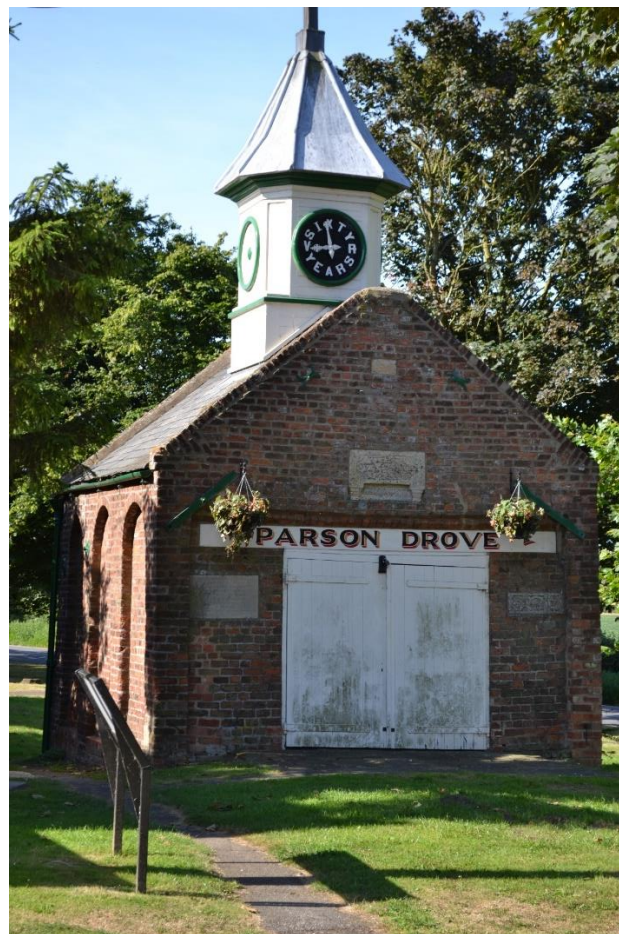


Parson Drive Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation Statement



Parson Drove Neighbourhood Development Plan

Consultation Statement April 2019

1. Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Section 15(2). Part 5 of the Regulations sets out that a Consultation Statement should:

- (a) contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- (b) explain how they were consulted;
- (c) summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
- (d) describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

2. How we produced our Neighbourhood Development Plan

At a large public meeting at the Village Hall in 2014 the attendees strongly supported the initiative to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (The Plan) for Parson Drove parish. This was largely driven by a strong desire by residents to maintain steady growth in the parish rather than being overtaken by a very large scheme that was likely to be rejected by Fenland planners but which was still an active application.

As a result of this local pressure the Parish Council applied to Fenland District Council to designate Parson Drove as a neighbourhood area. The application was determined by Planning Committee on 14 January 2015 and the whole of the parish was designated as the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Area.

In order to fully understand the views of the community the decision was made to deliver a confidential questionnaire to every household in the parish so that everyone had the opportunity to express their views.

The questions were vetted in advance by planning officers from Fenland and Cambs Acre to ensure that they were open questions and covered areas relevant to planning policy. All recommendations were included in the final document which was distributed in October 2015.

The questionnaires were distributed in Village Voices, the parish magazine, which is delivered monthly to every household. To ensure we achieved the maximum possible response every home was visited by volunteers to collect the completed questionnaires.

There were 120 responses to the questionnaire representing a 22% return rate based on the number of households. Due to this satisfactory return rate and the very strong majority opinions that it revealed the Parish Council is assured that The Plan reflects

the wishes of the majority of the residents of Parson Drove who have chosen to involve themselves in creating this plan.

As the Parish Council did not have the funds to employ consultants to prepare The Plan they established a working group of local residents who were tasked with doing so. This they have done in close consultation with planners from Fenland DC who have been extremely helpful and who have assisted with advice on the wording of our policies to ensure that the Parson Drove plan is compliant with legislation, is compatible with Fenland's own Local Plan and does not duplicate Fenland's policies where these already meet the concerns revealed by our questionnaire.

