

Hampton-in-Arden Neighbourhood Plan

Update on activities regarding the Hampton-in-Arden Neighbourhood Plan – July 2020

The Neighbourhood Plan set out how we would seek to resist building on the Green Belt, how we would urge upon SMBC and developers the importance of incorporating affordable housing opportunities into any new developments, how we would seek to protect the character of the Parish, together with its open spaces, and how we would seek to ensure the principles within the Village Design Statement were taken into account in planning applications. We have been actively advancing these principles and objectives in relation to the developments under consideration currently, and have so far been modestly successful in limiting and curtailing undesirable development.

We have battled to retain an element of affordable housing in the development on the old Cricket Pitch. We remain in discussion with SMBC and the developers about possible plans for the new site off Meriden Road, considering and rejecting a number of outline schemes which we felt did not meet our requirements; no final planning submission has yet been made. We have taken seriously developments which threaten the character and integrity of our Conservation Area and Heritage sites. We remain determined to resist encroachments on the Green Space in the Meriden Gap, and to ensure a belt of green separation remains to prevent urban sprawl, thus helping to maintain the village character of both Hampton and Catherine de Barnes. Whilst some provision of more local housing is both desirable and inevitable, we continue to urge SMBC to do so in ways that protect the character of our Parish and communities.

Our Plan emphasised our commitment to maintain current shopping outlets within the Parish, support sensitively and appropriately structured new business outlets and support improvements in Broadband provision. Whilst there been no new business proposals within the Parish requiring our involvement, we have been pleased to see the upgrading and improvements at the convenience store in Catherine de Barnes, and the significant improvement in Broadband connectivity that has been provided over the last few years.

Our Plan had a number of concerns around Transport issues which continue to resonate five years on. Traffic Management has continued to be a huge issue with the increasing probability of HS2 proceeding, and we have been in continuous discussion with SMBC and the HS2 Community Fund organisers to seek funding for a range of Traffic Calming Schemes. Our plans were submitted to a Parish wide consultation in 2019. Regrettably the process has still not secured the go ahead but actions remain underway to find a way of commencing this provision as soon as possible.

We continue to lobby for improved provision of local bus and train services which have not deteriorated further since our Plan was formulated. Unfortunately we have been unable so far to secure any movement over the provision of disabled access to the Birmingham Bound railway platform, where it appears the footfall is insufficient to justify the investment.

We have worked tirelessly to get the voice of our Parishioners heard over the development plans for HS2, the M42 Jct.6 Link road and the possible Motorway Service Area near Catherine de Barnes, and remain active participants in the Airport Consultative Committee working on aircraft noise mitigation. This Committee has been successful in achieving a community orientated new night flying policy and initiating a review of the daytime noise levels.

We remain committed to the provision of a footpath/cycle lane between Catherine de Barnes and Hampton, and will continue to actively press for this.

The Parish Council has remained vigilant in ensuring planning developments are cognisant of environmental issues, including preservation of green spaces and views, flooding and drainage, wildlife corridors and biodiversity. We have made a substantial investment to deal with flooding problems on our own land at the Sports Ground. We are active in engaging SMBC services on dealing with roads, footpaths, blocked gullies, faulty street lamps, dog fouling and fly-tipping.

The Parish Council works closely with the Fentham Trust and the Sports and Social Club to ensure the ongoing provision of our current community services. Our Community Infrastructure Levy funding (CIL) has only just started to come through and we have been developing policies to help us best allocate these sums to support infrastructure and community projects. We have also been engaging with SMBC and village community groups about how to improve provision of library services.

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council