

## **Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan**

Firstly, for anyone who likes a monthly dose of neighbourhood planning, let me apologise that there was no article in last month's Saga. I did write one, but then while enjoying my holiday, forgot to send it in to Barbara.

As I write this, there are only 4 days left to make comments in response to the second formal consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, which will close on 13 October (after the deadline for submitting this article). To all of you who responded, many thanks. Both your support and your comments are helpful. Rather than give incomplete information while the consultation is still open, I'll provide highlights of the consultation responses in the December issue, and on our website.

In addition to villager comments we've just received 89 comments from Breckland Council and others from Norfolk County Council. Between them, Historic England, Natural England and Anglian Water, who are among the most important bodies we must consult, have made only two low-key comments.

In due course I'll put more details about the consultation results on our website, but meanwhile you might be interested to read what we'll be doing next.

First, we simply need to take time to read and understand all the comments, and that will include resolving any conflict between comments on the same topic from different sources. We will certainly need to meet with Breckland planners to discuss their comments and will need more clarity on the County Council's comments, particularly those about highways.

We will create 3 new documents, which will collate all the comments (one for villagers, one for Breckland Council and a third for all the other comments). Villager comments will be included anonymously. For each comment we will give our considered response and describe what action, if any, we will take to modify the plan as a result. Where necessary we'll take advice from our planning consultant on how to respond. The three documents will become part of a formal consultation statement, which will also include details of all the events we have held, and the results of previous formal and informal consultations.

In parallel, independent consultants are continuing to develop what are known as Masterplanning studies for the cluster of sites around Pound Hill and the one at Richmond Hall. Their report will include example site layouts and street views. They will be an important factor in deciding how the final plan deals

with those sites. Our landscape consultant will be reviewing the studies for us, to give us an expert opinion on any impact of the schemes on landscape.

Around the time the consultation finishes we are expecting to hear from Breckland Council if we will be required to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the plan. If so, we will have to engage consultants to do it as it is a rather complex study. If needed it will likely take several months and is likely to be the thing that most affects the timetable for finalising the plan.

We will also prepare a document called the basic conditions statement that will explain in some detail how the plan complies with the many rules and regulations that apply.

As well as updating the plan we may have to revise or add to some of our evidence. One example is the Village Design Guide, which we plan to review in light of the very recently published National Design Guide.

When all the documents have been revised, we will submit them again to Breckland Council and there will be a final public consultation. The regulations mean comments during that consultation must focus on any regulatory shortcomings rather than the more wide-ranging requirements of the Plan. Another difference is that any comments will go directly to an independent examiner who will decide if the plan needs further revision before a village referendum can be held to decide if you all accept the plan.

Meanwhile we are hoping Breckland Council will at last complete its Local Plan – their latest estimate for doing that is December – so that the village has at least some protection against speculative developments until the Neighbourhood Plan is approved.

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**



**[www.stnp2036.org](http://www.stnp2036.org)**



**[stnp2036@gmail.com](mailto:stnp2036@gmail.com)**

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