

# 1. WELCOME



Following discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting in May, the Parish Council has decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the village so that we can influence where any new development goes over the next 20 years.

Today you have a chance to find out about Neighbourhood Plans and how you might help with Drinkstone's Plan.

## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

It is a new kind of planning document designed to allow local people to play an active part in planning their area. It can guide the development and conservation of the village.

It can, for example, also identify proposals for:

- Improving areas
- Providing new facilities
- Sites for new development
- Protecting sites of environmental or historic quality

When complete, it will form part of the statutory development plan for the area, meaning Mid Suffolk District Council and Planning Inspectors will have to take note of what it says when considering development proposals.

## Why we're doing it

Our village is coming under increasing pressure for new development. Permission has been granted for four new homes in the last year. Mid Suffolk are having to find sites for around 6,500 new homes across the district over the next 20 years.

Preparing our own Neighbourhood Plan gives us the opportunity to shape the future by deciding how and where the village will grow and what is needed to support that growth. It also allows us to identify what we want to preserve and improve.



# DRINKSTONE

Our village - Our choices



# 2. BACKGROUND



## What a Neighbourhood Plan can and cannot do

A Neighbourhood Plan can...

- Decide where and what type of development should happen in the parish
- Promote more development than is set out in the Local Plan.
- Include policies, for example regarding design standards. These take precedence over existing policies in the Local Plan for the parish. However, Neighbourhood Plan policies must not conflict with the strategic policies in the Local Plan.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot...

- Conflict with the strategic policies in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan.
- Be used to prevent development that is included in the Local Plan.



## Who prepares the Plan?

The Plan will be prepared by a Working Group that consists of Parish Councillors and volunteers from the village.

We will be assisted by Places4People Planning Consultants, who have considerable experience in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans.

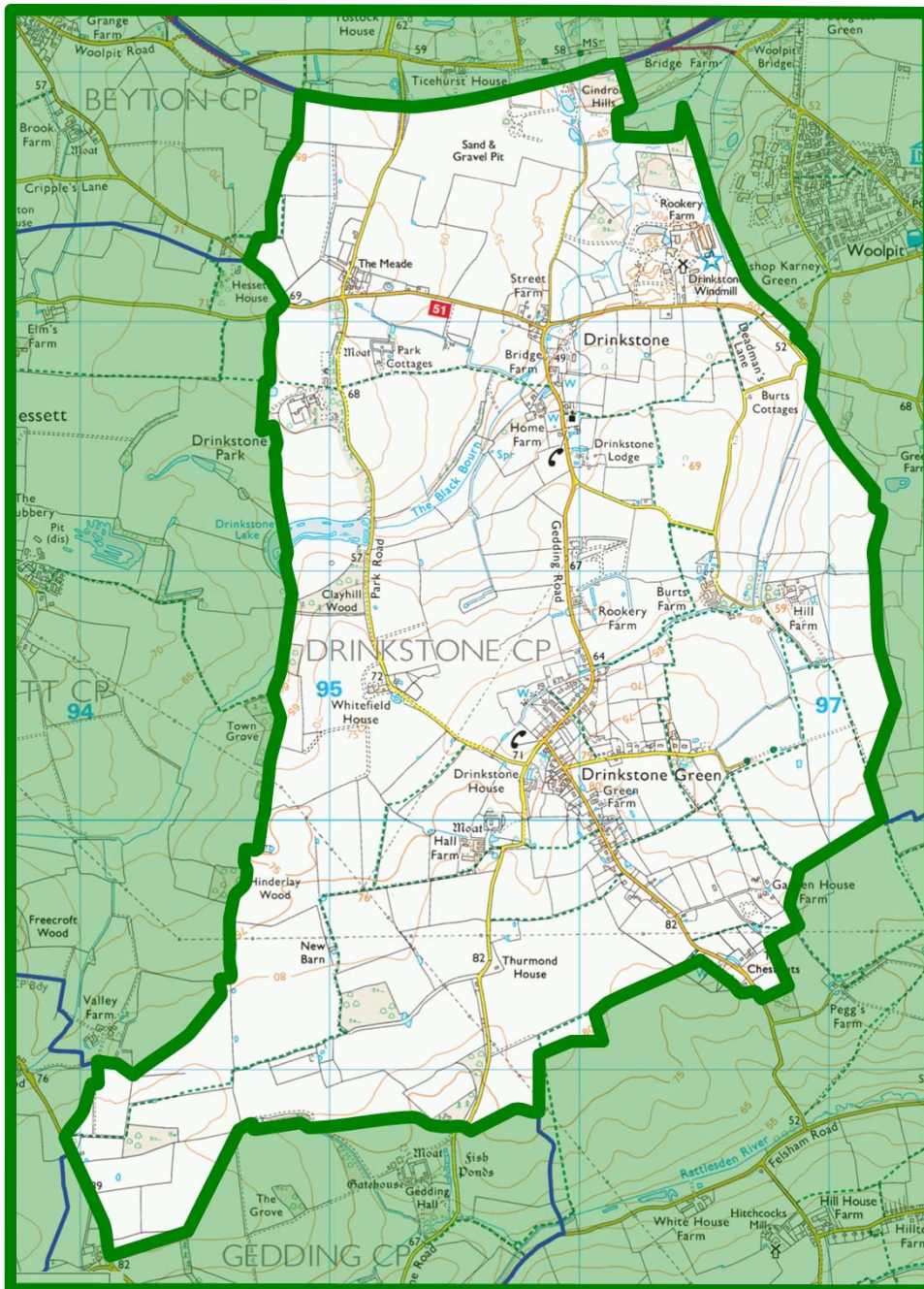
If you would like to get involved then please let us know. We'll need people to distribute questionnaires, gather information and analyse surveys.



