



# Walberton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 – 2035 Consultation Statement



## 1. Introduction

Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015) requires that where a qualifying body submits a plan proposal to the local planning authority it must include (inter alia) a consultation statement being a document which:

- Contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan
- Explains how they were consulted
- Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted
- Describes how those issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, have been addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan

This consultation statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of that regulation in respect of the Walberton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## 2. Background

The Parish of Walberton covers an area of 1,044.19 hectares and has a population of 2,175 (2011 Census). The Parish is in general rural but contains three distinct villages Walberton Fontwell and Binsted each in its own setting. Walberton Parish Council (PC) provides local government service for the whole Parish. The surrounding parishes are Slindon to the north, Yapton to the south, Tortington to the east, Aldingbourne, Barnham and Eastergate to the west. The nearest major towns are Chichester (8 miles), Bognor (5.5 miles) and Littlehampton (5 miles).

**Walberton** is the largest of the three villages; it lies between Binsted to the east and Fontwell to the west. It has a form, with development either side of The Street, and along the roads leading into the village.

**Binsted** has the smallest population. It is spread out along a single road, part of which is privately owned; there are some very large properties intermingled with farm cottages and buildings. There are few new buildings apart from some extensions/rebuilds and two barn conversions.

**Fontwell** is a more compact settlement than Binsted. It is situated in the northwest corner of the Parish, bounded to the north by the A27; its central street is the old A27 route, Arundel Road.

Early in 2014, the PC became aware that the community required robust

protection from bad development and that parishioners wished to ensure their Parish remained valued as a place in which to live and work. The PC therefore decided to investigate the process required to introduce a Neighbourhood Development Plan (Plan) for the three villages. The PC was well aware that its neighbouring parishes had produced or were in the process of producing such plans.

Although the neighbourhood plan process was already nationwide, with many completed examples, it was agreed first to consult with other parishes in the Arun District Council (ADC) area. Subsequently, at a meeting on 5 March 2014, the PC voted to develop a Plan. Terms of Reference were issued (see Evidence Base).

Volunteers were invited, through an advertisement in the Parish News, to form a sub-committee of the PC to undertake the production of the Plan. These volunteers, along with some parish councillors, formed the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Group). The first meeting of the Group was held on the 3 April 2014, though later the Group sought to ensure its representative nature by inviting extra volunteers to join them. In this way all three villages, the young of the Parish, and business interests became involved.

Skillsets of the Group include: a solicitor, an international sales and marketing event planner, a chartered surveyor, a medical professional, a youth worker / schoolteacher, builder / property developer, statistician, technical / scientific author, local authority finance officer and local authority land agent.



### **3. Community Engagement**

The Group agreed that, to succeed, some eye-catching branding / logo would be essential to promote maximum community engagement and also to ensure that the necessary consultation process drew in parishioners via the villages' new website which contained links to important Plan processes and a dedicated email address; these proved in retrospect to be valuable early decisions.

Starting in June 2014 and continuing through to August 2015 sets of banners and posters were produced to promote various aspects such as Open Days, Drop-In events, the Survey & Questionnaire, and the Consultation Day. Over the period there were 7 different and bespoke sets of banners which were placed in 8 different locations throughout the villages. Posters promoting these were also placed on all notice boards, various residents' houses, shops, the two pubs, dental surgery, doctors' surgery, all three churches, Village Hall and the Village Pavilion.

The banners and posters encouraged everyone to participate and increased awareness of the Plan process; as a side benefit, they also served to improve the cohesion between the three different villages. A total of five different newsletters was delivered to all 875

residences and the 72 businesses in the Parish over a 14-month period. The Group also made use of a Twitter feed.

Branding was consistent throughout and parishioners have become aware of the Plan and are being kept informed on a regular basis. Regular updates on progress with the Plan were given to the PC, which was sent all drafts of the Plan for consideration and comment. Hard copies of all key documents are kept in the Parish office for any councillor or member of the public to read.

#### **4. Survey Responses**

Taking advantage of the experiences of other parishes and having taken local soundings, the Group put together a local Parish questionnaire and housing needs survey bound together with a map of the area showing possible development sites (Survey). In January 2015 the Survey was delivered by hand to each of the 875 homes in the Parish, and posted to the 72 businesses. Over 600 responses were received and the results were then analysed with other inputs so as to draw out a set of objectives and policies for the Plan, overlaid with a Parish Vision.

