

SHARNBROOK PARISH COUNCIL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN NEWSLETTER

March 2020

Inside this newsletter you will find the results of the questionnaire that you took part in last September and October. The Neighbourhood Plan Group are very grateful to everyone that took part.

Using these results, and having talked to many of the developers, promoters and owners, of the various sites, we are now working on the draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan document for presentation to the Borough Council. We also await to hear if we will need to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of sites. For more details of what's next, see inside.



Sharnbrook Neighbourhood Plan



CELEBRATE VE DAY in Sharnbrook

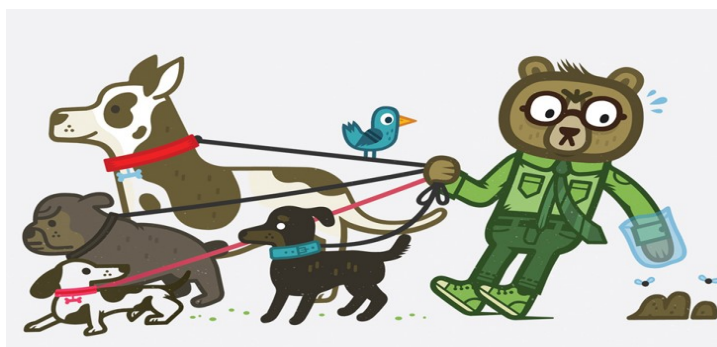
The Learning for Pleasure group are planning an informal celebration at the Village Hall on Friday 8th May, with refreshments, a display of memorabilia and are

also looking at possibly having Jive lessons! More details soon. Look out for the names on the lamp post poppies, these are locals who lost their lives during the second world war. You will also receive a free booklet detailing their lives through your door. This has been endorsed by the Parish Council and funded from the Ward Fund.

Dog Mess, Dog Mess Everywhere

Would you like dog mess with your carrots? Or leeks? Someone or some people are allowing their dog to foul on the allotment plots, and no one would disagree that this is a disgusting practice.

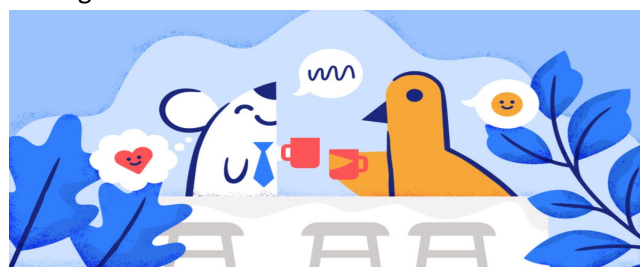
If the practice does not stop, public access to this area will have to be stopped. **Bag it and bin it.**



Empathy Café

We are never fully understood or listened to.

The Empathy Café is designed to allow anyone to engage in a discovery process through dialogue and discussion with others to explore a wide range of topics and subjects in a creative and fulfilling way. Come and experience the benefits of a structured and simple dialogue process allowing each person to feel fully heard to their satisfaction in order to develop and support meaningful, constructive and valuable life enhancing skills.



The Empathy Café' offers an effective gateway process for learning, engaging and developing deep listening skills and a peaceful mindset.

Who can participate? Everyone!

What is needed? Just a bit of your time and willingness to engage in dialogue and listen to other people. Why participate? The Empathy Café seeks to provide values such as: Strengthening the sense of shared community in Sharnbrook, Learning to find ways to unblock paths to inner peace, The opportunity to be heard and share your thoughts and much more.

Next meeting is at St Peter's Room, 7pm on 8th April.

For more information get in touch with Björn 07484-606305 bjorn_michael@outlook.com or Revd. Paolo Di Leo 07968-606377 rev.pdileo@gmail.com

SHARNBROOK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

survey used think going live issue Bedford required new countryside
homes Mill Road taken also Thank people
development Please houses good need areas
village say Sharnbrook parking traffic infrastructure
school whole built residents will provided road many A6 long
houses built avoid already work additional

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the Government White Paper, and Bedford Borough Council's Local Plan 2030, the Parish Council has been presented with an unprecedented opportunity to influence many aspects of life in our village through to the year 2030. This will be achieved through a made Neighbourhood Plan. Once the Neighbourhood Plan has cleared all the necessary legal and procedural hurdles, Bedford Borough Council will conduct a referendum in the village, to determine whether or not the plan has the support of at least 50% of those voting. Assuming that this favourable result is achieved, the Plan must then go on to be approved by the local authority and government inspectors. It will then sit alongside the Borough's Local Plan as a part of the statutory development plan for the Borough. All the above may take considerable time. However, the Neighbourhood Plan Group have been working hard for the past few years and hope to push this to completion around the end of this year.

