

Walberswick Parish Plan: Report of the Steering Group to the Annual Parish Meeting

18.04.2018

INTRODUCTION

The Parish Plan is in two parts: the Village Survey carried out in 2011 and the Action Plan published and approved in October 2012. The Action Plan summarises objectives and recommendations to address issues identified by the survey.

The Parish Plan Steering Group has overseen the development of the Plan from its inception: it has no executive powers but was intended to work in collaboration with the Parish Council, the Common Lands Charity and others, to achieve its aims .

In practice collaboration has been less than envisaged, in part because of the earlier difficulties experienced by the Parish Council, and some elements of the plan remain undeveloped.

In respect of Roads and Traffic, an independent working party (also including representatives of the Steering Group) has been established by WCLC to address issues arising from the implementation of the 20mph speed limit.

The review which follows records progress in the main elements of the Parish Plan by all groups, whether working under the aegis of the Steering Group or reporting independently under other Agenda items

REVIEW

1 Sea and River Defences

See report from Blythe Estuary Partnership

2 Planning and Development Control

The Planning Advisory Group (PAG) was established to assess planning applications referred by SCDC and to report its observations to the Parish Council. The Council uses the reports at its discretion in responding to the planning authority on behalf of the village.

During the past twelve months, the PAG has reviewed fifteen applications, making a total of more than 50 reports submitted to the Parish Council since the scheme's beginning in 2014. The reports are posted on the planning website which also gives notice of all planning applications relating to Walberswick as they are published by SCDC.

The members of the Group are Paul Bradley, Alan Gomm, Alvin Hunt, Brian Martin, John Nichols and Bill Ungless. Kay Ungless is the group's administrator.

Brian Morton was a member of the group until his sudden death earlier this year. His commitment to building conservation and his wide knowledge and experience in the field were much valued and respected.

I'm also sorry to report the resignation from the group last year of Frank Duffy, because of ill health. Frank was a founding member of the Parish Plan Steering and the Planning Advisory Group. His

intellect and imagination and his commitment to the village made a powerful contribution to the work of these groups.

3 Affordable and Sheltered Housing

The following report was first tabled in 2016. Further progress will depend on the commitment of the parish council and the support of residents.

‘The Housing Working Party report of 2014 (see WPP webpage) confirmed the view that helping young people to find affordable accommodation in the village and enabling the elderly to remain at home for the rest of their lives were desirable and widely supported objectives. The report also set out reasons why conventional provisions such as sheltered housing and housing association estates were not feasible in Walberswick.

As an alternative, discussions have been held with the Common Lands Charity to see whether the Trust could provide more flexible housing assistance in the village. This could take various forms: practical, financial, the provision of advice or some other service, depending on the needs of the time and the resources of the Charity’.

4 Traffic and the 20mph limit

The 20mph speed limit has now been implemented thanks to the perseverance of Michael Gower, our previous District Councillor, and financial assistance from WCLC. Illuminated speed indicators will be installed in the autumn.

A Working Party has been established to examine current issues of traffic and parking provision and the need to create environments which give greater precedence to pedestrians.

A report will be presented at the APM.

5 Environmental Issues

The following report was first tabled in 2016. Further progress will depend on the commitment of the parish council and the support of residents.

‘The Environmental Working Party has previously produced a report on the competing uses of the beach during the summer holidays and the desirability of restricting dogs, windsurfing, fighting kites and other disturbing activities from a section of the beach during July and August. The proposal should be developed in partnership with the Parish Council, having first established that the idea would be welcomed by the village.’

6 Access to the Dunes

The proposed extension of the existing boardwalk eastwards from the Cliff Field Car Park will provide access for disabled vehicles to a viewing platform at the head of the dunes. The boardwalk will also give easier access to the beach for pedestrians with buggies and prams and, by channelling circulation, help to protect the plantations of marram grass which secure the dunes.

The scheme is being promoted by WCLC with a view to its transfer in due course to the landowner, Waveney District Council. Waveney wants to make the beaches at Lowestoft and Kessingland accessible to wheelchair users and is keen to consider the inclusion of the beach at Walberswick in

its plans. If approved, the project would qualify for some form of joint funding from WDC and WCL with local contributions covering the balance.

Estimates have been obtained from three contractors. The aim now is to get the project onto Waveney DC's capital works programme.

John Nichols
Chairman Parish Plan Steering Group