# 3. THE PLAN AREA



In order to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, it is necessary to designate a "Neighbourhood Area". Following general support being expressed at the Annual Parish Meeting, the Parish Council asked Mid Suffolk District Council to designate the whole of the parish, as shown below, as the Neighbourhood Area. This is the normal approach for villages preparing Neighbourhood Plans. The Plan Area was confirmed in June.



# 4. THE PROCESS

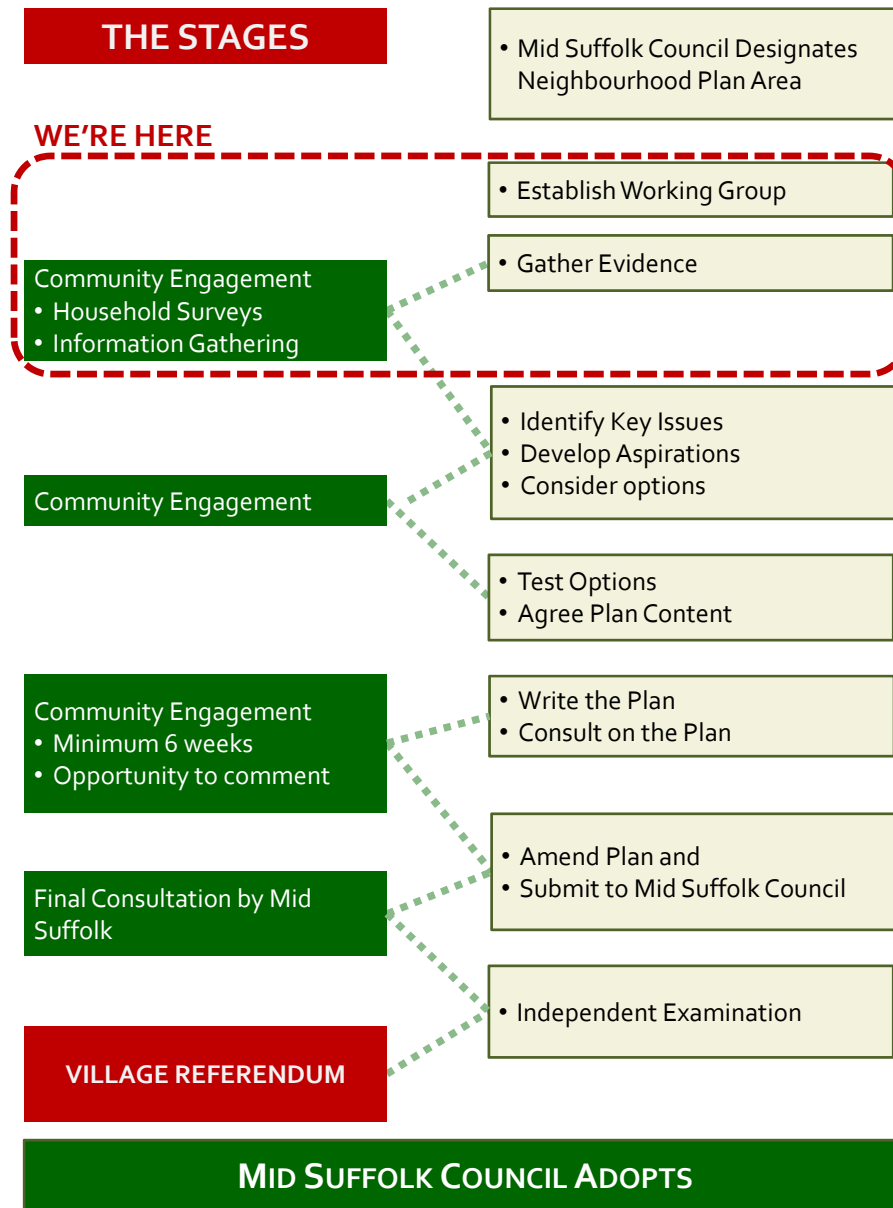


## How it's prepared

There are a number of stages that have to be completed, as illustrated. Some of these stages are governed by the regulations for preparing Neighbourhood Plans and so there is no short cut. The Plan will be prepared by the Steering Group advised by specialists when necessary. We encourage YOU to get involved too, either with the Steering Group or at the various consultation stages like today.

**At the end of the day, it's YOU who will decide whether the Plan should be approved.**

**Community Involvement is a major part of the process and the Plan must be approved in a village referendum before it can be used.**

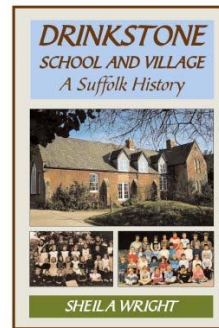


# 5. DRINKSTONE PAST AND PRESENT



## Natural and Built Characteristics

- Drinkstone started as two settlements, one around The Street and the other around The Green (where the main centre of population is now found).
