

Neighbourhood Planning

Since 2015/16 Wickhambrook Parish Council has been putting funds into earmarked reserves for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. Earmarked reserves currently stand at £7,500.

At its March meeting, councillors considered report [WPC.21.03.02](#), detailing the work involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and resolved to:

- 6.1 arrange a public meeting (when COVID regulations permit this) to present information to residents of the parish about Neighbourhood Planning, and authorise the cost of such a meeting, including hire of meeting room, refreshments, publicity and the time of a Neighbourhood Plan planning consultant, at a cost of not more than £500.00 plus VAT from the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- 6.2 in the event that residents of the parish agree at that meeting that they wish to establish a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, appoint two councillors to the steering group.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time, the parish council organised a Community Engagement Day on 3rd July at the Memorial Social Centre, which included a table-top display about Neighbourhood Planning (thanks are extended to Richard Byers and Roger Merry who engaged with visitors on the day). The day attracted nearly 60 residents of the parish, and of these, ten expressed an interest in forming a steering group to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Richard Byers and Roger Merry have subsequently approached the clerk to advise that they have established a steering group with a wide range of skills and experience, and asked the parish council to appoint two councillors to that group. Detailed advice on preparing a Neighbourhood Plan published by Locality is attached as Appendix A to this report.

The next stages in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan are to:

1. To consider what its objectives are in preparing a plan
2. To identify a Neighbourhood area (For town or parish councils, there is a presumption that the neighbourhood area will be the same as the parish boundary. However, they may choose a smaller and more focused area, such as a town or local centre. Clear planning reasoning would be required to support this choice.:
 - a. To be approved by the parish council before
 - b. Approaching West Suffolk Council for the area to be designated
2. Apply for grant funding and additional technical support through Locality;
3. Appoint a Neighbourhood Planning Consultant (this would need to be approved by full council). An outline fee proposal has been submitted by Plans4People (attached as Appendix B to this report)

It is likely that the steering group will need initial support and advice from a Neighbourhood Planning consultant, to establish their objectives and identify a Neighbourhood area to be proposed to the parish council for approval prior to submission to West Suffolk Council.

The unspent funds approved at the March meeting to cover the cost of the planning consultant attending a public meeting (£200 plus VAT) could be used for this purpose and would provide for support until such time as a Neighbourhood Planning consultant is formally appointed.

Recommendation

1. **Appoint two councillors to the Neighbourhood Plan steering group; and**
2. **Authorise unspent £200 plus VAT allocated under Minute ref 21.03.6.1 for professional support to Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group from Plans4People until a Neighbourhood Planning Consultant is appointed by the parish council;**
3. **Delegate authority to submit a grant application to Locality for Neighbourhood Planning financial and technical support.**

Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan

OUTLINE FEE PROPOSAL
January 2021

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Background

Places4People Planning Consultancy are pleased to submit this outline fee proposal to provide professional support for the preparation of the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal has been prepared prior to meeting the client and understanding what skills might be available within the community to undertake some of the tasks. It is based on our experience of working with other neighbourhood plan groups since 2015 but we therefore reserve the right to amend the Fee Proposal once more information is known.

The Proposal

The proposal is broken down into phases based upon what we consider to be needed to assist the Parish Council through to the completion of the Plan, having regard to the statutory requirements for the preparation of neighbourhood plans. The phases included in this proposal are:

1. General support in gathering evidence to support the Plan.
2. Preparation of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and "Pre-Submission" consultation
3. Completion of the statutory documentation required for the submission of the draft Plan to the Local Planning Authority
4. Examination and post-examination stage



We have allowed a set number of hours to provide “critical friend” advice and support in establishing a Working Group and getting work underway on the Plan and to provide guidance on:

