

Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan

Firstly, thanks to all those who responded to the recent consultation on the Plan. 7 villagers supported the Plan subject to comment, while 8 gave reasons why they objected to it. Another 56 simply supported the Plan without comment.

We find objections as helpful as any other comments, even when we do not agree with them, and contrary to a scurrilous allegation repeated by a small group of those who objected, I want to stress we did not make it harder to object to the Plan than to support it, and neither did we prevent those without internet access from taking part in the consultation.

There isn't room here to go into all the reasons both accusations are untrue, but the extensive information about how to take part given in the July and August Saga and Wayland Times, the leaflet that was delivered to every household, and the notices and posters that we displayed around the village proves they are.

So, while we value all constructive comments, both for and against the Plan, we most definitely do not value unfounded accusations against our integrity, and hope certain villagers will be feeling shame-faced on reading this!

We have now reviewed all comments received and the plan health check recommendations, and have incorporated all those that we accept in an updated version of the Plan. At time of writing, the revised Plan, the Consultation Statement (a document describing the process of consultation right from the start in 2016 up to the present day, and listing every comment received and how we have addressed each), and the Basic Conditions Statement (which explains how the Plan meets the legal and regulatory requirements), are being reviewed by our consultant. As always, we anticipate a set of incisive and constructive comments from her that will guide us in making final updates to the Plan and its many supporting documents, which include one new document – a sustainable drainage system design manual, to further reinforce requirements for developers to avoid adding to village flood risk.

After updating the documents, we will upload the consultation statement to our site – with luck it may be there before you read this, but if not, then we'll make it available as soon as possible.

With a fair following wind, we still hope to make the final submission of the Plan by the end of October, but we are increasingly being hampered by

Breckland Council, to whom unfortunately we are obliged to relinquish control of the process after we make the final submission.

To date they are unwilling to share with us the steps they will take leading to examination of the Plan, and are even suggesting they may refuse to publish it for its final consultation, simply because they have failed to open their own office despite there being no longer any Covid-19 restriction to prevent that.

The next, and final stage of consultation will differ from the others in three key respects; (1) it will be organised by Breckland Council; (2) comments will be considered only by the independent examiner of the Plan; and (3) only comments about the Plan meeting legal requirements will be considered.

When that consultation closes, examination of the Plan will start. We cannot predict how long it will take, but it will result in a report recommending specific changes required to the Plan to make it legally compliant. There is no opportunity to dispute those; they must either be accepted, or the Plan abandoned.

After the changes are made, we will once more be dependent on Breckland Council to organise a village referendum.

All in all, when we submit the Plan, we'll be entering what's likely to be a very frustrating period. Breckland can effectively delay the Plan at each and every step between submission and its adoption. We do know that on average, for the 6 Plans already completed in Breckland, it has taken about 39 weeks to progress from a plan being submitted to it being 'made' (formally accepted), so we know we're in for a long haul.

On another important topic I don't have space to go into detail about, please visit our website for news about the Government's proposed planning reforms and what we think of them.

As usual, if you have any comments or questions on any of this, or the Neighbourhood Plan in general, or if you'd like to be added to our mailing list, please get in touch with me. **Most importantly, stay healthy and safe!**

Chris Blow, STNP Work Group leader



www.stnp2036.org



stnp2036@gmail.com

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