- The parish also includes a small settlement formerly known as Potash, the remaining dwellings on the site of Drinkstone Park, a country house demolished in the 1940s and a number of outlying farms and cottages.
- Its centres are equidistant from Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket.
- Many of the farms date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and some of the cottages built to house farm workers are still standing and are as old as these farms.
- Geographically, the land slopes upwards from the A14 to the highest point on the border of Gedding parish, before dropping again to the River Ratt valley that flows east to the coast at Ipswich..
- The Black Bourn has its source at Bradfield St George and flows via Drinkstone Lakes northwards through Ixworth before joining the Little Ouse south of Thetford and on to The Wash
- The parish has one of the smallest Conservation Areas in the country, at just over ½ hectare, surrounding the two windmills.
- In addition, there are 44 Listed Buildings
- A number of trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders and there are four County Wildlife Sites
- A large part of the parish is designated as a Special Landscape Area



- VILLAGE CLUBS**  
**Weekly or more:**  
 Yoga (twice a week)  
 Circle Dancing  
 Art Club  
 Junior Club  
 Youth Club  
 Tuesday Club  
 Tai Chi

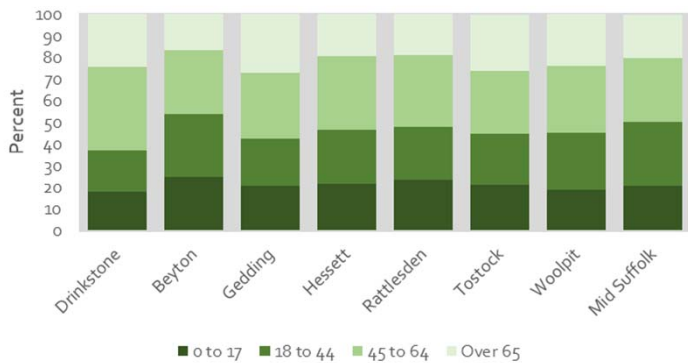
- Monthly**  
 Women's Institute  
 Stitch and Craft  
 Bingo  
 Gardening Club  
 Reading Circle 1  
 Reading Circle 2  
 Reading Circle 3  
 History Group