The advantages of having a made Plan are straightforward. Not only will it give the Parish Council responsibility for siting all new housing in the village and determine, to some extent, what form it should take, but it will also give the Council greater influence over other planning initiatives which might affect life in the village later on. The Plan will be used to assist in the determination of all planning applications within the Parish. The downside is that should the Plan fail to gain acceptance, then Bedford Borough Council will retain the right to determine where future development in the village should take place.

A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed in August 2017 to assist the Parish Council in the Plan's preparation, and includes members drawn from both the Parish Council and the village community who work together under the guidance of an independent planning consultant and the Parish Clerk. In January 2018 the Steering Group organised an open launch day so that everyone could have the opportunity to see what was going on, to ask questions, and to contribute their views as to what should be covered in the Plan. This was eventually followed in September 2019 by the delivery of a detailed Neighbourhood Questionnaire (or survey), to all village households, which covered as many as possible of the points raised during the launch day consultation.

There have, however, been two recent developments since the survey was conducted: 1) the Local Plan 2030 has been formally adopted, and 2) the number of dwellings confirmed for Sharnbrook is 500, plus a replacement primary school. The question of Village Open Spaces in the context of Local Plan 2030 will not be reviewed in the Neighbourhood Plan. Development on Village Open Spaces will not be permitted. The Neighbourhood Plan will be looking at designating Local Green Spaces.

WHAT NEXT?

Next we will be holding a "Regulation 14" consultation event.

A date for this event has yet to be confirmed but it will run for 6 weeks. This will be your chance to look at our draft Neighbourhood Plan proposals, ask questions, and make comments.



QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The results of the questionnaire are summarised below under the Key Themes of Housing; Transport and Access; Environment and Heritage; Technology, Employment and Business; Village Facilities; and About You/Employment. 678 completed or partially completed returns were received, which is approximately 40% of the electorate, but 71% of all dwellings. However, we are also aware that several of the developers involved in the call for sites have submitted responses. Also, in some instances more than one questionnaire was completed within the same household, equally, some were completed on behalf of all residents within one home with several ticks, however they were only counted once.

Nevertheless, a clearer picture has now been obtained regarding the concerns and aspirations of a representative number of Sharnbrook residents, and this information will serve as a valuable part of the emerging evidence-based Plan which is now moving towards its next stage of preparation. Figures shown combine the top two figures (strongly agree and agree) and the bottom two figures (disagree and strongly disagree).



The questionnaire did not ask if there was support for development in Sharnbrook. Under the Local Plan 2030, Sharnbrook Parish Council, by the medium of the Neighbourhood Plan Group, has been tasked to find sites for 500 new dwellings and there is no choice in the matter. However, respondents felt that an overriding consideration was the need to ensure that further development should not damage the environmental and heritage features that give the Parish its special character. Respondents also felt that housing development must be linked to sufficient capacity/investment in local infrastructure.

Any development will require some alteration to the present Settlement Policy Area (SPA) as there is no available land within the SPA.

Compliance with good highway access, car parking and amenity space, energy efficiency, height, massing, and external finish, is of paramount importance.

Support for a single large development (47.2%) or several smaller sites (49.2%) was divided fairly equally.

New housing should comprise a variety of dwellings with the majority supporting a mix of 3 or more bedroom detached, 2/3 bedroom semi-detached or terraced housing, bungalows, and the provision of retirement housing. There was strong resistance to any suggestion that flats/apartments and three storey housing should be considered.

Strong support was given for more affordable homes for sale or rent (56.2%), and homes for the elderly (64%).

89.8% agreed that new houses should be energy efficient, 88.3% wanted houses with gardens, 95.3% said that houses should have off street parking as a minimum, and 96% said that any housing development should respect the character of the village.

