

Neighbourhood Plan (NP) – August 2017

As everyone will know from last month's Heritage Notes, we are undertaking a major rework of the earlier version of our plan. The NP team has approached the new version from a markedly different direction. The basic principle has been that a neighbourhood plan must be based on the "Development of Land" and here the key elements in any plan are the "Vision," "Objectives", "Policies" and evidence that justifies the policies. Only a Plan's policies will carry legal weight in future, so the new approach has concentrated on those and the evidence that supports them, and provided only as much general information about the village as contributes to readers' understanding of the village and its environment and wishes, and sets a context for the policies. This revised version of our plan will have been submitted for re-evaluation by our planning adviser at Breckland Council by the time this article appears. The new Policies have been derived from our analysis of the responses to questionnaires and exhibits in which Saham residents, businesses and organisations participated from mid-2015 onwards. There is a rigorous formal series of stages through which the plan must pass. The most immediate ones of these are:

1. **"Regulation 14 Pre-Submission"** [I apologise for the technical terminology] which we hope to complete by the end of August 2017. This submission initiates a formal six week "Consultation Period" with all those who live, work or run a business in the parish and a large number of statutory bodies, including of course Breckland Council Planning Authority. At the end of the six week period we must review every comment received and decide how to address each of them. We do not have to accept every comment the District Council or others make, and will be in a stronger position if we can gain the support of parishioners for our proposals. A series of consultation events will be organised to appraise the whole parish, by whom we mean households, businesses and other organisations, of the developing plan. These will run from our first event, **at the village Fete on Sunday 30th July** throughout the whole consultation period.

We aim to organise **events** (e.g. exhibitions), **drop-in sessions** (to enable residents to see and discuss the developing plan), **a presentation to the village**, a **web site**, and **information posters**.

The consultation will be your main (though not last) chance to make your voice heard before the Plan moves into its final stages, so we hope when it is published you will take the time to read it, come along to the events, fill in the questionnaires and let us have your comments! As a small incentive we're planning a prize draw for all who return questionnaires.

IF ANYONE HAS IDEAS OF HOW WE CAN BEST KEEP THE VILLGE UP-TO-DATE ON PROGRESS, DO PLEASE ALERT ANY MEMBER OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING TEAM.

Brian Mitchell, The Saham Neighbourhood Planning Group