

# Consultation on Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan Opening

A six week public consultation on Saham Toney's Neighbourhood Plan will begin on Monday 12th March 2018.

It will be open to everyone who lives, works or runs a business in the Parish.

It is the first of two public consultations on the Plan. The second will concentrate on legal compliance of the Plan with the regulations, so this is the main chance for people to influence the final version of the Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans are the central feature in the Localism Act of 2011, which aims to devolve decision making to individuals and communities. The Act says that Neighbourhood Plans are intended to allow everyone with a stake in an area's future to say where they think new houses and other development should go and what they should look like. The Plan has been prepared on behalf of the Parish Council by a small group of parishioners, based on feedback villagers gave earlier in response to a series of questionnaires. It sets out rules for development in Saham Toney up to 2036, and if later accepted by villagers at a referendum, it will become part of Breckland Council's development plan for the district.

The Plan sets out a vision for the future of the Parish. It's most important aspect is the thirteen policies, which deal with housing allocation, the size and location of new developments, the type of houses to be built, business and tourism related development, keeping Saham separate from Watton, safeguarding the area's historic buildings, green spaces, best views and wildlife, and preventing new developments from adding to flood risk.

The Plan does not aim to stop development, but instead to guide it towards the most appropriate locations and to ensure it is on a scale that is sustainable and fully respects the character of the village and its surrounding countryside.

Publication of the Plan will be discussed at the Parish Council meeting on 5th March and if Councillors approve it, consultation will commence on Monday 12th March.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee encourages all Saham villagers to participate in the consultation to ensure the final Plan best represents their wishes.

The Plan is supported by a series of documents that set out to justify each

policy. From 12th March, both the Plan and those supporting documents will be available on the Plan's website - [www.stnp2036.org](http://www.stnp2036.org) - to view and download. A questionnaire and comments form on the website will allow responses to be sent online. For those who prefer paper, copies of the Plan will be available at the Wells Cole Community Centre, St. George's Church and Penny's tearoom, and also available on loan from the steering committee. Paper versions of the questionnaire and comments form will also be available.

During the consultation period a series of "drop-in" sessions will take place at Wells Cole Community Centre, Broom Hall Hotel and Penny's tearoom, where villagers will be able to view the Plan, talk with those who have prepared it, ask questions and complete questionnaires.

The Parish Council has generously agreed to a prize draw for all villagers who return a properly completed questionnaire, with three cash prizes of £50, £25 and £10.

Following the consultation all responses will be reviewed to determine how each should be addressed. A document known as a consultation statement will then be prepared giving details of comments received and describing what has been done about each. Another new document will set out how the Plan satisfies all the regulatory requirements it is required to comply with.

Once those two documents are ready, providing there have been no significant changes to the Plan's policies, the Plan would normally be submitted for a second and final public consultation prior to its review by an independent examiner leading to a village referendum. This will happen, but the timing will depend very much on Breckland Council's Local Plan, with which the Saham Plan must conform. The Local Plan will undergo its own independent examination in April and May and Breckland Council do not expect it to be approved till late 2018. If changes are made to the Local Plan as a result of its examination that may lead to changes to the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan, which is why there is some caution about setting a date for the second consultation. Much more information can be found at [www.stnp2036.org](http://www.stnp2036.org) and any queries may be sent to [stnp2036@gmail.com](mailto:stnp2036@gmail.com)