## The Village

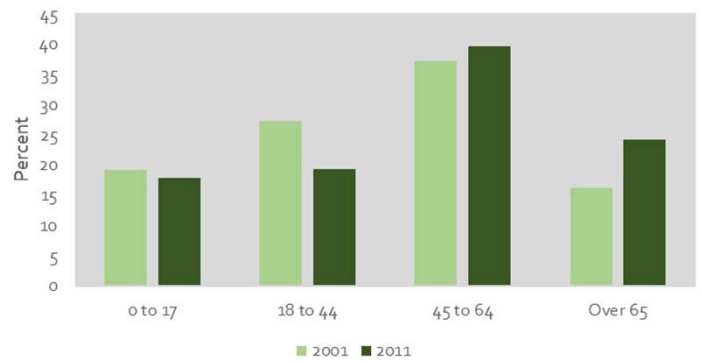
- In 1801 the population is recorded as 369 compared with 548 at the time of the 2011 Census
- 42 new homes or conversions were completed in Drinkstone between 2001 and 2016
- 24% of residents were aged 65 or over in 2011, compared with 16% in 2001.
- Over the last 30 years or so, the village school, shop, post office and pub have all closed.
- The Village Hall remains the focal point for community life and is home to a large number of educational, artistic, sporting, social and recreational activities.



Population Structure



Village population comparison 2001 - 2011



# 6. LIKES & DISLIKES



To help us prepare the Neighbourhood Plan, we would like you to tell us what you like most about the village and what you'd like to see improved.

**MOST CHERISH**

Use post-it notes  
To write comments &  
coloured dots if you  
agree or disagree with  
comment

**LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED**

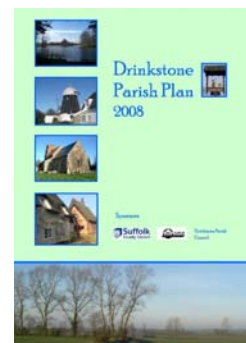


# 7. 2008 PARISH PLAN



In 2008 we prepared a Parish Plan for the village. However, it does not have any status in the determination of planning applications.

The Parish Plan contained a number of Actions. The next 3 boards identify what has been achieved and asks if any are still needed today



Completed High Priority Actions			
Develop new village hall			
Press for speedy development of Cherry Tree site			
Investigate and set up a youth club/drop in centre for young people			
Continue to work to eliminate smell from Rookery Farm			
Outstanding High Priority Actions	Status	Still needed?	
		YES	NO
Reduce speeding in the village and enforce speed limits.	A speed watch group was set up, with speed camera. Activity ceased through lack of volunteers		
Ensure parish plan is taken into account in planning decisions	The Parish Plan had no legal status when Mid Suffolk made planning decisions. Mid Suffolk has to take account of a Neighbourhood Plan.		
Work with Suffolk Police to achieve more visible police presence in village and quick response to incidents	This never really happened, and has been overtaken by frequent reorganisations of Suffolk Police		
Lobby for better enforcement of planning decisions	The Parish Council aims to provide informed and relevant responses to planning applications, and is proactive in keeping on at Enforcement where there are issues		
Present Parish Plan to planners to reinforce awareness of local views	Will be replaced by the Neighbourhood Plan		
Set up a youth web	Probably overtaken by Facebook / Snapchat / Instagram?		



# 8. 2008 PARISH PLAN



## Completed Medium Priority Actions

Provide more dog bins

Increase use of village website – New website runner-up in Suffolk Association of Local Councils website of the year competition (small village category)

Ensure footpaths are kept clean and clear at all times of year – The Parish Council Footpath Warden has established "Adopt a Footpath" - a volunteer group to cut paths in the summer, and PC has purchased heavy duty strimmers for their use. More volunteers welcome

Outstanding Medium Priority Actions	Status	Still needed?	
		YES	NO
Investigate feasibility of oil cooperative	This was set up, but ceased through lack of volunteers to run it.		
Investigate options for child care in village	Never really happened?		
Investigate again possibility of lorry weight restrictions (being addressed)	This was largely to do with the rendering plant at Rookery Farm. This closed down several years ago and lorry traffic has significantly reduced		
Strengthen Neighbourhood Watch	No action taken		
Lobby Suffolk CC for gritting of main bus route through village	Appears to be much better?		
Establish better communication between PC and residents	The minutes are published on the village website. The Chair writes a synopsis in the monthly Drinkstone Parish Magazine..		
Expand effective liaison between PC and neighbouring PCs	At the time of the plan, four PCs were working together to address the Woolpit Whiff from Rookery Farm		
Provide better information to residents about MSDC planning decisions	Mid Suffolk planning decisions are available on their website and included in the Parish Council report for the Parish Magazine and on the village website.		





