

THOUGHTS ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

I first came to hear about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan during the frenzy of concern when many of us believed that our parish was under imminent threat of development beyond the wishes and control of us, the residents of Haversham and Little Linford. Having no previous experience of Parish Councils etc I was somewhat cautious about offering to be involved in the process but was equally apprehensive about the possibility of us not taking the steps that other parishes have done to try and use the recognised channels for gathering the thoughts and aspirations of the community for the next generation. It appears that a democratically-approved well-developed Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to be a powerful document when negotiating the future of an area, this is especially relevant as no change whatsoever is seemingly unrealistic and arguably unwise.

As I understand it, for a Neighbourhood Plan to be agreed and successful in its aim to outline the future direction of an area, it is imperative that the community is gathered together to listen, digest and consider as many differing voices as possible. Whilst the drive for me offering to be involved was the housing scare, the plan should aim to reach much wider than this - to capture a vision beyond this single issue. Due to this I am hesitant to even offer some proposed suggestions of things which we may wish to consider as a community, as it would be wonderful if the blank canvas were to be spread widely and you all take time to think laterally and communicate your thoughts.

Utopia is something which no doubt means something different to us all and this is not realistically what is on offer. That said, I do believe that there is a genuine desire to capture the feelings of all parishioners, so, if you have thoughts about how you feel our villages should evolve and would be willing to share them, then please look out for the first public meeting and come along to share your views, particularly if you feel that your views may differ from those traditionally well-represented. If nothing more, we can have safety in numbers feeling like ducks out of the water!

Kieron Tanner, Haversham Resident