

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

The Update for the last issue reported the interest generated by Bantham Estate's draft proposals and the progress of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, ending with reporting that our Project Director Sue Crowther was continuing to work on the initial draft of the Neighbourhood Plan.



I can now report that the initial draft has been prepared and has been sent for review by an independent Examiner to check that it meets the basic conditions of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. This review is provided by the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service and administered by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Steering groups are advised to have their plans reviewed in this way at an early stage so as to avoid delay or rejection later in the process. We have obtained government grant funding to pay for the review.

Once we have received the Examiner's comments and incorporated them, we will be inserting the maps and photographs with the assistance of the South Hams Design Unit. The draft Neighbourhood Plan will then be presented to the Parish for your comments.

Consultation - Parish

The public consultation in the Parish will take place over a six-week period and it is a crucial part of the procedure. It is organised by the Steering Group in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

The consultation will be advertised on the Parish website and there will be plenty of posters to draw your attention to the consultation. The draft Plan itself will be available for you to read on the Parish website and we would be grateful if you could let us have your comments online, where possible.

We will also be holding **weekend drop-in sessions** at the Parish Hall at which there will be a number of hard copies available for you to read and the opportunity for you to provide us with your written comments, if you do not have access to a computer. Members of the Steering Group will be available at these sessions to assist you and discuss any queries you may have. We will also be arranging for hard copies to be made available for you to inspect at certain locations within the Parish.

Consultation - South Hams District Council

Following the consultation and having incorporated your comments, the draft plan will then be submitted to **South Hams District Council** who will ensure that we have complied with the statutory requirements of the planning legislation and carry out their own six-week consultation. The timing of these two consultations is dictated by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and we will endeavour to ensure that the process is carried out as promptly and efficiently as possible.

Only after these two consultations have taken place will the draft Plan be submitted to an **Independent Examiner**, who will decide whether or not the Plan can proceed to a Referendum.

In the meantime, since the last issue, there have been a number of events to report:

- We have submitted responses on behalf of the parish to the **Joint Local Plan** focussing on how development within the AONB can only be sustainable if it provides for proven local need and emphasising that inappropriate development in the AONB, whilst it may provide some benefits, is irreversible.
- There has been a second **Heritage Trail** by pupils, parents and staff of Thurlestone All Saints' Primary School around Bantham and Buckland, led by members of our Heritage Working Group. You can read all about the Bantham and Buckland Trail in this issue of the Village Voice. Again, we would like to extend our thanks to the School for their support. It has been very instructive to see how enthusiastic the pupils are about their historic environment. They have made an important contribution to the Neighbourhood Plan by helping to make us all more publicly aware of heritage assets that contribute to our sense of place, yet have no statutory protection.
- A Talk about "**The Archaeology of Bantham Ham**" was given in the Parish Hall on the 11th May by Stephen Reed, the County's Senior Historic Environment Officer, who advises the planning authorities and developers about heritage issues and who was involved personally in two of the main archaeological investigations at Bantham.

He described Bantham's important role as a trading port with Mediterranean countries in the 5th and 6th centuries, which is evident from the quantity of ceramics recovered from the Ham, second only to that from Tintagel; he explained how the remains of a Roman enclosure were discovered under the car park by the toilet block; and he reminded us of the statutory protection provided by the Scheduled Ancient Monument legislation and the reasons why Bantham is on the Heritage at Risk Register, due to its national archaeological significance and vulnerability to visitor erosion. His talk was accompanied by fascinating slides, including those of the 1997 and 2001 archaeological investigations in which he took part.

Finally, a huge thanks to all those who have contacted us over the past months and have volunteered their time to assist us with their local knowledge, research, photography and IT skills.

Please continue to do so, it is never too late.

Tony Goddard
Steering Group Chairman

