

## **ARNE PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

You might well be thinking what is happening with our Neighbourhood Plan. It's not a quick process but a lot of work has to be done behind the scenes with our strategic steering group and various working parties.

In our first attempts at pulling the plan together, I think we're doing quite well. Currently, we are compiling a first draft. All the policies are being scrutinised, quality assured, rewritten and sent around to the various members of the steering group for comment. There are probably too many and some pruning may have to take place. Robert Kenward is being a stalwart in ensuring that the policies from this diverse range of sources read coherently.

So here are a few proposed ideas for policies. Don't jump up and down too much yet as they are only in the process of development! As the residents of Arne Parish, eventually the decisions will be yours. Another consultation evening is to be planned and our referendum is due to take place sometime next year.

In the Housing working party, chaired by Bridget Kenward, policies are being developed about retaining/extending the parish settlement boundary and areas for housing development. All applications for new development

should demonstrate high quality design for sustainable living at a scale, density and distinctiveness appropriate for local needs. Social and affordable housing is to be encouraged, as is building of flats, annexes for multi-generational living in existing property and in-fill development, where appropriate.

Vivienne Ward, as chair of the Environment working group, proposes that all the land with international protection or national designations must be protected. The group recognises the importance of the water meadows and that the associated drainage network is critical for flood management. Cooperation between Natural England and the Environment Agency with local authorities is essential to ensure the appropriate management of all the ecosystem services, vital for maintaining the agricultural framework of the area.

The Traffic Management and Accessibility group led by our parish council chair, Caroline McLeod, is developing several policies: campaigning with Stoborough Primary for measures to improve safety on the roads in front of the school, specifically for a 20 mph speed limit during school access hours; seeking safer use of Nutcrack Lane; lobbying for a safer road crossing between Stoborough Green and the Hayricks recreation area. The group recognises the importance of non-car users and has highlighted the

need for increasing safety for walkers, cyclists and families on their way to school or recreational areas.

Don Hunter, chair of the Business and Employment group, is looking to protect and support existing employment, encouraging working from home, and coordinating, developing and promoting tourism. A small business award within the parish is even being considered! For most residents, the provision of superfast broadband is a key initiative for the parish. The group has identified a need to pursue vigorously the timely installation of superfast broadband services to all properties within the parish, encouraging small enterprises to flourish and provide better support for our many internet users.

Anne Pugsley, chair of the Health group, has highlighted policies around encouraging social support for the elderly within the community, especially for lonely and isolated persons. The group is also focusing on the provision of more care homes in the Wareham area and supporting the greater use of Wareham Hospital for diagnostics and treatment.

The Crime and Policing group, chaired by Ian Jenkins, recognises that the parish is, at present, a low crime area, and there remains significant community support for the police in sustaining the low number of crime incidents. Regular reassurance from the

police to combat the fear of perceived crime is needed. There is increasing concern about littering and fly tipping within Arne Parish, particularly during the summer period. Continued vigilance in the reporting of incidents is to be encouraged.

I chair the Community Well-being - formerly Education, Recreation and Youth - group, promoting policies around supporting the provision of education in the parish at Stoborough Primary School and ensuring that any further development to the school's facilities will take into account its sustainability. Residents of all ages should be encouraged to take full advantage of the wide range of leisure and cultural activities in Arne Parish. With the help of willing community organisations, these opportunities should be enhanced, particularly for the young.

So, I hope you can see that a lot of ideas are being developed as a result of our consultation with you. Localism, if it works, should ensure that our needs are met and our views are taken into account in the planning process. As the Neighbourhood Plan develops, we should gain a clearer view of what our future holds for us.

**Ashley Pellegrini**