

The Elstead Annual Parish Meeting

The Elstead Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday April 15th in the United Reformed Church. This was a formal meeting to hear a report from the Parish Council Chairman Pat Murphy on the activities of the Council over the past year. After the meeting there was a presentation on Neighbourhood Planning by Planning Consultant Chris Bowden and short presentations by the four Working Groups on the work that they have been doing on the Elstead & Weyburn Neighbourhood Plan. An exhibition of some of their work was shown in the URC Hall with members of the Groups and Planning Consultants Angela Koch and Chris Bowden present to answer questions.

Transport & Utilities

The Transport & Utilities Group has investigated a number of key topics related to the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Public Transport, including bus services and rail connections, the Hoppa service and Help in Elstead
- Parking – a parking survey has been carried out over one weekday in term time. This has produced no surprises but the situation is now recorded for reference. There is some concern about an increase in parking round the Green when the Post Office is moved to the Spar shop.
- Traffic – A traffic survey is being carried out on the Milford and Thursley Roads. Results so far show that between the Crossing and the Green on the Milford Road speeds range from 6 mph to over 56 mph with only 57% of traffic at less than 30 mph. 99 vehicles were recorded on one day at over 40 mph, 20 of them at 46 mph to 60 mph.
- Cycling & Walking – The Group has looked at current routes through the village and has a number of ideas for improved routes, especially for access to St James's School.
- Telecommunications – The Group has produced a very comprehensive report on Mobile & Broadband communications.
- Gas & Electricity Infrastructure – Maps will be produced showing the location of supply lines for these utilities
- Waterways, drainage & flood protection – Flooding from the River Wey affects only the Farnham Road in Elstead but groundwater and blocked drains cause surface flooding elsewhere. Better maintenance by residents, Surrey CC and local landowners would reduce this risk.

Investigations are continuing and residents will be asked to help with collecting information.

The Housing & Facilities Group has continued work:

- Identifying numbers and types of existing homes in Elstead.
- Studying the age profiles of residents and the capacity of local schools and medical facilities.
- We do not yet know what government targets for future development will be set in the Waverley Local Plan. Development at Weyburn will not cover all the likely requirements and other sites around the village will almost certainly be needed. These areas will need to be identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- A Survey is being prepared to assess likely housing requirements in Elstead over the next fifteen years and this will be circulated within the next few weeks. This is a vital part of the evidence needed for the Neighbourhood Plan and will help to ensure that whatever housing development is required will at least include what we need in the village.

Environment Design & Recreation

The Environment Design & Recreation Group has been looking into a number of areas of interest:

- Environment - Elstead Parish, and the small part of Peper Harow included in the NP comprise a range of environments that carry a high degree of landscape, conservation and community value. We are very lucky in being surrounded by protected common land and the River Wey valley with a network of public rights of way.
- Heritage - Elstead was never a wealthy village and developed slowly over the years. There are three designated conservation areas - around the Church, Westbrook Green, the village green and the Milford Road. In addition there are some 41 listed structures ranging from houses, churches and in some cases walls. Elstead Parish Council produced a Design statement that recommends ways of maintaining the scale and diversity of design that makes Elstead such an attractive village. The Group has been photographing houses inside and outside conservation areas, and other key open spaces such as Bonfire Hill to create a record of what is here at present.
- Recreation - Elstead has large number of clubs and associations and the Group is in contact with them to assess their membership and longer term needs. There are a number of community spaces, including the Village Hall and Youth Centre, the Cricket Pavilion, the Tennis Club, St James's Church, the URC and the British Legion. There are also four recreation grounds, in Thursley Road, Burford Lea, Springfield and The Croft.

Employment & Business

The Employment and Business Group has been investigating and interviewing existing businesses in Elstead, including small businesses run from home.

- The biggest area of employment in the Neighbourhood Plan area is the Tanshire Business Park in Peper Harow where 300-400 people are employed in a variety of jobs including a dentist, call centres and admin companies. It is a flexible site and there is often a waiting list for space. Employees come from Elstead, Farnham, Aldershot and further afield.
- There is also the possibility of new employment on the Weyburn industrial site if development includes business premises.

Weyburn & Peper Harow

The Weyburn Group has carried out intensive investigations into possible development on this site, including:

- The options of development entirely of housing, part housing and part business or all business, with or without elderly care facilities. Linden Homes are currently proposing housing and a care home to provide some employment.
- The impact of development on the environment, transport, school places and medical facilities in the area. There may be serious effects on secondary school places for children in Elstead & Peper Harow.
- Access to Elstead from Weyburn on foot, bicycle and mobility vehicle. The existing public footpath is on private land and is only suitable for pedestrian use. An alternative via the Burford Recreation Ground is possible. There is no safe pedestrian route via the Milford Road.
- The impact on Peper Harow of a possible doubling of the number of homes in the Parish.

Weyburn Engineering Site Exhibition.

An exhibition to show the work that has been done by the Weyburn Working Group was held on Saturday March 28th in the Elstead Youth Hall. It was attended by over 120 visitors, who discussed the possible development of the industrial site with members of the Group. Some of them were people who had either worked at Weyburn Engineering or had relatives who had done so. They gave useful information on the history and on the contamination of the site by machine oil, metal swarf and asbestos, as well as the frequency of flooding from the River Wey. At times the atmosphere in the machine shop was foul with fumes from the waste oils, something that would not be allowed nowadays.

The exhibition covered the history of the Weyburn Engineering Works, the proposed development for housing by Linden Homes and the possible effects of any major development on schools, transport, employment and the environment.

Visitors were asked to fill in brief questionnaires and these will be used as part of the evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Steering Group was formed in March:

- To co-ordinate the activities of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups and to provide them with technical and administrative support.
- To keep the Elstead Parish Council and Peper Harow Parish meetings fully informed of progress.
- The Steering Group comprises representatives from Elstead Parish Council and Peper Harow, a representative from each of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups, and a secretary.
- To provide consultant and other technical resources for the Neighbourhood Plan project.

The Project Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Team has been working since September 2014, initially on agreeing the boundary of the NP area with Peper Harow Parish and starting the process of informing Elstead residents about the NP and the Waverley Local Plan, with a public meeting in December. In January another public meeting was held and the Working Groups were set up to start preparing the evidence to support the NP. The Steering Group was set up in March and two Planning Consultants were appointed.

Future activities include:

- Continuing the current investigation into Elstead and Weyburn as they are now.
- Holding a public meeting to ask residents, landowners and businesses for their vision and ideas for the future of Elstead and Weyburn.
- Reviewing the ideas and vision against the evidence collected, assessing them for practicality and prioritising them for future action.
- Writing the policy statements that make up the draft Neighbourhood Plan and submitting them to Waverley for approval.
- Holding a referendum of all residents to finally approve the Plan.

The Project Plan is being maintained by the Steering Group Secretary with input from the Working Groups. Copies of reports will be available in St James's Church or at Steering Group meetings.