The Survey results and specific site analyses can be found in the Evidence Base, along with analyses of the other responses and over 400 freeform replies. Below is a summary of the leading issues that were identified from the Survey, other than the housing site reactions.

##### **Environment and Sustainability**

- The existing setting of the villages within open countryside should be preserved, with no development in the gaps between villages
- The Horticultural / Glasshouse industry should be supported but should not encroach further into the open countryside
- Redundant Horticultural / Glasshouse holdings should not be treated as brownfield land, which - both inside and outside the Built Up Area - should be considered for residential development
- Green spaces within the villages should be protected and enhanced; at least 20 sites were specifically mentioned by parishioners.
- It is important to protect natural habitats and archaeological sites of special importance, even those without statutory protection
- Traffic increases and road conditions were a concern frequently raised, as were flooding and sewerage worries

##### **Housing and Local Economy**

- The Parish housing allocation should be split among several sites of different sizes and these should be dispersed through the villages in places where there is safe access by foot, car and bicycle
- New local work opportunities should be encouraged, and business premises should be protected from conversion to housing

- Housing density, infrastructure and traffic volumes were the main additional concerns raised.

#### Getting Around

- No new commercial development should be permitted which generates more heavy goods vehicles using minor roads around the villages
- Traffic congestion at and around the A27 / A29 junction should be eased and nothing done that might make it worse
- Traffic congestion in The Street, Walberton should also be eased and a 20 mph speed limit introduced; there should be a 30mph speed limit from The Street to the A27
- A more regular bus service would be especially helpful, and cycleways to Fontwell and Arundel from Walberton would be well-used
- An Arundel bypass is necessary but should be as short as possible

#### Village Facilities

- The Post Office in Walberton was seen as a vital facility by very many parishioners
- Other facilities strongly supported for retention or improvement were existing village stores, bus services, allotments, sports and games and social facilities for young people
- The main additional or improved facilities referred to in responses were footpaths and cycleways, improvements to Doctors' Surgeries, traffic and road improvements, and playing field improvements

A separate section of the Survey was devoted to housing need, since this was felt by the Group to be an important issue locally given what the Group already knew from Census data and from ADC sources. The outcomes are included in the Survey response analysis in the Evidence Base. The Group has recommended that the PC build on this, and maintain a programme of such surveys to inform its future responses on social and housing issues.

## 5. Diary of Consultation

The Group met formally on many occasions and an organised timetable of events, leafletting, publicity, consultation and information-gathering took place. The Group diary reveals the following:-

### 2014

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| 5March | PC established "The Group" to oversee the process of preparing a Plan for Walberton. Parish Council Approved Terms of Reference for the Group |
| 3April | First Group Meeting   |
| 9April | Group Meeting with Maureen Chaffe, Consultant to the PC at Holly Tree   |

23 April Group Meeting at Holly Tree

6 May Group Meeting at Holly Tree

27 May Group Meeting with Maureen Chaffe, at Holly Tree

June *A5 double sided leaflet delivered to all households.*

4 June Group and PC Meeting with representatives of and agents for Hanbury Development Group at The Pavilion, Walberton.

9 June Group Meeting at Holly Tree

12 June Group display "Picnic at the Pond" Walberton

14 June Posters and Parish Map at Village Market in morning and Sussex Day in Village Hall in afternoon

16 June Group Meeting at Holly Tree

23 June Group Meeting at Holly Tree

Throughout the months of July, Sept, Oct, Nov and Dec: Village Market stand. One Saturday each month

12 July Group stand at 'Picnic at the Pond' attended by local MP

20 July Group stand at the Binsted Strawberry Fair

June & July *Various village groups were visited by a member of The Group including: Friendly Club, Horticultural Society, Wednesday Afternoon Club, Mothers' Union, Guides, Scouts, Baptist Chapel, Hilton Hotel, Golf Club, Post Office and shops, Physiotherapy Clinic, Village Hall, Computer Club, Parish News Editor*