Pressure on school places concerned 88.4% of respondents, while environmental impact (flooding, drainage, sewerage, air quality, etc.) was of concern to 91.8%. Impact on parking concerned 96.4% of residents, and access and safety problems caused by traffic and congestion was a worry for 97.1% of respondents. 89.2% were concerned about the impact on views, with 91.7% worried about the adequacy of existing services and facilities, particularly with regard to the doctors' surgery, school places at both primary and secondary levels, and the pressure on retail units.



The majority of residents were concerned, or very concerned about cyclist and pedestrian safety, parking on verges and pavements, local road congestion, the (low) frequency of a local bus services, safer walks to school, speed of vehicles, HGV traffic, footpath provision and footpath standards. All these concerns were 64.8% or over. 409 separate comments show this is a matter that is of great concern to the majority of respondents.

Nearly all residents travelled by car as their main mode of transport (85.6%).

So far as the most needed improvements were concerned, an improved bus service, more designated footpaths and cycle lanes, more pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, average speed cameras and reducing/preventing on-street parking were all popular. Improved mobility access had 56% agreement.



ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE



When asked what was important about living in Sharnbrook, being in a peaceful and safe neighbourhood came top, with 98.6% agreeing, with easy access to the countryside coming in second place at 97.5%. The rural character was third, with 96.5%, being in a quiet village (93.9%) and the quality of the buildings (91.9%) in fourth and fifth places respectively. Local services also scored highly, but came in 6th at 91.6%, with having a say in decisions that affect the village at 89.8%. All these scored very highly, and showed that Sharnbrook residents really appreciate their village. Many other facilities were listed but these will be addressed under village facilities below. Remaining a village was important to many.

Respondents valued all of the spaces they were asked to rate with all spaces getting a minimum of 75.9%. They also listed many other areas not listed, and it is clear that the countryside and views are of key importance to residents.

Protecting existing Open Spaces and Views was of most importance when considering the local environment, with 97.6% saying it was either very important or important. Reducing flooding was also a big consideration from residents, with 91.1% realising what the impact of flooding has on the Parish. Maintaining good air quality got 93% of votes, while encouraging good housing design received 92.1% of the votes. Improving road safety (93.6%) was also considered very important by the majority. 52 comments gave other additional priorities, including reducing crime, congestion and speeding, protecting wildlife, and maintaining a rural feel, as examples.

Noise pollution was the highest concern, at 81%, with air pollution rated the second highest concern, at 77.2%. Flooding and sewerage were next, at 76.4% and 76.3% respectively. Light pollution concerned 56%, but 28.7% were neutral on this. Street lighting was a concern to 57.2% but 29.1% were neutral and 13.6% were unconcerned.

With regard to landscape, all respondents were keen to maintain the status quo. Protecting, managing and enhancing nature was felt to be very important or important to 96.9% of respondents, and 93.8% wanted to maintain existing views/vistas. Protecting local wildlife and habitats was crucial to 96.9% of respondents, and maintaining rights of way was important to 94.9%. Protecting the allotment gardens was seen as less important, but still of importance to 73.6%.

In order to protect the environment, respondents were keen on all options, with planting trees/orchards coming top at 88.4%, followed by recreating wildlife meadows (86.2%), the provision of new footways (84.9%) and enhanced signage and environmental improvements (64%). This was felt to be neutral by 32.3%.

87.2% either strongly agreed or agreed that locally important built heritage assets should be identified and protected.



TECHNOLOGY, EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS



68% of respondents had no issues with their broadband speed, but 31.6% had issues. These varied from dropping out, being slow or intermittent, prone to failure, generally unsatisfactory.

67.1% had no issue with their mobile phone reception, but 32.6% did. Poor signal, bad reception, dropping out, and no signal were the main issues. It would appear that these are network related.

8.7% of respondents operated a business from home, with 3.7% occasionally operating from home.

20.7% worked from home regularly, with another 20.4% working from home occasionally.

71.6% felt that the Neighbourhood Plan should promote policies that encourage working from home.

Opinion was divided on whether there should be further development of small business units, with 22.2% for and 22.7% against. 55.1% said that it would depend on location.