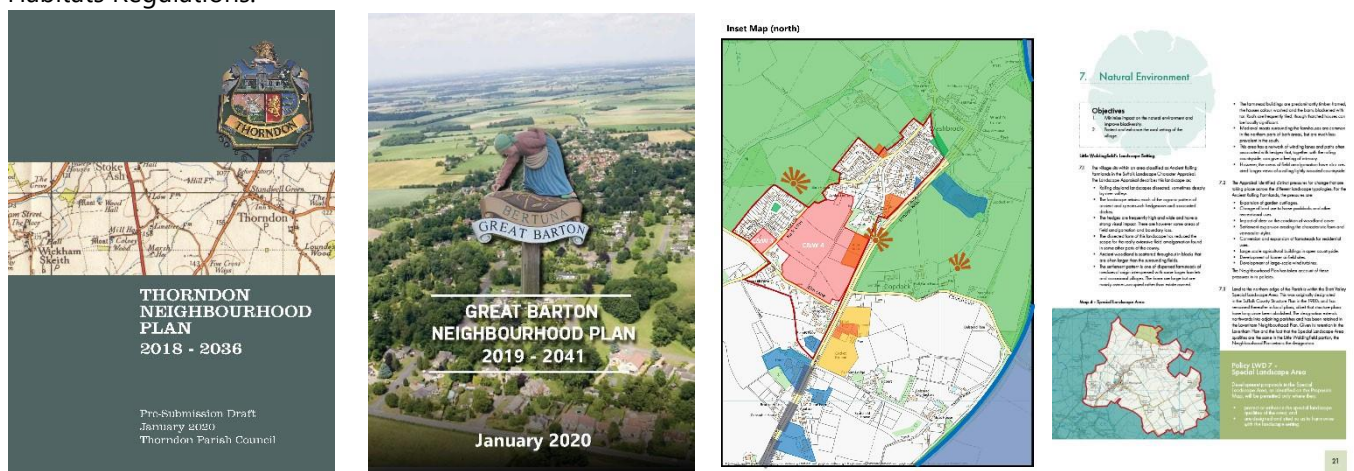
- information collection,
- securing free Technical Support available from the Government Neighbourhood Planning support packages,
- advising on other work that might be necessary to provide evidence to support the neighbourhood plan policies, and
- community engagement including the production of consultation material.

The support would also include attending meetings of the Working Group as necessary. Given the unknown quantity of work involved at this stage, we would provide a set number of hours to provide support including, subject to the lifting of current restrictions, travel costs involved in attending up to six meetings of the Group.

Phase 2: Preparation of Draft Neighbourhood Plan and “Pre-Submission” consultation

We would liaise with the Working Group to complete the preparation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Typically, we would prepare the draft planning policies and supporting text in accordance with a timetable to be agreed with the Working Group. The Working Group would contribute additional content. We would also prepare the statutory maps that are required within the Plan but will require the Parish Council to subscribe to the Parish Online mapping package. We would allow for attending three meetings of the Working Group.

Prior to finalising the Plan for the formal “pre-submission” consultation stage (Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan regulations), we would seek informal comments from West Suffolk Council Planning Policy Officers and ask the Council to screen the emerging Plan as required by the Strategic Environmental and the Habitats Regulations.



Once the draft Plan has been agreed by the Working Group, we would advise on consultation arrangements in order that the statutory requirements under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations are met. The Parish Council, as the “qualifying body” will be responsible for heading up the consultation process and therefore the draft Plan will need to be formally approved for consultation by the Council.

We would also provide document design and desk-top publishing of the Neighbourhood Plan (examples are illustrated above).

Phase 3: Submission of Plan to West Suffolk Council

We would liaise with the Working Group to agree post-consultation modifications and the preparation of the supporting material that is required to be submitted to West Suffolk Council.

Phase 4: Examination of the Plan

We would advise and provide support on matters relating to the public consultation to be undertaken by West Suffolk Council and the independent examination of the Plan.

Fees

Without knowing the detail of the amount of support required or what the Plan will cover, we can only provide an indicative fee range based on experience of working with other Parish Councils. On this basis and without prejudice, it is considered that our fees would be in the region of £8,000 to £10,000 +VAT. These costs could be met by applying for a Government Neighbourhood Planning Grant, where up to £18,000 plus additional free Technical Support is available. Generally, there is rarely a need for a Parish Council to incur any costs in preparing a Plan.

Places4People Planning Consultancy

About us

Places4People draws on over 40 years of experience in a range of town planning fields including the preparation of strategic and local plans, site briefs and concept statements, community engagement, public realm advice, parish plans and projects in historic towns.