2 July Group Meeting at Holly Tree

7 July Group Meeting at Holly Tree

16 July Group Meeting, Conservation Officer for ADC, PC Planning Chairman at Holly Tree.

22 July Group Meeting with PC Planning committee and representatives from Wandleys Farm

30 July Group Meeting at Holly Tree

13 Aug Group Meeting, Martyn White, Conservation Office, ADC and Donna Moles, ADC Support Officer for NPs at Holly Tree

20 Aug Group Meeting with Maureen Chaffe, at Holly Tree

27 Aug Group Meeting at Holly Tree.

September *Leaflet Invitation to Open Day. A5 four page leaflet delivered to all households and posted to all businesses.*

2 Sept Group Meeting at Holly Tree

23 Sept Group Meeting at Holly Tree

30 Sept Group Meeting at Holly Tree

October *Banners and posters promulgated throughout 3 villages.*

14 Oct Group Meeting at Holly Tree

21 Oct Group Meeting at Holly Tree, followed by a meeting in the Pavilion with the Parish Council Planning Committee and Dandara

28 Oct Group Meeting at Holly Tree

4 Nov Group Meeting at Holly Tree

8 Nov **Open Day**, Walberton Village Hall- 505 attendees

11 Nov Group Meeting at Holly Tree

19 Nov Group Meeting at Holly Tree

27 Nov Group Meeting at Holly Tree

12 Nov Youth Group Meeting at St Mary's Church  
4 Dec Group with Maureen Chaffe and designer  
9 Dec **Drop-In Evening** 180 attendees.  
15 Dec Group Meeting, at Lansdown House, Walberton

**2015**

*Jan Banners and posters promulgated throughout the three villages  
Parish magazine cover.*

13 Jan Group Housing Meeting at Arun DC with Housing & Enabling  
Manager and Affordable Housing Advisor of Action in Rural Sussex.

19 Jan Group Meeting at Holly Tree

*February Banners and posters promulgated throughout the three villages.  
A six page A4 leaflet with full details of all potential housing sites with  
a six page pull-out prepared*

*February Delivery of the **Survey** for completion, included with a business reply  
envelope, to all households and posted to all businesses. The Survey  
also made available for completion online encouraging all household  
members to "have their say".  
The total response = 611*

*February Parish magazine cover*

9 Feb Group Meeting at Holly Tree  
17 Feb Group Meeting at Holly Tree  
23 Feb Group Meeting with National Trust  
25 Feb Group with Councillor Sargeant, ADC – Martyn White & Donna Moles  
9 March Meeting with the School Council of Walberton and Binsted CE School  
12 March Group Meeting at The Pines  
24 March Group Meeting at Holly Tree

*April Banners and posters promulgated throughout three villages.  
April A5 four page leaflet delivered to all households and businesses with  
a resume of the Survey results and further information of an  
additional housing site No.19 with a request to the parish to indicate  
an 'Oppose' or a 'Don't Know' statement for the additional site.*

7 April Group Meeting, Environment Agency, Southern Water, WSCC at  
Holly Tree

8 April Group Meeting at Holly Tree  
13 April Group with Portsmouth Water & West Sussex County Council  
representatives

14 April Group Meeting at The Pines  
15 April Group Meeting at Arun DC with Donna Moles and Jim Redwood  
25 April **Drop-in Day**, The Pavilion, Walberton = 294 attendees.  
27 April Group Meeting at Holly Tree  
11 May Group Meeting at Holly Tree  
21 May Group Meeting at Holly Tree

*June A5, four page leaflet delivered to all households and businesses with  
resume of chosen housing sites.*

*June Parish magazine cover.*

9 June Letter sent to all landowners and/or their agents announcing the sites  
accepted in the draft Plan and for those remaining sites not

accepted, the reason(s) given for not being considered in the plan.

16 June	Group Meeting at 'The Pines'
26 June	Meeting at Arun DC – 2 members of The Group with Charlotte Hardy & Martyn White
29 June	Group Meeting at Holly Tree
9 July	Group Meeting at 'The Pines'
22 July	Group Meeting at Holly Tree
14 August	Group Meeting at Holly Tree
22 August	<b>Consultation Day</b> , The Pavilion, Walberton = 100 attendees
1 Sept	Group Meeting at Holly Tree
30 Sept	Group Meeting at Mallards

Ongoing: Monthly article in the Parish Magazine since July 2014

**Specific Consultation:** Julian Hart, the Group's Youth Liaison nominee held a series of get-togethers with the younger people in the Parish, including St Mary's Church youth group, School Council of Walberton and Binsted CE School and a special "pizza" session for youngsters during the Open Day.

