5th December 2015

**Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan**

Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Government in 2012. Local communities are now able to produce Neighbourhood Plans for their neighbourhood which puts in place a vision and policies for the future of their area. These are normally prepared by the Parish Council or where a Parish Council does not exist by a specially elected Neighbourhood Forum. The Parish Council may however set up a working or steering group of community representatives. This group can change from time to time, bringing in additional people if others want to join or bringing in people with special skills or knowledge to work on different aspects of the plan. The plan does need to be consistent with national policy and accord with the strategic policies of the South Hams District Council’s adopted plan. It cannot, for example, propose less housing than required by the Local Plan but could include more housing if considered appropriate.

**What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

It is a community led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It should include a vision, aims and planning policies and can include proposals to improve the area, provide new facilities e.g. community facilities, and allocate key sites for specific kinds of development. It may deal with a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues (such as types of housing and where this should be provided). It can deal with heritage issues e.g. designating buildings of local architectural or historic interest which the community would like to see retained.

If the District Council have policies to increase housing in a particular area or if the community wish to provide more housing (e.g. affordable housing or starter homes), the plan could put forward suitable sites, providing evidence of why and how these sites have been selected.

The Plan can be a very powerful tool in shaping the development of an area. It does need to go through independent examination which will be organised and paid for by the South Hams District Council but once adopted it becomes a statutory plan and **must** be taken into account when applications for development are being considered, unlike the Bigbury Parish Plan which carried very little weight. Many appeals have been dismissed due to the fact the proposals did not accord with Neighbourhood Plans.

**Timeframes**

The community can decided how long the timeframe of the plans should be. It could be 5, 10, 15 or 20 years.

The plan is likely to take about 18 months to be prepared and be adopted.

**First Step**

Work on a Neighbourhood Plan can only commence formally when the neighbourhood area has been designated by the South Hams District Council.

An application needs to be sent to the District Council. This has to include a plan showing the area chosen. This would normally be the whole of the parish but it could be a smaller and more focused area. Adjacent Parish Councils may also agree to work in partnership to

produce a joint Neighbourhood Plan. The application needs to include a statement to justify need for a Neighbourhood Plan and the area chosen and there needs to be a statement setting out the terms of reference.

**Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference will need to include the methodology for preparing the plan and the membership of the committee including how people will be recruited. This could for example be equal parts from the people on Parish Council and the community at large.

A Chairman needs to be appointed and people on the working party could be allocated specific roles. Additional or replacement members could be recruited as and when needed.

We will need to consider how disputes will be handled.

There needs to be regular reports given to the full Parish Council on any major issues arising on which the Parish Council needs to express a view.

How will the proposals of the plan be advertised and how will the local community be consulted?

How will it be financed? At the moment no finance is required however if we want to instruct any professionals or a heritage consultant, carry out surveys to obtain public opinion, or hire out the memorial hall, there will be costs involved. It may be necessary to think about how to finance this if we do not have sufficient money available. When Ugborough Parish set up their Working Group in October 2011 they managed to raise funds of £20,000, advanced to them by South Hams Council.

**Other South Hams Neighbourhood Plans**

* Ugborough Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan, approved 21st March 2013
* Totnes Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan, approved 21st March 2013
* Harberton Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan, approved 21st March 2013
* Salcombe Neighbourhood Plan, approved 18th July 2013
* Ivybridge Neighbourhood Plan, approved 18th July 2013
* Bickleigh Neighbourhood Plan, approved 18th July 2013
* Malborough Neighbourhood Plan, approved 12th December 2013
* Stoke Fleming Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan, approved 5th June 2014
* Newton and Noss Parish Council. Neighbourhood Plan, approved 5th June 2014
* Dartington Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan, approved 5th June 2014.
* Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan, approved December 2014.
* Dartmouth Neighbourhood Plan, approved 11th December 2014
* Berry Pomroy Neighbourhood Plan, approved 13th February 2015
* South Milton Neighbourhood Plan, approved 13th February 2015
* Modbury Neighbourhood Plan, approved 24th February 2015
* Thurlestone Neighbourhood Plan, approved 24th April 2015
* Brixton Neighbourhood Plan, approved 26th June 2015
* Wembury Neighbourhood Plan, approved 22nd October 2015
* Strete Neighbourhood Plan, approved 19th November 2015
* Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan, approved 18th November 2015

**South Hams Strategic Policies**

The South Hams District Council Core Strategy was adopted in December 2006.

The District Council has assessed every town and village in terms of its potential for additional development. The District Council considers that in settlements with an appropriate level of infrastructure and service provision, a small or modest amount of development can be beneficial and acceptable.

This can apply to settlements within the South Devon Area of Outstanding National Beauty where development could help to foster social or economic wellbeing.

Policy CSI of the Core Strategy identifies the settlements where additional development is acceptable in principle. This includes the village of Bigbury-on-Sea and St. Ann’s Chapel. The village of Bigbury is not included. Elsewhere development will be strictly controlled and not permitted unless it can be delivered sustainably and in response to a demonstrable local need.

The Core Strategy states that Development Boundaries will be defined in subsequent Development Plan Documents (DPDs) but there has been no subsequent DPD showing a development boundary for either Bigbury on Sea or St Ann’s Chapel.

The Rural Areas Site Allocations DPD, published in February 2011, shows site allocations for various local centres and villages including Modbury and Aveton Gifford but this did not include any allocations or development boundaries for Bigbury-on-Sea or St Ann’s Chapel.

There were however development boundaries shown in the previous South Hams Local Plan, April 1996, for both Ringmore and Bigbury on Sea but not St Ann’s Chapel. These boundaries were drawn tightly around the existing built up areas allowing little scope for expansion.

**Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**

Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the working group should contact Valerie Scott on telephone: 01548 810336 or email Valerie.Scott@cgms.co.uk