Progress on The Plan has been communicated regularly to parishioners via Village Voices and has been an agenda item on our public Parish Council meetings throughout the period of its development.

2. Consultation on the Parson Drove Local Development Plan.

The objectives of our consultation process were to ensure that all persons who live, work or carry out businesses in Parson Drove Parish:

- are aware of the policies in the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- all have the opportunity to discuss the contents of The Plan with members of the Working Group;
- can make formal comments that will be considered and where appropriate incorporated into revisions to The Plan;

In addition, we wished to ensure that Fenland District Council and relevant bodies from the Regulation 14 Consultation List were consulted. The bodies that we have consulted are listed in Appendix A.

Following acceptance of The Plan by the Parish Council a formal notice alerting parishioners and others to the consultation process was published and circulated in the Village Voices magazine which is distributed to all households in the parish. A copy of the notice is attached in Appendix B.

The consultation notice and The Plan was published on the Official Parson Drove Web Site, and the consultation notice was publicised on the notice board on the village green which included the means to see a copy of the plan for those without on-line access or printers: hard copies of The Plan were available for review via members of the Working Group either by direct contact or at the workshops and a copy was lodged at the village Post Office.

Copies of The Plan and details of the mechanism for making comments were circulated by email to Fenland District Council and other bodies from the Regulation 14 Consultation List, and Fenland District Council publicised the consultation on its website.

The consultation started at 13.00 on Monday 26th November 2018 and closed at 13.00 on Monday 21st January 2019. This was an 8-week period which allowed for disruption due to Christmas and the New Year.

Three weekend sessions were held at St Marks Church Hall and the Cage on the village green. These sessions were hosted by members of the Working Group and lasted for 2 hours each. There were plans to extend this period should there have been sufficient interest from consultees but in the event this did not arise.

Consultees were invited to send formal comments to the Working Group via the email or postal addresses of two of its members.

3 The Main Issues Raised during Consultation.

Four consultees raised issues with the plan.

Ms B, a local resident, asked whether our Policy 5, Road and Pedestrian Safety, should focus on improving the condition of existing footpaths rather than on providing new ones. While we have every sympathy with Ms Ballard's concerns, maintaining the existing footpaths along the adopted highway is a matter for Cambridgeshire County Council's highways team rather than the planning process. She makes a related point asking whether the existing footpaths could be extended instead of new footpaths being provided along the frontage of a new development. We feel this is impractical due to the complications of land ownership where a developer may have to purchase additional land well beyond his current holding in order to fulfil such a requirement.

We have therefore maintained the current wording of Policy 5.

The Head of the Alderman Payne School supported the additional growth threshold in The Plan but asked whether it could be amended to include support for smaller homes which could be afforded by families with children. This would in turn increase the size of the school role. She notes that many of the recently constructed dwellings in the parish have been very large and bought by older couples who do not have children of school age.

While the Parish Council strongly supports the continued well-being of this excellent school, because our plan envisages that development will be led by market forces, we do not feel it is appropriate to try to control the size of homes that might be built in the parish. We would however note that any larger development that would require local support under our policies may well achieve that support by offering smaller homes at genuinely affordable prices.

Gladman Developments, based in Cheshire, responded to The Plan although they did not disclose the interest they had or represented in the parish.

They questioned whether our threshold of fewer than 5 dwellings in Policy 2 would restrict the ability of developers to provide affordable homes and suggest we should raise this threshold to 20 – 25 homes. We believe they have misunderstood the nature of our policies as we do not preclude any size of development, but do require a developer to demonstrate local support for larger schemes. The provision of affordable housing could be one benefit that would obtain such local support for larger schemes. We have discussed the wording of Policy 2 extensively with Fenland planners and see no reason to change the wording.

They also have questioned whether maintaining separation between Parson Drove and Church End is a proper consideration for a neighbourhood plan. On this matter we feel that given the strong local support for maintaining this separation, the increase in the overall growth threshold within the parish The Plan offers, the extensive discussions on the wording of all of our policies that we have held with Fenland planners and the opportunity in our Policy 3 to provide affordable housing in such sites we have no reason to delete this policy as Gladman Developments have suggested.