These reports are in the Evidence Base.

## 6. Housing Sites

### Site Selection Process

Arun District Council has confirmed that the permissions granted on Turnpike Motors Walberton (six houses) and at the rear of the Holy Tree Walberton (one additional house) count towards the Plan allocation, leaving sites for 43 homes to be found.

The Group publicised the intention to prepare a Plan with stalls at two village events, by banners around the Parish and in the first Neighbourhood News delivered by hand to every home in the Parish. This invited any interested landowner to contact the Group. Two opening meetings with a total of seven landowners were held on 7 and 8 May 2014.

A letter was sent on 11 October 2014 to the owners of all sites listed by Arun District Council in SHLAA (enclosing the relevant extract from SHLAA) and to all owners who had contacted the Group or the PC. It notified them of the proposed Open Day on 8 November 2014 and informed them that details of their site would be included on a map of possible sites for development; it invited them to provide further information if they wished.

The Group made a number of site visits before the Open Day to meet site owners or their agents and discuss their proposals, so as to ensure an even-handed approach and a proper level of information on which parishioners could make choices. Not all landowners fully embraced the (to them, novel) Plan production process, while others became fully engaged.

The Open Day on 8<sup>th</sup> November was attended by in excess of 500 people, a quarter of the Parish's total population. A map showed 25 potential sites which identified those which the owners had confirmed would not become available for development within

the lifetime of the Plan. These sites became the first set of sites to be removed in the selection process, and they have not been considered further.

Details of the remaining sites and the possible development on them were displayed and in several cases the owners or their agents were present to explain their plans and to answer questions. As a result of the level of parishioner participation and interest and as a result of this Open Day, a number of other landowners made contact with the Group. As the consultation message spread, it also became clear that there were residents who had not got to the Open Day, or who wished to have another look at the proposals, so it was decided to hold a Drop In Evening on 9 December 2014 at which details of the further sites bought forward and of all the sites remaining under consideration were displayed. Attendance was 180 people.

These interactive events enabled the Group to draw up a list of 18 potential sites. These were shown with their outline proposals, as then understood, on the map included with the Survey; residents were reminded that sites were sought to provide at least 50 houses. Residents were not asked which sites they favoured, but were asked to identify those sites to whose development they would object.

The full responses to the Survey are available in the Evidence Base and confirm that there was overwhelming opposition to development in the gaps and countryside surrounding the three villages and on large sites and that there was support for development on brownfield sites (both inside and outside the Built-Up Area) and for the idea that the 50 homes should be on different sites throughout the Parish and not all on one site. As a result of the Survey replies, the Group was able to rank all the sites by their level of unpopularity. Five sites were very unpopular, so they were excluded and have not been considered further; this was the second set of sites to be removed in the process.

The Group held a series of meetings with Southern Water and the Environment Agency, with Portsmouth Water and West Sussex County Council and with Donna Moles and Jim Redwood of ADC to consider planning issues. They have also met on two occasions with Andy Elder the Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager to discuss affordable housing and to look at sites with him. These meetings gave the Group a better grasp on site deliverability and sustainability.

An additional site was put forward at this late stage by a landowner and it was included in the second Neighbourhood News, again delivered to all households, and residents were asked to indicate if they objected to this site. The second Neighbourhood News also gave a summary of the Survey results, identified the five excluded sites, and marked the 19 sites still being considered. It gave details of a further Drop In event to be held on 25 April 2015.

The Group had conferred about the method of choosing sites and a formal list of criteria was agreed, together with the way to apply them; the Group looked at other parishes' processes compared with its own preferences and terms of reference. The unpopularity ranking was a key criterion, and the other criteria reflected parishioner concerns revealed in the Survey and its freeform response sections and in views expressed on Open and Drop In events as well as Group items to be considered such as sustainability. At the April 2015 Drop In Day, all this information was displayed so that parishioners could be clear how the Group was responding to the Survey results and how judgements were being made. Feedback was collected on methodology therefore as well as on the sites

themselves.