# 9. 2008 PARISH PLAN



## Completed Low Priority Actions

Increase number of allotment plots – now sufficient to meet demand

Outstanding Low Priority Actions	Status	Still needed?	
		YES	NO
Build on interest in alternative sources of energy for heating and water	Nothing happened on this one		
Investigate feasibility of mains gas supply to village	No action		
Contact Highways to address problems of verge and road edge erosion	No specific action		
Establish programme for maintenance of hedges and trees in public areas	No specific action. The Parish Council monitors this on its own land. The Parish now has a Tree Warden		
Investigate creating a network of bridleways	Strong opposition to horses sharing footpaths with walkers. A farmer allowed riding on his land on farm tracks		
Lobby MSDC for more recycling and larger black bins where needed	No specific action		
Lobby mobile phone and TV networks to improve reception	Largely been superseded by improved technology and the drive for better broadband. We have 4G in much of the village now. Broadband still inadequate.		
Provide more litter bins	No action		
Assess feasibility of environmentally friendly street lighting and / or pavements where required and cycle paths	No action – much opposition		



# 10. THE PLANNING RULES



This board provides details of the current and emerging planning policies that our Neighbourhood Plan will have to conform with.

## National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) originally came into force in 2012 and was updated in July 2018. It aims to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth.

It encourages local people to “*shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area*”

Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan nor undermine its strategic policies. However, Neighbourhood Plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area.

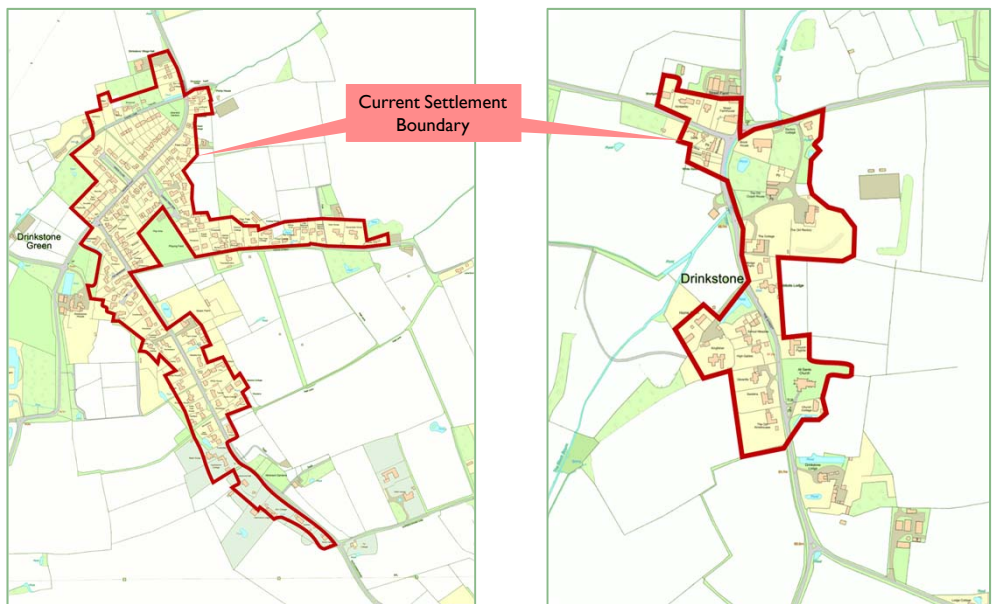
## Mid Suffolk Local Plan

The current Local Plan Core Strategy designates Drinkstone as a “Countryside Village” where “*development will be restricted to particular types of development to support the rural economy, meet affordable housing, community needs and provide renewable energy.*”

So, as a Countryside Village there is no expectation to have a large number of new houses in the village.

