

7. Planning

- 7.5. To consider and agree a consultation response on 'Planning for the Future' – submission due by 29th October 2020
- 7.6. To consider and agree a consultation response on 'Changes to the Planning System' – submission due by 1st October 2020
- 7.7. To review and consider a decision to update/refresh the existing Neighbourhood Plan
- 7.8. To receive report on liaison with Rocklands PC with regards collaborative approaches to Planning and Flooding issues

8. Grand Projects

- 8.1 To receive and consider report on the VE/VJ Events and total spend v budget
- 8.2 To receive and consider report on transition of 'Yaxham Cares' to a Neighbourhood Scheme and current grant spend v budget
- 8.3 To receive update on Parish Partnership Grants
 - 8.3.1 SAM2 Pole
 - 8.3.2 Village Gateways
 - 8.3.3 Lining Improvements
 - 8.3.4 Well Hill Bus Shelter
- 8.4 To consider Parish Partnership Bids 2021/22
 - 8.4.1 Replacement of remaining wooden bus shelter
 - 8.4.2 Others?

9. Recreation Field Play Area

- 9.5. To receive and consider a report from Cllr Couves, YPC Liaison with YVAA
- 9.6. To consider and agree next steps including the option of offering to take full responsibility for the recreation Play Area.

7.5 'Planning for the Future'

We all know the Local Plan and planning application needs reforming.

We all know that design, sustainability, brownfield land should be given more weight.

BUT

The drafting of the White Paper is very broad in nature and depending on the housing requirement in a given area.

The "Changes" consultation however sets out a revised standard method for assessing housing numbers in strategic plans. Breckland's current Local Plan has an annual number of 612 new dwellings pa.

The new figure from the Algorithm set out in the "Changes to the current planning system" consultation for Breckland is 1,070 new dwellings pa i.e. an increase of 75% on the Local Plan. It is also two-thirds higher than the record numbers of dwellings being completed in the last three years. This is the starting point for considering the White Paper proposals and recognising that they will have a significant effect on the ground.

Major objections to the White Paper include:

- The total failure to address the issue of developer land banking, making the planning authorities out to be the major cause of the holdup in development – using primarily suburban and rural districts in the southern half of England as the scapegoats for the housing shortage
- There are some 4,000 un-built permitted dwellings in Breckland, 30,000 in Greater Norwich and 1million across England. If these were encouraged to be built then the some 250,000 completions achieved last year could be topped up by 50,000 a year for 20 years – without any need for these ill-thought-out proposals – so focus on the land-banking developers.
- The "proposed reforms are designed to remove an entire layer of local democratic accountability" taken from The Times editorial on 29th August 2020 supporting the White Paper!
- The 30 month Local Plan making period will none-the-less apparently create "world-class civic engagement and proactive plan-making" – how?
- It pits south against the north, urban against rural
- Completely ignoring the lessons from the pandemic and indeed any mention of Covid-19

And

- It could decimate our rural communities in Breckland

We have to push back and push back hard to stop these proposals combined with the "mutant algorithm" decimating our communities.

I have set out the key issues that run through the White Paper with comments and questions in the attached.

