

# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE



The Update for the June Issue reported the submission of the first draft of our Neighbourhood Plan for a **Healthcheck** by an Independent Examiner. The purpose of this Healthcheck is to ensure that the Plan satisfies four basic conditions which are prescribed by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. These conditions are:

- (a) To be consistent with national policies and guidance
- (b) To contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- (c) To be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan (adopted South Hams Local Development Framework)
- (d) To be compatible with EU regulations

The Examiner has now come back with her initial comments. There were some instances where changes were needed to make the Plan consistent with national planning policies, and some suggestions as to the wording of some of our policies.

One unexpected result was the fact that although the **Plymouth and South Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP)** draft policies are very well known to us, we should not refer to it in our Plan because it has not been adopted and is therefore not the current development plan. We should, however, use the Evidence Base for the JLP to inform our policies (particularly in relation to housing). Conversely, if the JLP is adopted before our Plan goes to Examination, then our Plan would have to conform generally **with** the strategic policies in the JLP.

The draft policies are now in the process of being made and will be returned to the Examiner for her final comments, which will be produced in the form of a Healthcheck Report.

At the same time, the numerous maps and photographs to be incorporated into the draft Plan are being prepared by the South Hams Design Unit, so that a final working copy of the draft Plan can be launched for **Parish Consultation**. In the last Update in June, I reported at some length on how the Parish will be consulted; this is still displayed on the Parish Website and I do not therefore need to repeat the details here.

## Community Housing Initiative

Councillor Judy Pearce and I attended a workshop on 17<sup>th</sup> May at Follaton House organised by SHDC and attended by members of other neighbourhood planning groups. At the workshop, SHDC outlined some of their objectives and invited people who are already involved in community housing to share their experiences.

The background to this workshop was that the government, in an effort to help councils affected by high levels of second home-ownership in their communities, has introduced a **Community Housing Fund**. This fund is to be used by councils to help deliver housing that is affordable to local people, in order to tackle the problem second homes can cause in reducing housing supply.

The allocation of the fund to SHDC is £1.881 million, reflecting the high number of second homes in South Hams and lack of affordable housing for local people: the average house price in the SHDC area being over £350,000, whereas the average income is under £20,000.

Community-led housing may involve self-build or custom house-building, where the build is contracted out to professional builders, offering purchasers the opportunity to do the final finishing. It may also enable local community groups to deliver small-scale housing on sites that are unlikely to be of interest to mainstream housebuilders.

*More details can be found on the Parish Website in the Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 6 June 2017. See also the following link:*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/60-million-boost-for-communities-affected-by-second-homeownership>

Other progress and events since the last Update include the following:

- Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) are continuing to investigate a suitable location in the parish for an **Air Ambulance Night Landing Site**.
- Devon Association for Renewable Energy are to undertake a feasibility study, funded by the Rural Community Energy Fund, for a **Community Heating Scheme** in Thurlestone.
- Bush Broadband of Okehampton have carried out a drone survey of Buckland and Bantham as a first step towards exploring the feasibility of implementing **Community WiFi** for the benefit of Buckland and Bantham
- South Devon AONB Unit launched their **AONB Planning Guidance** on 21<sup>st</sup> June at Stoke Fleming Village Hall and Councillor Judy Pearce attended the event. This Guidance is an annex to the statutory South Devon AONB Management Plan and is a material consideration in plan-making and decision-taking, where these have the potential to affect the AONB. Workshops were held about *Coastal and Estuarine developments* and *Identifying the Special Qualities of Your Parish*. There was also a *Planning Surgery*, which was of particular interest to neighbourhood planning groups.
- Also in June, pupils of Thurlestone All Saints Primary School performed **"The Story of the Thurlestone Cannon"** written by Carey Ryan-Carter, about the last moments of the ship 'Chanteloupe' wrecked on Thurlestone Rock in 1772. The cannon is located opposite the village shop in Thurlestone and is an important non-designated heritage asset that has been identified by the community to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. A review of the play by Sian Williams appears later in this issue of Village Voice.

Finally, should anyone have any queries about the draft Plan or have any relevant information which they wish us to consider, please contact us by using the **Contact Form** on the Parish website.

**Tony Goddard**  
Steering Group Chairman