Of those in favour or dependant on location, 54.7% favoured art/craft studios to rent, 79.1% small office units, and 67.7% wished for workshops. Light industrial and manufacturing received support from 35.1% and shop/retain space was popular with 55.4% of respondents. Other options suggested by respondents were shared working spaces, rentable garage space and library/internet facilities.

Only 13.3% had an interest in either definitely or possibly renting a unit.

7.6% ran businesses in Sharnbrook.

Steps that could help businesses develop and thrive were suggested, including improved postal services, using local tradesmen and suppliers, better bus services, fibre broadband, lower rate of corporation tax for home-based businesses.



VILLAGE FACILITIES



The most appreciated facility in the village is the Doctors' surgery which was supported by 98.3% of respondents. This was closely followed by the post office (97.2%), village hall (92%), play areas (89.9%), then pubs (88.8%), playing field club (83.8%), shops (82.5%), farm shops (81.6%), restaurants (81.4%), Paula Radcliffe Community Sports Centre (75.9%) and the bakery at 74.7%.

The remaining facilities were mostly between 48% and 68%. Only the soft furnishing shop was very low, at 17.8% (this has since closed down).

Facilities that respondents felt needed to be added to or improved were improved medical services (89.4%), high speed broadband (81.4%), children's play areas (76.4%), the village hall (72.6%) and recreational/sporting facilities (71.9%). Of least importance to responders was cemetery provision (42.5%).

Provision for young people was considered important, with schools (96.7%), pre-schools (92.9%) and sports facilities (93.2%) scoring highly. Facilities for teenagers (90.2%) and children's play areas (94.5%) were all scored highly.

Thinking about future needs of young people, the following facilities were scored highly by respondents: - Facilities for teenagers (79.2%), children's play areas (77.2%), recreational/sporting facilities (77.1%), upgraded play park equipment (66.7%), a youth centre (65.5%) and childcare/nursery facilities (65.1%).

The best and worst things about living in Sharnbrook had 589 responses. We have created a word cloud from these, which you can see at the end of this summary. The best things focused on the countryside, the quiet, the rural nature of the village and the friendliness of residents. The worst things were perceived to be the traffic, congestion and noise, lack of public transport, poor roads and footways, HGVs and poor/lack of available parking.

185 people answered with more detail of what should be addressed by the Neighbourhood Plan, and these are being addressed, where possible, in the draft Neighbourhood Plan document. Some things are outside the scope, but it is possible that a Parish Plan document may be produced once the NP has been completed, and these items can then be considered.

ABOUT YOU

The breakdown of households was as follows:

Household with school age or pre-school age children	28.0%
Household with grown up children living at home	13.8%
Couple	42.6%
Adult living with other adults	4.3%
Adult living alone	11.1%
Adult living in residential care	0.2%

Ages of responders

Under 18	1.1%
18-30	5.6%
31-45	18.8%
46-65	41.9%
66-85	31.1%
86 and over	1.6%

Length of residency in Sharnbrook (in years)

Less than 5	16.6%
5-10	13.0%
11-20	25.6%
More than 20	44.9%

Employment

Employed or self-employed	55.6%
Temporary or seasonal employment	1.6%
Unemployed or unable to work	0.8%
Looking after the home	5.1%
Carer at home	1.6%
Retired	38.2%
Student	3.2%



Railway station cope good access road destroy impact additional amenities
 new housing keeping village feel stop larger within consideration
 new primary school community particularly especially number local
 high small designed many Additional housing provision children
 access view A6 access A6 parking travel high street
 issue building existing need developed
 development great traffic think village come
 houses place will enough Sharnbrook happen
 school Mill Road roads area planning problems new
 new homes people proposed residents Mill Theatre
 upper school considered Bedford due want infrastructure
 new developments look space buy building houses one
 Speeding work times leaving must current increase mentioned Garden
 moving

A further 64 comments were received about the Plan, and they will all be considered when we are writing the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would like to thank everyone who took part in this survey.

SHARNBROOK PARISH COUNCIL **OUR NEW WEBSITE IS NOW LIVE!!!**

Go to www.sharnbrook-pc.gov.uk

Be an active member of our local community. Remember it is your civic right to attend and observe our meetings. The dates and venues are always posted on the website. The website is the best way for you to know what is going on and communicate your views.