The previous Local Plan (1998) identified Settlement Boundaries for two areas of the village – Drinkstone Church and Drinkstone Green, as illustrated below. Development is only allowed outside the boundary in exceptional circumstances.

The Neighbourhood Plan has the opportunity to review these boundaries.



## New Local Plan

Mid Suffolk has started work on a new joint Local Plan with Babergh that will guide how much development should take place to 2036, and where it should go. Last year they consulted on some initial proposals including that Drinkstone should be designated a “Hinterland Village” because of its location and the level of services and facilities it provides. The Parish Council has contested this and we’re hopeful that the designation will be changed to “Hamlet” when the draft Local Plan is published in the coming weeks.

Hamlets will only be expected to take very low levels of housing development.

The new Local Plan will take about two years to complete and the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be mindful of the emerging strategy of the new Plan.

Babergh & Mid Suffolk  
Joint Local Plan:  
Consultation Document  
August 2017



# 11. THE PLAN CONTENT



You're probably aware that the Government is prioritising more house building in the UK.

Among other things, they require district councils :

- to have an up-to-date local plan
- to be able to demonstrate that enough sites are available to deliver enough homes for the next five years

If a district council does not have a five-year land supply, then the policies in either a local or neighbourhood plan on the location of new housing cannot be used to decide where such housing should go. A Neighbourhood Plan can, however, be used if there is at least a three-year supply and it is meeting the identified housing requirement for the parish.

Until very recently, Mid Suffolk did not have a five year supply of land, so we were vulnerable to speculative planning applications for new housing. Six new homes have been granted planning permission in Drinkstone in the last year.

The Neighbourhood Plan will, when complete, allow us to be in control of where future housing development can take place in Drinkstone. We believe that the new Local Plan should designate Drinkstone as a Hamlet in their village hierarchy. That means we should have between 10 and 15 additional new homes by 2036.

**The Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan is intended to**

- help to maintain the general character and layout of the village,
- try to meet the needs of local people
- Protect the environment and minimise any adverse effects on local infrastructure or facilities

Do you agree with these intentions?

**YES**



**NO**



# 12. ASPIRATIONS



Most plans have a vision of what the village will be like in the future. We'd like you to contribute towards defining a Vision for Drinkstone.

Using single words, describe how you'd like the village to be in 2036

Use post-it notes

Use post-it notes

Use post-it notes

Use post-it notes

*In 2036 Drinkstone will be.....*



# 13. VILLAGE CHARACTER

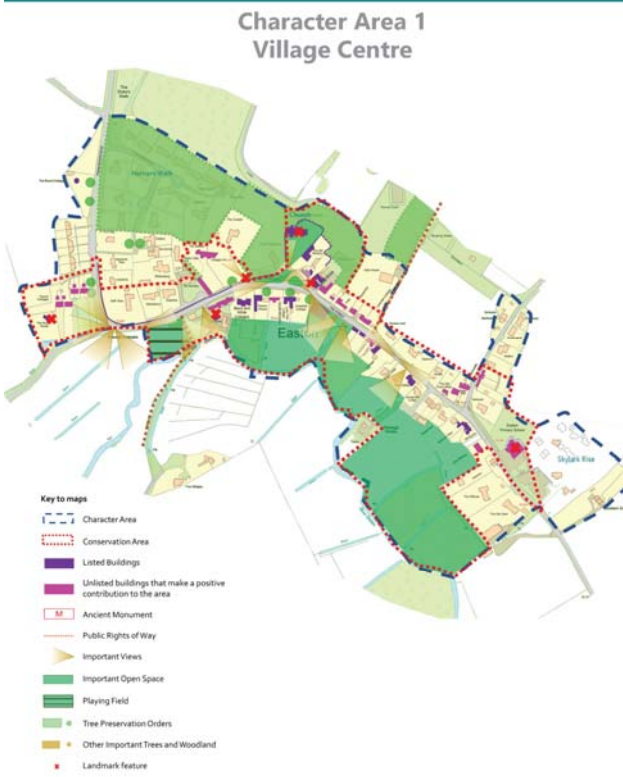
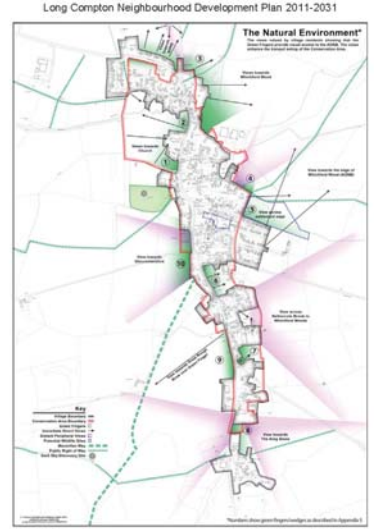


## Identifying Important Local Characteristics

An important advantage of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is that it's possible to identify important features in the village that add to the distinct characteristics of the area and so should be protected. Examples of assessments from other neighbourhood plans are illustrated here.