Since our formation in 2015 we have concentrated on providing specialist support services for neighbourhood planning, providing advice to the following:

- **Cambridge City Council & South Cambridgeshire District Council** – Neighbourhood Plan support.
- **Thanet District Council** – Neighbourhood Plan support.
- **Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils** - Neighbourhood Plan “Critical Friend” Advice to parish councils including Debenham, Elmswell, Haughley, Stowupland, Stradbroke and Woolpit
- **Direct Neighbourhood Plan support** - We have specialised in providing support packages to parish councils preparing neighbourhood plans. This has included everything from occasional document review and advice to a complete package of project management and document preparation.

To date we have completed seven neighbourhood plans with four currently awaiting a Referendum in May 2021:

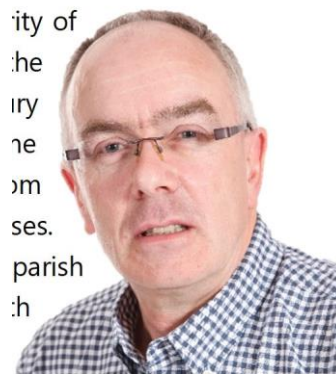
Lawshall (made)
 Hargrave (made)
 Aldham (made)
 Sutton, Cambs (made)
 Rickingham & Botesdale
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 Elmsett (made)
 Newmarket (made)
 Drinkstone (Referendum)
 Thorndon (Referendum)
 Great Barton (Referendum)
 Laxfield (Referendum)

Assington (Examination)
 Little Waldingfield
 (Examination)
 Copdock & Washbrook (at
 consultation)
 West Mersea (at consultation)
 Bentley (at consultation)
 Hartest (at consultation)
 Beyton
 Easton
 Broomfield, Essex
 Glemsford

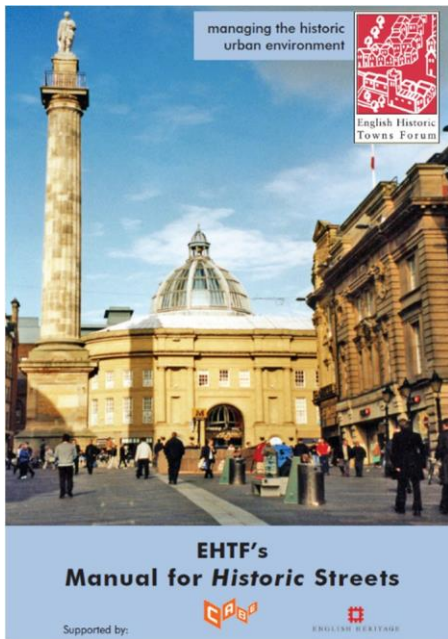
Haddenham, Cambs
 Reach, Cambs
 Barningham
 Freckenham
 Great Waldingfield
 Great Bardfield, Essex
 Rushmere St Andrew
 Earl Soham
 Chilton
 Watton, Norfolk
 Brettenham

Ian Poole, Owner & Director

Ian has been a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute for 25 years. The majority of Ian's experience has been at local authority level, more recently as the manager of the planning policy, conservation, landscape and urban design service at St Edmundsbury Borough Council. He has also had short periods as Acting Head of Planning at the same authority. Ian has successfully managed the delivery of several local plan documents from inception to adoption and delivered a number of community engagement exercises. During his career, he has also worked with parishes to facilitate their preparation of parish plans and organised community engagement and facilitation courses in conjunction with the then Suffolk ACRE (now Community Action Suffolk).



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Planning in historic built environments has figured largely in Ian's career and he has contributed to the preparation of good practice guidance published by the English Historic Towns Forum, an organisation that he chaired between 2004 and 2006. In 2008 he was awarded a travel scholarship by the government backed organisation CABE Space, which involved studying the management and maintenance of streets and squares in European historic cities. Ian was also a major contributor and advisor for the preparation of the Manual for Historic Streets.

Ian is the founder and Managing Director of Places4People Planning Consultancy and is currently advising clients both in local authorities and the private sector. In addition, he is regularly invited to talk at seminars and conferences in the UK and Europe on topics covering planning, historic towns and

public realm.

Ian is also a Commissaire (race referee) for the Union Cycliste International, the World governing body for cycle sport and is employed as a tutor on a casual basis by British Cycling. He is part of the organising committee for the 2021 and 2022 World Masters Cyclo-Cross Championships to be held at Trinity Park, Ipswich.

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