Plan element (my numbering)	Comment/Questions
<p>1. The Government’s commitment to achieving 300,000 new homes each year, by centrally imposing LPA binding targets for 337,000 homes (including a buffer for any shortfall). <i>For Breckland this is 1,070 new dwellings pa versus the Local Plan base figure of 612 – a 75% increase.</i></p>	<p>This is despite rejection of the reduction in projected households over the next 10 years or so.</p> <p>Completely ignores the fact that Local Councils cannot build new homes, irrespective of the number of planning permissions granted each year, and that there is no current incentive for developers who are land banking to bring their permitted developments forward for completion;</p> <p>No mention of the implications arising from the Covid pandemic, indeed it emphasises “intensification” and “densification”, potentially the exact opposite of the post Covid world’s requirements with those living closest together being at most risk, and more people working from home requiring greater requirements for gardens and open space;</p>
<p>2. Planning Policies would be in the NPPF – no local planning policies</p>	<p>A belief in one size fits all, based on the urban environment and little other than passing consideration of predominantly rural areas.</p> <p>Emphasis on “densification” and “intensification”. No reference to the issues arising out of Covid-19 – people working from homes, importance of gardens, main spread of pandemic in high density accommodation.</p>
<p>3. New Local Plans to be undertaken in 30/42 months focusing on zoning and Local Design Codes.</p>	<p>This streamlined approach is supposed to enhance democratic accountability – how when reduced to 30 months?</p> <p>And is the only chance for public involvement, once the Local Plan is made – little or no further elected member of community involvement.</p> <p>How would this be “world-class civic engagement and proactive plan-making”?</p>
<p>4. Local Plan will designate as 1 of 3 planning “Zones” 4.1. Growth – designated for major growth 4.2. Renewal – additional housing including in and around villages 4.3. Protected – national designations and some “open-countryside”</p>	<p>The binding algorithm number drives this process. Breckland’s 75% increase, way above current record building levels would mean the protected area would be at a minimum and the areas for development including our villages – maximised.</p>

<p>5. In the Growth and Renewal zones, 5.1. presumption in favour of development for classes of permitted development that comply with Local Design Codes (overseen by a new national body) which will be set out in the Local Plan and will be binding on the applicants 5.2. permission in principle for compliant developments</p>	
<p>6. Applications in those zones that are outside the Local Plan, and those in the Protected zone to be via similar planning application process to now.</p>	
<p>7. Streamlining & speeding up the planning process for reserved matters/technical applications to be decided via local Planning Officers.</p>	<p>No involvement of the local community or district councillors at the planning application stage. Are planning decisions below Local Plan level going to be by algorithm or planning judgement? The White Paper waxes lyrical about “prop tech”?</p>
<p>8. New “sustainable development” test for Local Plans to satisfy, doing away with “soundness” and “sustainability appraisals”, but the new test will incorporate “viability”.</p>	
<p>9. Centrally set binding housing targets will be applied – with the amended Standard Method for local housing need in the “Changes” paper as the initial basis for determining this.</p>	<p>for Breckland this 1,070 versus the current 612 dwellings pa in the Local Plan</p>
<p>10. The funding of required infrastructure by Local Authorities raising loans against future Infrastructure Levy projected income from developers once they (if they ever do) commence building out a given planning permission.</p>	<p>Why pass the risk from the private sector to public sector? and particularly to local residents through their council tax. In Breckland we are severely constrained by lack of infrastructure – roads, electricity, water supply, sewerage, broadband, mobile phone coverage, schools, medical surgeries, hospitals, buses etc.</p>
<p>11. Brownfield land utilisation</p>	<p>one positive in the White Paper</p>
<p>12. 5 year land supply will go, but greater reliance on the Housing Delivery Test.</p>	<p>with the implicit threat that if the Housing Delivery Test is not met then central government would either intervene, as now, or take control from the centre.</p>

7.6 Changes to the current planning system (“Changes...”) Consultation deadline 1/10/2020¹

Both these papers are now out for consultation. The White Paper sets out a revolutionary new approach to planning. The “Changes...” nominally proposes changes to the current system, but also provides the basis that the White Paper proposes to develop on. As the “Changes...” consultation closes on 1st October 2020, the following briefing is on this consultation – a further note will follow on the White Paper.

This “Changes...” consultation is important for 2 reasons

- One, the proposals outlined are planned to be implemented this Autumn with no legislation, but by regulation or ministerial statement i.e. without the normal legislative rigour; and
- Two, key elements of the “Changes...” proposals will form the starting point for items in the White Paper.

And covers three areas:

- “Boosting Supply” through a revised standard method for assessing housing numbers
- Delivering “First Homes”
- Supporting SME developers - S106 threshold and provision of affordable homes

“Boosting Supply”

This proposed new standard method, or “algorithm”, is intended to boost housing supply. It focuses solely on the targets for Local Planning Authorities, rather than providing any incentive for developers to bring forward the already permitted dwellings. These are estimated as 3,000 in Breckland, 30,000 in the Greater Norwich area and 1 million across England.

