

## **Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan**

We have continued to make progress with site allocations and in early June published more information about them on our website. There you can find the independent site assessment report, matrices summarising the results of those before and after our review on each site's constraints against development, and the bulk of our draft site selection report. Excluded from the latter for now are our provisional ratings and rankings of the sites. That is because we need to get our consultant's opinion of those and give site owners a chance to offer their own solutions to constraints which were beyond our expertise or resources to resolve.

We have informed landowners where such constraints exist and at time of writing await their responses. We then hope to hold discussions with those owners whose sites we propose to allocate, to gain their agreement to the policy conditions for the site.

In parallel we have completed our update of the Plan itself and its 12 volumes of evidence, and as I write we are anticipating receipt of our consultant's review of all those documents shortly. Based on her recommendations and the results of discussions with site owners we will then be in a position to make public the provisional site allocations we are proposing.

Then once we have gained the Parish Council's approval, we will publish everything for a formal 6-week public consultation, during which you'll be able to give your comments on the site allocations and all the other updated and new policies in the Plan. Those include an important new policy aimed at preserving the village's landscape and character which I outlined at our last two village presentations. During the consultation we'll arrange a number of village meetings to give you a chance to better understand all the changes we have made since the previous consultation in the spring of 2018 and to ask us questions. Our current thinking is that the consultation will start between mid-July and mid-August, but do please watch out for announcements in future issues of Saga, on posters around the village and on our website for confirmation.

At this point, it's probably worth reiterating that in common with other aspects of the Plan, the site allocation proposals we make will be provisional, pending two formal stages of public consultation (the one mentioned above and another when the final version of the plan is submitted), examination of the Plan by a Government inspector, and a village referendum to vote on accepting the entire Plan. Additionally,

allocated sites must still go through the normal planning application process to gain permission to develop.

No doubt some of you are keen to find out how many houses we propose allocating and where, and we will provide that as soon as possible, but we have to balance a wish to make results public against having more confidence they are valid. That means waiting for our consultant's review and the post-assessment discussions with site owners. So, all I will say for now is the number of houses we currently have in mind is less than the total proposed by the 7 pending planning applications that are trying to circumvent the site assessment process, and significantly less than the total number originally proposed by site owners.

On the subject of those planning applications do please take a little time to look at them (you can find links on our website) and make any comments to Breckland Council. We certainly hope they all get the same level of village scrutiny and comment as we expect – and welcome – for our proposed site allocations, because we think they are far less justified than any of the sites we may propose.

Meanwhile the Breckland Local Plan seems to have been delayed again, this time by an unfortunate administrative error on the Council's part: so far, no revised date for that plan's approval has been made public.

Finally, in the next couple of weeks, we will meet one of our new district councillors, Tim Birt, who is already taking a keen interest in our Plan and looks likely to offer us more support than our previous Breckland Councillor.

As usual, if you have any comments or questions on any of this, or anything else to do with the Neighbourhood Plan, or if you'd like to be added to our mailing list, please get in touch with me.

**Chris Blow, STNP Work Group leader**



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***Neighbourhood Plan  
Shaping the future of  
Saham Toney!***