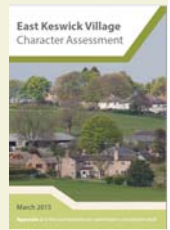
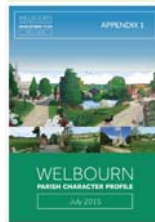
We intend to prepare a Landscape Character Assessment and a Built Environment Character Assessment. These will enable us to identify features such as important views, woodland, open spaces, building materials and characteristics.

Can you spare some time to help prepare these pieces of work?



What features in Drinkstone do you think should be preserved and protected

Use post-it notes  
To write comments &  
coloured dots if you **agree** or  
**disagree** with comment



# 14. HOUSING GROWTH



What type of new homes do you think should be built over the next 20 years?

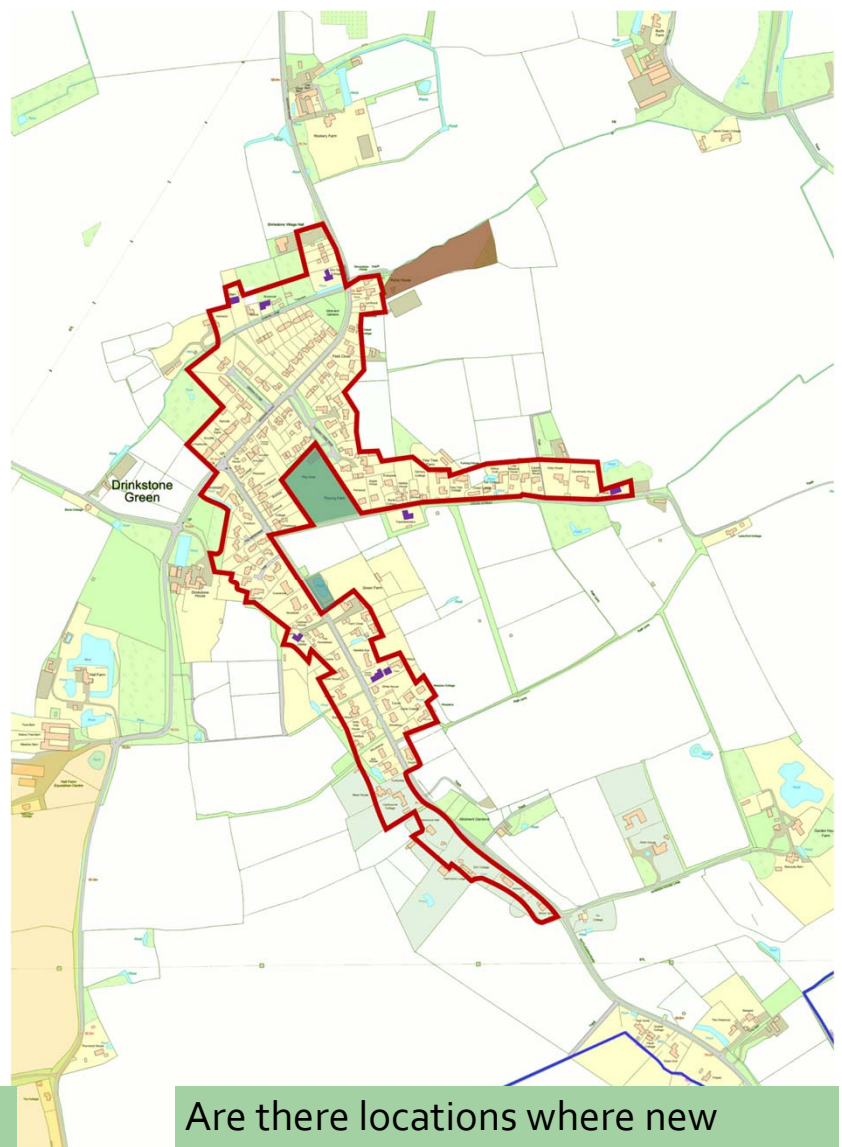
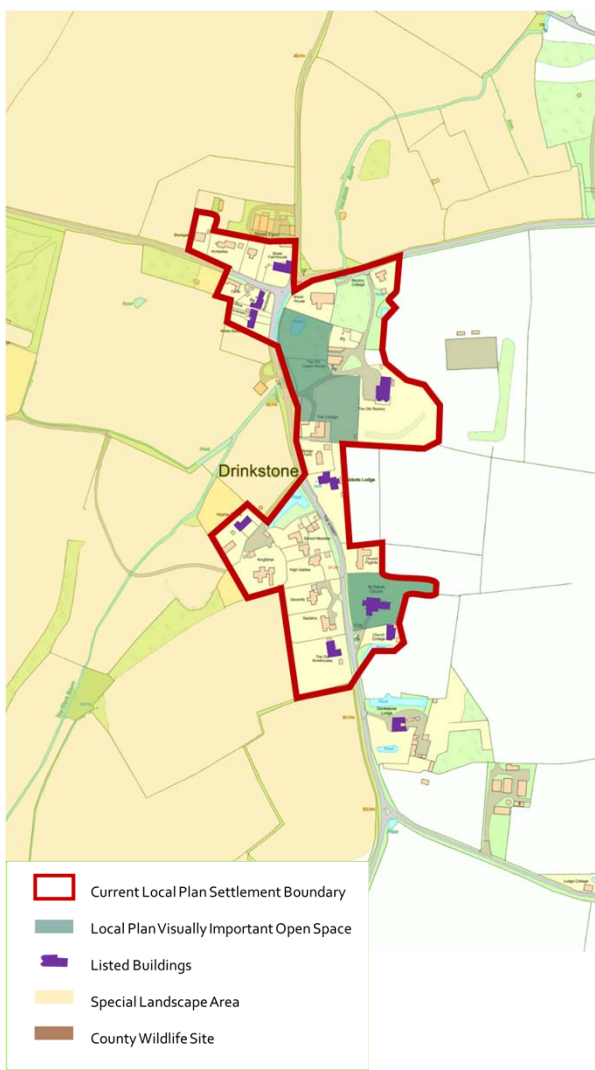
Use coloured dots if you agree or disagree with what's required