The government’s target is to deliver 300,000 new dwellings pa. With a buffer, this rises to 337,000 homes to be distributed centrally annually, and the total set out from applying the new “Algorithm” actually distributes 370,000 homes. This is supposed to be the starting point for the numbers to be the basis of every Local Plan. Every LPA will be required to have a new Local Plan in place in 3-4 years using the Algorithm numbers as the its basis, once new legislation is in place.

How does this affect Breckland?

Breckland’s current Local Plan is based on delivering an annual number of 612 new dwellings pa. This is the starting point for considering whether the new proposals will make a significant effect or whether in truth the outcome on the ground would be very different (save for the process). The new figure courtesy of the algorithm instead of 612 dwellings is 1,070 dwellings i.e. up **75%** on the current Local Plan number. This is the basis for the calculation of the White Paper’s centrally imposed binding targets.

Norfolk Comparison

	Actual				Proposed Method versus			
	Plan	3 year average	Current Standard Method	Proposed	Plan	3 year average	Current Standard Method	
Breckland	612	692	661	1070	75%	55%	62%	
Broadland	706	673	517	922	31%	37%	78%	
Great Yarmouth	420	248	357	373	-11%	50%	4%	
Kings Lyn & West Norfolk	660	404	538	540	-18%	34%	0%	
North Norfolk	400	505	552	730	83%	45%	32%	
South Norfolk	863	1164	893	1832	112%	57%	105%	
Norwich	477	529	598	502	5%	-5%	-16%	
Norfolk	4138	4215	4116	5969	44%	42%	45%	

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system>

The comparison above highlights the numbers for Norfolk districts, the percentage changes:

- Broadland is up 78% on the affordability method and **up 31%** on its Local Plan
- North Norfolk is up 32% on the affordability method and **up 83%** on its Local Plan
- South Norfolk is up 105% on the affordability method and **up 112%** on its Local Plan
- Norwich is down 16% on the affordability method and **up only 5%** on its Local Plan
- Great Yarmouth is up 4% on the affordability method and **down 11%** on its Local Plan
- King's Lynn & West Norfolk is 0% on the affordability method & **down 18%** on its Local Plan

These centrally set binding housing targets will be applied to the new Local Plans.

There are many issues that arise from this:

- There appears a strong push for more housing in the rural districts of Broadland up 31%, Breckland up 75%, South Norfolk up 112%, and North Norfolk up 83%;
- In contrast the urban districts in Norfolk of Norwich City, up only 5%, Great Yarmouth down 11%, and King's Lynn down 18%.
- How does all this work with the infrastructure requirements?
 - o In Breckland in particular – has a lack of electricity supply, sewerage facilities, poor broadband and mobile coverage, restricted school places and dental provision?
- How then does Breckland deliver 1,070 new homes a year v 612 in the Plan without ?

In addition, there are various flaws with the Algorithm:

- The whole concept is that house prices will fall if there is an increase in the supply of housing. This is fine in theory, but when the developers have no incentive to bring forward their existing permissions, except when the price is right. It leaves control of the market to the developers.
- Within the calculation of the affordability, is the assumption that workplace-pay is the right element to be considered versus the average cost of housing.
- Workplace pay in Breckland is relatively low, but many in Breckland commute to Norwich, and the N&N, to Cambridge and even London and these salaries would be much higher than the Breckland average. If this was taken into account it could dramatically reduce the affordability element ;

Affordable Homes

There are two proposals affecting affordable homes.

First – the introduction of “First Homes” which will take a proportion of the affordable home percentage and offer these as one-off discounts to first time buyer and key workers. It appears to replace shared-ownership, and that dwellings once sold will be lost to the affordable housing stock. A key question then is how does that help?

Second, in the only mention of covid-19 in either of the consultations the Government is concerned with helping SME builders to get back on their feet. To achieve this the proposal is to raise the s106 threshold for requiring a proportion of the development to be allocated to being Affordable Homes (25% in Breckland's Local Plan) from 10 dwellings to 40 or 50 dwellings. Most developments in Breckland are for 50 or less. This would be implemented by a Ministerial Statement – which apparently would override Breckland's Local Plan. There is therefore a risk that for the next couple of years there would be little or no s106 affordable homes delivered in Breckland.