Gary Garford from Fenland District Council made a number of comments which are different to advice we had received from other members of Fenland's planning team during the development of our policies.

Mr Garford challenged Policy 3 Affordable Housing on the basis that there are no exception sites in villages. He suggested that the policy, including its focus on priority letting to those with local connections, should be discussed with FDC's housing team. The wording of Policy 3 was, however, discussed extensively with FDC planners and the housing team prior to submission of the plan for consultation and we do not think it is necessary to make any further changes to it.

Mr Garford suggested that Policy 4 Maintaining Separation between Parson Drove and Church End should be clarified further on the map attached to the Plan. We have made this clarification. He also suggested that we should refer to permitted development rights rather than agricultural buildings on the wording of the policy. We have also made this change.

Regarding Policy 5 Road and Pedestrian Safety Mr Garford raised several issues of practicability in the application of the policy such as the lack of adequate width along Back Road Murrow for a footpath or the lack of willingness of the highways authority to adopt the road. We believe these valid concerns are covered by the practicability test we have included in Policy 5 and we do not think it is necessary to change the wording.

Conclusions

The Parson Drove Neighbourhood Development Plan is a simple document containing 5 policies that reflect the Parish Council's desire to see continued growth in our parish but within a framework that our parishioners will support. Our consultation process has raised few issues that required changes to our plan although we are grateful for all those who responded to it.

Appendix A

Regulation 14 Statutory Consultees.

The following were all consulted via individual emails.

LPAs:

Fenland District Council
Peterborough CC
South Holland DC

County councils:

Cambridgeshire CC
Lincolnshire CC

Parish councils:

Gorefield
Wisbech St Mary
Thorney
Sutton St Edmund

Others

Homes and Communities Agency
Natural England
The Environment Agency
The Highways Agency
Historic England
BT
National Grid
Anglian Water
North Level Internal Drainage Board
Cambridgeshire Police
Disability Cambridgeshire
Sport England
Church of England
Baptist Church

Parishioners, local businesses and landowners

These were all expected to be aware of the consultation via local distribution of Village voices, the notice on the village green and publicity on Fenland DC's website.

Parish residents
Post Office
Elgoods Brewery - Swan Inn
Butchers Arms (free house)
Five Bells (free house)
MGB Hive
Local farmers
Local landowners

Appendix B Formal notice

Regulation 14 Consultation: Notice of the Opportunity to Comment on the Parson Drove Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan

Notice is hereby given that a Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared by Parson Drove Parish Council under the Localism Act 2011.

A neighbourhood development plan is a statutory planning document and as such would be a material consideration (alongside Fenland's Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework) in the determination of all planning applications within the neighbourhood area to which it applies.

Opportunity to comment

In accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015), the Neighbourhood Development Plan is hereby advertised and people are able to submit their comments in relation to the proposed plan.

A consultation period of 8 weeks will run from 13.00 hours on Monday 26 November 2018 until 13.00 hours on Monday 21 January 2019. Comments received after this time may not be considered.

A copy of the neighbourhood plan is available to view:

- Online <http://www.parsondrove.net/>
- By email from gavin.booth@virgin.net or colin.britt@nichols.uk.com
- At the Post Office
- At The Cage between 11.00 and 13.00 on Saturday 8th December 2018 where members of the working Group will be available to take questions.
- At St Marks Church Hall between 11.00 and 13.00 on Saturday 15th December 2018 where members of the working Group will be available to take questions.

Comments on the application may be submitted either:

- By email - gavin.booth@virgin.net or colin.britt@nichols.uk.com
- In writing to the Chair of the Parish Council:

Mr Gavin Booth
3 John Bends Way,
Parson Drove
Wisbech
CAMBS

If you have any queries on the plan please call Gavin Booth on 01945 701157; Anne Adams on 01945 700121; or Colin Britt on 01945 700277. Please be aware that all comments that you wish to be taken into consideration before the Neighbourhood Plan is finalised must be made in writing.

Gavin Booth, Chair of the Parish Council