- You can read the minutes of our council meetings.
- Subscribe to our newsletter and get automatic updates by email.
 - Get useful information.
 - Read the Agenda
 - Get Latest Planning Applications

So go to: **www.sharnbrook-pc.gov.uk**
 and bookmark it on your computer, laptop, mobile phone or tablet.

COMMUNITY LITTER PICK

We will be holding a community litter pick on Saturday 4th April.

Come along to the Parish Office at the back of the Scout Hut between 10am and 1pm to collect your equipment and join in the fun!

Keep Sharnbrook Tidy!



Volunteers are always needed to help maintain this very special area. Work parties have been planned for the following dates:-



Saturday 7th March,

Tuesday 17th March

Saturday 4th April

Tuesday 21st April

Meet at the Lodge Road entrance at 10 am, and dress for the weather!

ADVANCE NOTICE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on
at 7.30pm on Tuesday 19th May in the
Methodist Church, Park Lane.

This is your opportunity to find out what is happening in the Parish, what the Parish Council has done over the past year, and what is proposed for the forthcoming year.

It is also when we present the **Skelton Cup** to its recipient. This will sadly be the first year since we have lost Mrs Jean Skelton who presented the cup for so many years. If you have any nominations for the Cup, members of the Parish who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, put themselves out in service of the community, or just been an all round good egg, then please send your nominations to the Clerk (details below).



You can contact the Parish Council via the Clerk at The Parish Office on Tuesdays, 10.30-12.30 Or by appointment

Email clerk@sharnbrook-pc.gov.uk

Phone 01234 782827 (answer machine)

Via Twitter— @sharnbrookpc

Via Instagram—sharnbrookpc

Via Facebook—Sharnbrook Parish Council

Also check out our NEW WEBSITE - www.sharnbrook-pc.gov.uk where you can find agendas, minutes, check meeting dates, village events and more! Sign up for alerts!



Bulky Waste

Advance Notice - The Bulky Waste collection will be held on 13th and 14th June 2020.

Collection will be from the following sites:-

Saturday 13th June, 2020

Top end of Station Road 8.30am - 9.20am

Home Close 9.30am - 10.20am

School Approach, off Odell Road 10.30am - 11.00am

Sunday 14th June, 2020

Stileman Way 8.30am - 9.20am

Loring/Lodge Road 9.30am - 10.20am

School Approach 10.30am - 11.00am

RURAL BULKY WASTE SERVICE FOR THE COLLECTION OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Please help us to provide a safe and efficient service by following these guidelines:

- ☐ This service is provided for household waste only – business or commercial waste will not be accepted.
- ☐ Comply with any instructions given by the driver in charge.
- ☐ Place waste directly into the vehicle or container provided. Do not leave your waste on site if the vehicle is not present. Fly-tipping is a serious offence attracting substantial fines.
- ☐ Don't throw waste into the containers from a distance.
- ☐ Act in a considerate and responsible manner without 'queue jumping'.
- ☐ Please remember not to do anything that would endanger you, other users or Council staff.
- ☐ Don't attempt to dispose of business waste or unsuitable materials as the driver will refuse to take these. Users could be liable to prosecution if they load any such materials.

Unsuitable Materials

Please do not bring the following materials for disposal via this scheme:

× Acids × Asbestos × Batteries × Clinical Waste × Medicines × Fluorescent Lamps × Gas Cylinders × Lead Sheeting × Oil × Paraffin × Petrol/Diesel × Creosote × Toner Cartridges × Plasterboard/gypsum × Tyres × **Fridges & Freezers**

These hazardous materials require special disposal by law. For guidance on how to dispose of these items please contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506.

Alternative Council disposal methods:

- ☐ Household Waste Recycling Centre, Barkers Lane, Bedford will accept oil, tyres and batteries as well as normal household waste.

For further information please contact 01234

718013 (Commercial waste is not accepted at this recycling centre).

- ☐ Bulky Waste and Fridge/Freezer collection service operated by Bedford Borough Council. For further information please call the Environmental Services Helpline on 01234 718060 (charges apply).

BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE
OR REJECT ANY UNSUITABLE ITEMS i.e. hazardous, large or overweight items that are deemed likely to cause injury to employees, members of the public or cause damage to vehicles.