7.7. To review and consider a decision to update/refresh the existing Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plans are not required to undertake a 5 year review, but in not doing so runs the risk of key policies being rendered out-of-date, because:

- The length of time since the consultation that justified the policies
- The adoption of a new Local Plan by Breckland as happened on 29th November 2019
- The revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and therefore it being argued that policies that were in conformity with a former version (2012 in our case) may no longer be compliant with the latest version as revised in 2019, and new version promised by the Government planning consultations.

This could take the form of a “light-touch” review to bring the supporting text and the policies up to date and policies into conformity with the new Local Plan and the latest NPPF – and to consult the community if they support these changes. It would then go to an Examiner who would decide whether it met the legal tests and whether any changes are sufficiently significant to require it to go to a new Referendum.

This has we believe been overtaken by the Government’s Planning Consultation and therefore recommend that we put any review on hold until matters clarify as to those consultations and any subsequent implementation.

7.8. To receive report on liaison with Rocklands PC with regards collaborative approaches to Planning and Flooding issues

Contact has been made, but not taken any further for the moment.

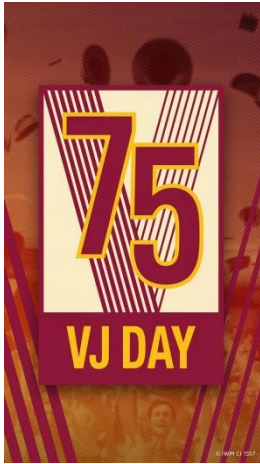
8. Grant Projects

8.1 VE/VJ

A TRIBUTE TO THE FALLEN AND THE END OF WWII

In the Spring, pre-COVID, Yaxham Parish Council formed a VE/VJ Working Group, this group applied to, and received from Breckland a £500 Grant to enable the Parish to mark the momentous 75th Anniversary of the end of WWII. COVID-19 meant a change in plans!

As May was during Lockdown VE Day was a Virtual VE Day event. a great success, especially for the toast to heroes on Friday 8th at 3pm, held over Zoom. Well done everyone who mastered



Zoom, often for the first time. All parts of village joined in including the front garden parties at Well Hill, Priors Grover and Oaklands, plus residents in Spring Lane, Norwich Road Yaxham and Clint Green, Church Lane, Dereham Road, Elm Close. It was a great moment across the whole Parish to pay tribute to the heroes of WWII - everyone in the armed forces and everyone on the home front. Thank you to everyone who entered the WWII Quiz and the Hat Competitions, winners received a VE Day a 75th Anniversary Mug.

We were glad to be able to organise VJ Day as a “real” COVID-19 compliant Event on 15th August at the Village Hall, this was the first main event held in the Hall since lockdown ended. The Event included afternoon Tea and Cakes provided by the Yaxham Community Café. In keeping with the War theme everyone was given a Ration Ticket entitling them to a free drink. Visitors were serenaded by the wonderful Kitty Collins, the Norfolk Vera Lynn and had a chance to view Memorabilia from the war. Outside a dozen stalls, a mini-roundabout and “Hook-a-Duck” kept all ages entertained. The Community Bar was open, and the Football Club played two matches and also ran a very successful BBQ. In all over 150 people checked in for these events – a great result all round – Yaxham at its best.

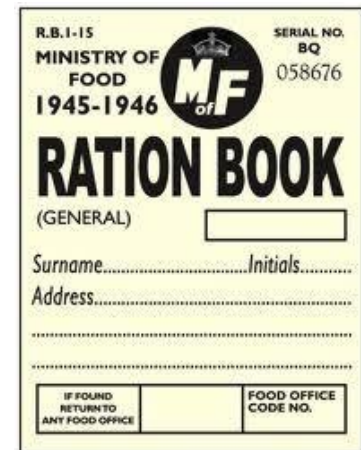
Susan Martin
Coordinator for Yaxham VE/VJ Day



Day

It was
May

the



8.2 Yaxham Cares

Yaxham Cares was funded by £1,000 grant from the Norfolk Community Covid Response Fund administered by Norfolk Community Foundation. The grant timely was timely and very much appreciated. It enabled us to set up "Yaxham Cares" as voluntary group under the auspices of the Parish Council to rapidly get the word out through printed leaflets delivered door-to-door, banners at each end of the village; mileage cost of volunteers (and at the peak we had some 70 volunteers), identity badges and lanyards and PPE etc. The net amount remaining of the £1,000 is therefore some £154.86.