1 -2 bedroom homes?

3-4 bedroom homes?

5+ bedroom homes?

Affordable homes to rent?



Are there any areas where new homes should NOT be built?

Use **red sticky dots** for suggestions

Are there locations where new homes could be built?

Use **green sticky dots** for suggestions



# 15. WHAT NEXT



## Residents' Survey

Soon we'll be distributing a questionnaire to every household in the village. The information we gather today will help us draw up the questionnaire as will statistical and environmental information gathered from other official sources.

Please help us by sparing the time to complete the questionnaire and returning it to us.

## Information Gathering

We will also be gathering information about the village such as use of facilities, the natural and historic environment and other matters that might be raised today.

## Vision and Options

The outcome of today's event, plus the information gathered through research and the Residents' Survey will help us prepare a vision for the Neighbourhood Plan and some draft options for its content. We'll test these with you before we proceed to the next stage.

## Possible Housing Site Identification

We will need to decide how to meet the housing requirements of the village and whether to identify a site or sites for housing. It is important that you are given information before the Plan is produced.

We'll hold further consultation events where you can give us your feedback on the suitability of any identified sites.

## Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Once the above stages have been completed we'll start preparing the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Once complete, we'll undertake formal consultation for a period of six weeks. This will allow anyone to make comments before the Plan is amended and sent to Mid Suffolk or further consultation and then assessment by an independent Examiner.

## Can you spare some time?

We've established a small group to start the Neighbourhood Plan process but we need more people to help.

Could you spare a couple of hours a month to attend a meeting and also help out with specific tasks under the guidance of our professional Neighbourhood Planning consultant?

Please let us know.

**DRINKSTONE**  
Our village - Our choices

# 16. COMMENTS



Use this board to post any additional comments about the Neighbourhood Plan