Further meetings with some site owners were held to discuss queries on, or refinements to, their proposals; the issue of sheltered housing was considered for example. The Group was then able to make its individual site assessments of the 19 sites, against its pre-agreed criteria and reach its final recommendations for sites providing 54 homes (with those already having permission giving 61 in total) including affordable and sheltered housing. Thus a “buffer” of 20% was indirectly established and this became the Plan target; the Group also attached a timetable for the development of these sites, to show their deliverability. Landowners were notified individually, and the selected sites were reported to the Parish in the third Neighbourhood News, delivered to all residents in June 2015. Only one landowner questioned the selection process, but an exchange of correspondence with him, relating to specific data results, fully clarified and amicably concluded the matter.

The Site Selection Analysis can be found in the Evidence Base along with an assessment against known constraints which included sustainability considerations.

### **Parish Resident Consultation**

The Survey results, together with the total of 412 freeform suggestions, were backed up with verbal and written comments collated from the Drop-In events and Open Day and the Consultation Day. These included comments on individual sites especially where housing proposals on them were refined during the consultation process and also on the introduction of the 19th site at a late stage. Details of these appear in the Evidence Base.

The Group is satisfied that the management of the consultation process with residents allowed it to elicit not only their site preferences but also the full range of parishioner worries and concerns and needs in the future. It also drew in their positive suggestions about the Parish’s change and development in the years ahead.

Each of the leading issues, with others that were raised, was considered by the Group and carefully addressed. The Group was required to make judgements, where parishioners’ preferences were deemed to conflict with legislation and guidance, for example in respect of local green spaces. Where an issue lay outside the Plan policy remit, then residents’ opinions have been expressed as aspirations or noted to the PC for future attention. However, where it is believed to lie within the Plan remit, each of the leading issues in Section 4 above is reflected in a Plan policy, in fulfilment of a key Group target.

The Group was grateful for and gratified by the level of engagement from landowners and residents, including the young, with the result that it believes it was able to produce a broadly acceptable and justifiable set of policies and sites through a rigorous and fair process that will stand scrutiny. However, the response from the business community was muted, and additionally the attendance at the final Consultation Day - despite the usual publicity - was below what had come to be expected; the fine August Saturday, the degree of confidence that had already been expressed that the Group was correctly interpreting local opinions and the fact that most residents by now had “had their say” were taken to be responsible. A Group concern is that “consultation overload” has been risked, but takes this as a positive that the process has been exhaustive and complete.

## **7 Regulation 14 Consultation**

The Group made no special effort directly to contact statutory consultees up to this point, save for meetings with the Environment Agency, Portsmouth Water, Southern Water, West Sussex County Council and several times with various ADC officers who assisted the Group on Affordable Housing and Conservation Area matters in particular. Otherwise, statutory consultees were consulted through the Regulation 14 process. However, those businesses covered by VE 5, Buildings and Structures of Character, were sent copies of the Plan at this stage for comment. None has been received and the Group has already briefed the PC that efforts to engage with local enterprise should be increased.

A number of the consultees such as the Environment Agency and WSCC had expressed views about sites in the Parish or on other planning and infrastructure aspects in the course of recent planning applications and in statements to the Local Plan Examination in Public. These gave the Group an insight into some policy stances and informed the Plan preparation.

The Draft Plan was sent to a list of statutory consultees and others (see Evidence Base). The Group responses are made next to each point raised. These are very detailed and cannot practicably be summarised here, but in respect of policy wording, policy reasoning and descriptive sections, the majority of changes made by the Group was in answer to comment from ADC and to the positive suggestions from Southern Water. Their valuable contributions have been embraced except where the Group felt that its role as representing localism and residents' opinions in a positive and sustainable manner was, on balance, to be upheld, having proper regard to NPPF guidelines, the current Local Plan and relevant legislation.

## **8 Conclusion**

The Consultation Statement details how the Group consulted with residents and businesses in the Parish, widely and intensively. It sets out what processes were followed, and details how and when views were sought, what views were sought and how feedback was received on draft proposals. It indicates how and when Group judgements were made and how the Plan was brought together and policies drafted. Finally, it confirms via the Evidence Base how the Group responded positively to all statutory consultees and how it then reframed policies accordingly.

Suzanne Clark

on behalf of

The Walberton, Binsted and Fontwell Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group