As a small council this remaining sum will be very helpful in securing the volunteers and the organisation, to continue to assist the now identified vulnerable within our community. This we are doing in conjunction with Community Action Norfolk by bringing Yaxham Cares under the "Good Neighbour Scheme" which will enable volunteers to assist the elderly, isolated and vulnerable in our community, not just as a result of Covid.

CAN has offered free DBS checks for volunteers and a set of templates to check our policies and procedures against.

The Parish Council's insurance will cover volunteers under this scheme for public liability and personal injury.

The Working Group, under Yaxham Parish Council, is being reconstituted and draft amended Terms of Reference are attached.

Our thanks to those who are standing down – Peter Smith, Jennie Smith, Trudy Gust and Claire Sullivan – and to those continuing – myself, Maggie Oechsle, Susan Martin and Richard Whadcoat – and welcome to Louise Dye who has stepped forward to act as coordinator, taking over the role that Jennie and Trudy have done so well to date. They are returning to focus on the Community Car Scheme, the relationship with which will be very important to Yaxham Cares. If other Councillors wish to be involved then please let us know.

We propose to buy a basic mobile phone on a pay as you go basis so that the public have one number to ring and it avoids the coordinator or her alternate personal phone numbers being given out.

We will come forward with a proposed budget to be included in the Parish Council's formal budget in November, and in the meantime there is the residual grant, and any further significant expenditure will be brought to the Council for approval.

Yaxham Parish Council
Yaxham Cares Working Group - Terms of Reference – September 2020

The Yaxham Cares Working Group Terms of Reference were adopted by Yaxham Parish Council on Tuesday 31st March 2020 and amended on 24th September 2020. With the Government prohibiting gatherings of more than 6, all references to a “meeting” or “meetings” shall include virtual meetings over Zoom.

Objective

To lead, organise and coordinate the Yaxham Community Voluntary response “Yaxham Cares”:

- first in the Covid-19 national pandemic, and
- second as a Good Neighbour Scheme, in conjunction with Community Action Norfolk

to seek as far as practical to help those who are vulnerable and isolated in our community to know that they are not alone and that there are residents who non-medical volunteers that are available at the end of the phone to help and assist.

Members

To be seven to be appointed annually or as required and to include the Chairman and Vic-Chairman of the Council. Other members may be members of the Parish Council or residents of Yaxham and co-opted as required. The Clerk to the Council shall be the Clerk to the Working Group.

Quorum

The quorum of the Committee shall be three Members.

Voting

Only the above may vote and participate at a meeting. In the case of an equal vote the Chairman may have the casting vote.

Interests

If a Member has a personal interest as defined by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council then he/she shall declare such an interest as soon as it becomes apparent, disclosing the nature and extent of the interest as required. NB. If a Member has declared an interest and then considers the interest to be prejudicial, he/she must withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the agenda item to which the interest relates.

Chairman

The Chairman of the Working Group shall be a Yaxham Parish Councillors.

Minutes

All minutes shall be open for inspection by any Member of the Parish Council, if appropriate.

Admission of the Public and Press

The Public and Press may not be admitted to these meetings as in accordance with s1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the items of business.

Responsibilities

The Working Group is responsible for organising the voluntary help to assist residents in the Parish of Yaxham who require non-medical assistance during the Corvid-19 National Emergency. In doing this the Working Group will be responsible for the budget and its use, and reporting expenditure to the Full Council for reimbursement by it. The Policies, Insurances etc of the Parish Council shall cover the Working Group

Procedures

Meetings will be held on an as and when needed basis. The operation of “Yaxham Cares” will take account of the all the Policies (including Safeguarding and GDPR), Insurances etc of the Parish Council. The attached protocols will guide the operation of Yaxham Cares.

