

THE FERNHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Overview from James Cottam

I am delighted to report that we are now near the end of the village planning process and would urge everyone to vote according to their wishes after considering the final 'Referendum Version of the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan' ['NP'].

Under the Localism Act 2011 and for the first time, parishes have the opportunity to determine what development is [or is not] appropriate in their area. The idea is that an adopted Neighbourhood Plan for a parish will set out policies that rank alongside those at District Level [in our case that means planning policies decided solely by the South Downs National Park as the local planning authority]. But, the respective plans must be in general conformity and so some negotiation has been involved to achieve that.

It was more than a year ago that Deborah McCann [the 'Independent Examiner'] held a public hearing in our village hall to examine the draft Plan that we had produced. She made a number of recommendations for changes which were in her view necessary for the Plan to comply with the relevant legislation. She also stated that any changes were to be agreed by Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (FNPSG) and South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). After several months of discussions, the FNPSG and the SDNPA have now agreed the final NP document. The last stage of the process is a referendum covering those who live in Fernhurst.

Eligible residents will receive a Poll Card on 3rd February and the referendum will be held on 2nd March 2016. You can vote in the usual way in our village hall on whether the Referendum Version of the Fernhurst Neighbourhood Plan should be adopted as part of the Planning Policies with which all future planning applications in the parish of Fernhurst must comply.

What would the Steering Group envisage as the main benefits of the NP if it is adopted?

Main benefits are:

- We have achieved much in setting out what development should be permitted and what would not be permitted.
- We have policies covering the most important areas including: the brownfield sites at Syngenta, Bridgelands and Hurstfold; developments related to the provision of employment; the protection of local green spaces; control of light pollution; financial contributions from developers towards youth facilities, allotments, community facilities and bus services; and more.
- At Syngenta, the use of this site for mixed housing and commercial use is supported. However, housing development will be restricted to approx. 200 dwellings with a range of bedroom sizes and with a significant proportion of affordable homes. The needs of both younger and older residents have been taken

particularly into account, together with the requirement to integrate any Syngenta development with the existing Fernhurst settlement.

- Developments will be tightly controlled to preserve the essential village character of Fernhurst and the local environment. The village settlement boundary is protected to avoid housing sprawl.
- There is also protection of green spaces of community value and of sight-lines to beautiful views.
- Fernhurst will receive 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy payable by developers. Compared with the situation without a NP, the extra benefit available for spending on infrastructure should be significant.

In the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan, Fernhurst residents and Parish Council would have no decision making input into planning policies affecting the village in the next 15 years --- and only those dictated by the SDNPA would apply. Consequently, an adopted NP is essential to reflect and protect Fernhurst's interests.

Where can I read the entire NP?

The entire NP --- which is 84 pages long --- is available for inspection in the Fernhurst Centre, where you are welcome to come and sit with a cup of coffee and read as much as you would like. You may also purchase a copy at £5 to take away if you wish.

Additionally, the Fernhurst Parish Council website has a downloadable copy of the entire NP for those having internet access. The specific link is:

<http://www.fernhurstpc.org.uk/fnp-referendumdoc>

You can also read the entire NP on Fernhurst Centre computers.

If possible, we recommend that you review the entire document as the full background underlying each policy is provided and you will also gain an understanding as to how much careful research and consideration has gone into our NP --- and with ample consultation along the way.

Have you produced a shorter summary concentrating on the Policies?

Yes. You will receive at home a summary document that includes the introductory section from the NP plus all the Planning Policies --- they are grouped together for easiest access.

Can I ask questions about the NP?

A series of “drop in” sessions have been arranged at the Fernhurst Centre for anyone who would like to come and meet members of the Steering Group. We will do our best to answer your questions. A member of staff of the SDNPA may also attend some of these sessions.

These sessions will be:

	Times	Dates
Morning	10.30-12.30	Tuesday 9 th February
Afternoon	2.30-5.00	Tuesday 16 th February
Evening	7.00-9.00	Tuesday 23 rd February

Can I suggest changes to the NP?

No further changes are permitted at this stage, because the designated consultation periods are over. There is now a simple choice to be made.

The decision is now yours to make by voting in the Referendum:

Do you want South Downs National Park Authority to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Fernhurst to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

PLEASE VOTE ON 2ND MARCH IN THE VILLAGE HALL

From: James Cottam
Chairman of the Steering Group responsible for the Fernhurst NP
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