable Villages; Smaller Villages,

Hamlets and the Countryside.

Thurlestone is ranked as a Sustainable Village and the Sustainable Villages within the TTV should provide 720 homes over the 20-year period. The indicative level of new housing needed in Thurlestone is **10 new homes** over the 20-year period. Ranked according to facilities, it should have been 30 new homes. However, all Sustainable Villages in the South Devon AONB have now been reduced to only 10 so as to provide solely for known local need, since there is a presumption against major development in the AONB, which has the highest level of protection in the planning balance. We have our District Councillor to thank for pressing this point home.

Please note that the JLP is now out for public consultation until the 27th April and can be viewed by going to the Notice board on the Home page of the Parish Website.

Meanwhile our Project Director Sue Crowther continues to work on drafting the Neighbourhood Plan, dealing with any gaps in our evidence that may appear and calling for assistance from the other members of the Steering Group and Working Groups, as and when required. Robin Macdonald is in discussion with Devon Air Ambulance Trust with regard to the siting of a night landing strip in the parish, and Chris White is assisting with more technical matters including Mobile Phone coverage, Community WiFi and Community Heating Scheme.

On a very encouraging note, more parishioners are volunteering to help us and there is no better example than the two **Heritage Trails** that are presently underway. The pupils, their parents and staff at Thurlestone All Saints Primary School have all embraced the subject of local Heritage Assets with huge enthusiasm, notwithstanding the uncooperative weather. You can read all about the Thurlestone Trail in this issue of the Village Voice and coverage of the Buckland and Bantham Trail will follow in the next issue. It has been a big learning curve for all of us and we would like to extend our thanks to the School for their support. The Heritage Assets that they are exploring have no current legal protection and will be included in the Neighbourhood Plan on the basis that they are part of our historic environment and contribute to our sense of place.

Finally, after some 18 months preparation, we are looking forward to presenting an initial draft of the Thurlestone Parish Neighbourhood Plan to the Parish. We would hope that it will be around the time of the next issue of the Village Voice but much will depend on our graphic design skills. If there is anyone locally with a graphic design background who would be able to assist, now is the time to speak up! You can contact us via the Parish Website.

Tony Goddard

Steering Group Chairman