Terms of Reference

The Working Group shall review the Terms of Reference as and when necessary and make appropriate recommendations to Full Council.

- 1) The members of the Working Group shall be:

Cllr Ian Martin, Cllr Maggie Oechsle, Cllr Richard Whadcoat, Louise Dye, Susan Martin

- 2) The Working Group will collect and collate in so far as is practical as much relevant information on national and local requirements, local shops and services that are consistent with the overall objectives of the Yaxham Cares (YC) initiative.
- 3) The Working Group shall produce and publish (electronically or on paper or both as required) newsletters and updates to go out to all residents or as many as practical in order to ensure that as far as is practical all the residents of the parish have the opportunity to see these and share them with neighbours.
- 4) The Working Group shall be the Parish Council's link to national, Norfolk County Council, Breckland Council and national and local organisations relevant to achieving YC's objectives.
- 5) Badges – All volunteers to wear badges identifying them when working for YC.
- 6) The YC coordinator – Louise Dye or agreed alternative – will take calls (on a mobile to be supplied by Yaxham PC) and emails and decide how to respond as constructively as is practical. Where items need to be collected from a resident such as a prescription or post; purchasing of supplies are required etc that require a YC volunteer then the co-ordinator will email the database of volunteers to see if anyone can cover the request.
- 7) Shopping for residents

The following approach will apply:

- YC can assist a resident if they are vulnerable and isolated to the best of your judgement.
- If they are on-line and can do click & collect then they will pay direct and a YC volunteer can collect and deliver
- if they can phone the shop, place an order and give us a cheque to take with us then a YC volunteer can take the cheque to the shop and collect and deliver the ordered goods
- if however the resident is not on line and/or can't order ahead, then they could provide a list for a YC volunteer to purchase.

- There will need to be clear agreement with the resident on the budget and any flexibility the resident is happy with for sensible substitutions to be made within the set budget.
- The YC volunteer would then purchase items where practical and deliver them to the resident. However, goods will not be handed over without the payment to the YC volunteer. Provided both the recipient and the YC Volunteer sign the receipt as paid, then the volunteer should retain the receipt for Yaxham Cares to keep for its records.
- The key rule is - no payment, they don't get the goods.

- 8) Other errands

To be decided at the coordinator's discretion and the availability/willingness of a volunteer.

The Working Group shall be responsible for maintaining and revising these protocols as events unfold, subject to reporting any significant changes to the Parish Council.

8.3 To receive update on Parish Partnership Grants

8.3.1 SAM2 Pole –
confirmed, awaiting NCC/Wescotech to confirm & will need to sign a new MoJ

8.3.2 Village Gateways –
in place – value £6,000, cost YPC £2,000

8.3.3 Lining Improvements –
designs to come forward for the Whinburgh Road/Norwich Road junction to include a site for a SAM2 sign to be mounted

8.3.4 Well Hill Bus Shelter
Need to consult on this – two options, similar to the new Yaxham Bus-shelters or commission our own, need to discuss budget, and to consult on the new location in Clint Green.

8.4 To consider Parish Partnership Bids 2021/22

8.4.1 Replacement of remaining wooden bus shelter – if a good idea will need to gain quotes ahead of the December PP grant application submission

8.4.2 Others ideas?

9. Recreation Field Play Area

9.1. To receive and consider a report from Cllr Couves, YPC Liaison with YVAA

9.2. To consider and agree next steps including the option of offering to take full responsibility for the recreation Play Area.

Proposal to consider: that we write to YVAA offering say a 10 year management agreement lease for a “peppercorn” annual rent where YPC takes full responsibility for management, maintenance, liability etc of the equipment including railings and ground coverings – but not the land. Insurers have confirmed that our Public Liability insurance will cover this. The YVAA does not insure the equipment as it will hopefully be replaced in due course. The management agreement/lease would be on a similar basis to the Portakabin lease by YPC to the YVAA.