

# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

The Update this month must begin with the sad news of the death of **Peter Hurrell** who was a member of our Steering Group. A tribute was paid to him at our January meeting in the following terms:



*Peter had an unrivalled knowledge of the history of this parish and area as his wonderful collection of photographs and his recent book prove. But his interest in the past did not prevent him being positive about the future and forward-looking. He was enthusiastic about the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan. Perhaps some of us were not aware of just how much work he did to help with the research and just how helpful his knowledge of the Parish was to us. It is very sad that he will not be around to see the culmination of his and our endeavours. He will be sadly missed and we pay grateful tribute to all that he did for this Group.*

My Update in November 2016 reported the two Focus Group meetings, the publication of the results of the consultation on the South Hams and West Devon Village Sustainability Assessment Framework and our response to it, and the landmark ruling in St Ives that a principal residence restriction is legally enforceable where such a policy would contribute to sustainable development.

Since November, we have continued to undertake further detailed research of locally important issues and studied the many other neighbourhood plans that have been made (more than 260 to date), or that are in the course of preparation (over 2000), to learn from their experiences. We have also been keeping an eye on the progress of the **Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP)** and have greatly benefitted from the assistance of Councillor Judy Pearce, who is a member of the Joint Steering Group preparing the JLP and a member of our Steering Group. Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and although the draft JLP will not be publicly available until March, it is invaluable to have her involvement.

If you have been following the progress of our Neighbourhood Plan on the parish website, you will be aware that we are now in the course of drafting the Plan. However, as you will appreciate, nothing in the planning world stands still. Hardly a week goes by without a news story about housing and pressures on the AONB. In particular, we have been reviewing the results of the **Housing Needs Survey** undertaken last April. In the Council's report (on the website), you will see that they recommend the provision of 5 new affordable housing properties over the next 5 years and, as part of our remit, we have been looking at where such housing could be provided if there is a demonstrated need. Given that the whole of our parish is in the South Devon AONB and our infrastructure, services and facilities are limited, this is a challenge. We would encourage you to read the Minutes of our December meeting (on the website), which include responses from the two main landowners in the parish on the subject of land for affordable housing provision.

## **Bantham Estate**

Following on from our enquiries of the Bantham Estate, **Nicholas Johnston** was invited to attend our January meeting to share with us his draft proposals for the future development of the Estate. Before he made his presentation, we spelled out certain ground rules to ensure everyone knew the meeting would be fully minuted and posted on the parish website, together with plans; and equally importantly, that the Steering Group would listen but not express an opinion and that nothing we said or did not say should be interpreted as either endorsing or opposing his proposals.

Mr Johnston explained that he had studied the findings of the Parish Questionnaire, Family Events and Housing Needs Survey and taken them into account in his proposals. In broad outline, his proposals were as follows:

## Thurlestone

- Behind the Church, a development of four open market houses, a courtyard development of six family self-catering lodges to be managed by and included in the accommodation offered by the Thurlestone Hotel, and a repositioned and enlarged Church car park.

*Proposed community benefits included: the gift of the Church car park to the Church, the gift of the freehold of the village shop to the Parish Council, the restoration of the cobbled road by the War Memorial and the car park at Links Court. There was also the potential for this scheme to incorporate five affordable housing units to be located within the parish.*

## Buckland

- A development of three open market houses on land adjoining West Buckland.
- A dedicated pedestrian/cycle route from West Buckland to the beach at Bantham.

## Bantham

- A development of eight new open market houses, including two replacement properties and one barn conversion.
- A new underground car park with capacity for about 100 cars, mainly for residents and mooring holders, with boat storage facilities.
- New village tennis courts, croquet lawn or bowling green.
- A development of eight new family rented houses, at a rent affordable for local families in perpetuity.
- A children's play area close to the family rented housing.
- A new boat building/ restoration yard/joinery to provide local employment.
- Land for new village allotments with up to 10 plots (if required).
- A new estate office and entrance barrier.
- Refurbishment of the toilet block with warm water showers.
- A new beach club on Zealands Field with pool, gym and café.

*Proposed public/strategic benefits included: increased parking and reduced congestion, more public open space, sports and recreational facilities, employment generation and increased sustainability as a village community with extra revenue for the Sloop Inn and village shop, better passing places on the road down to Bantham, and better sewage facility, electricity supply and broadband/mobile connectivity.*

**The proposals are set out in more detail in the Minutes of our January meeting which are on the parish website, together with Mr Johnston's plans.** Mr Johnston emphasised that these proposals are draft ideas, conceptual, and very early on in the process. He said it would be at least six months before he is ready for a public consultation.

## Other Matters

Over the coming months, aside from drafting the Plan, the Group will be progressing other matters for which there was strong support in the Parish Questionnaire. We are in discussion with the **Devon Air Ambulance Trust** about a suitable location for a permanent night landing site. We have made initial contact with a company willing to look into the provision of a **community Wi-Fi network** to improve mobile phone reception. We are also in the course of applying to the Rural Community Energy Fund to pay for a study to be undertaken to investigate the feasibility of a **community heating scheme** in Thurlestone.

Please note our contact details on the parish website and do please contact us should you have any queries or comments as your feedback is both welcome and essential.

**Tony Goddard** (Steering Group Chairman)

**Sue Crowther** (Project Director)