

2013 was a long time ago and we were, well, 6 years younger! A group of Malborough's residents attended a SHDC led workshop at Follaton House to learn about the Government's relatively new (2011) Localism initiative, Neighbourhood Planning. Full of enthusiasm we bought the concept back to the village and the Parish Council led the debate as to whether we should engage with this, allowing, nay mandating, Local Communities to determine their own future, essentially with respect to Planning. The go ahead was given and Malborough was designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Area.



2019 and we have a Plan, one that you now need to vote on. Is it all we hoped for? What have we achieved? Why bother to vote? Why did it take so long? In all honesty no it doesn't do everything we wanted it to. Time has moved on: for example, a large estate of new builds is now underway and, whilst the emerging Plan gave us some say in the design process, the build is not bound by the policies in the final Plan. Delays were inherent throughout the Neighbourhood Planning process. All of these, we would argue, outside of Malborough's control. And expectations were managed down, the leeway given to Local Communities quite radically reduced and a red pen imposed on some of our aspirations. BUT we have a Plan and one that tries to ensure that:

Any future development in Malborough is of the right type in the right place at the right time and for the right reason.....

In 2014, using questionnaires and drop in sessions, we asked you what you wanted Malborough to look like in 20 years' time, what your priorities were for investment and what type of new housing should be built in the village, where that should be and for whom? Using all this information we then produced a Parish Plan, ran a Call for Sites exercise in 2015 and, from that, generated Site Options and held another public consultation. In 2016 we produced the 1st draft of the Neighbourhood Plan for Malborough and we asked you what you thought about it. Fully intending to finish the rewrite you required in 2017 we were then delayed as 'due process' demanded that we had to do a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. When this was, eventually, received (the only bit of the Plan that was (had to be) 'farmed out' to professionals) in 2018 we submitted the latest Plan to SHDC. They then had to offer up a critique/validation of our Plan to accompany its' submission to an Independent Examiner. In turn the Examiner had to assure herself that we had 'stuck to the rules'. The red pen then came out again as, in terms of Planning Law, things were decreed to be in conflict with SHDC's over-arching strategy or inappropriate to put into a Plan. The Strategic Environmental Assessment also had to be revisited. So we re-wrote again and, now, have a final Plan.

On **27th February 2019** this final Plan is coming back to the Village for you to say Yes or No in a referendum. If you Vote Yes the Plan can be 'made' and it then becomes a statutory planning document and one that developers and the planners at South Hams HAVE to take into account when determining the fate of any planning application in the Parish. As far as possible we have opted to 'stick to our guns' in that what our Plan contains is evidenced by what the village wants! **It is a Local Plan to fulfil Local Need and meet Local aspirations.** Villagers - you/we/us! - are hugely supportive of affordable housing for local people

but not to meet wider, unmet need across the District. Furthermore the drive is for a sustainable community, not one diluted by a disproportionate supply of second homes. To this end, there are policies in our Neighbourhood Plan that aim to achieve this. We have also included policies to protect all the good things we love about our Parish, the environment, our green spaces, local character, whilst trying to ensure we have opportunities for employment and are promoting a local, sustainable community of all ages.

The Parish Council include, with this edition of the Messenger, a Referendum brochure which gives a snapshot of the Plan. The Plan itself and the supporting documents are freely available online, downloadable and by hard copy. Yes the Plan is long, yes it contains jargon – it has to as it will become, if adopted by a Yes vote, a statutory planning document. But we – the Forum, the writers – have tried to keep it ‘real’ encapsulating what we all want but putting it into ‘Planning Speak’ with supportive and explanatory text. It is worth a read, especially on a dark winter’s night!

Included elsewhere in this Messenger are details of how to vote and where to obtain more information from or a copy of the Plan. **Voting takes place at the Village Hall Annexe on the 27th February 2019.** A yes vote means the Plan is adopted, it is ‘made’. We get to have a little more say about what happens in Malborough and where and when than we would if there is a No vote. It is a simple choice.

As to who has developed this Plan, well the answer is most of Malborough, some being more active than others in its actual compilation and move to print. Throughout the process there have been consultations and feedback and opportunities to input. The Forum, at any one time, comprised a maximum of 15 residents and membership has changed over the years as people dipped in and out, playing to their strengths and experiences. The Parish Council are the over-arching body but, bizarrely, in law they are not now able to promote a Yes vote or campaign for the adoption of the Plan. They can only urge you to vote and increase your awareness of the Plan and its’ content. Individual Councillors however can express their personal opinions and preferences and you will find more background information throughout this Messenger.

So, please take time to vote! Your Future – Your Choice – Your Plan and now - Your Vote! Make your vote count. In some ways a low turn-out would be more disheartening than a No vote. At least with the latter we would know that time and interest had been shown to inform the vote. But a Yes vote really is our chance, as a Local Community, to have a greater influence on Planning decisions made by SHDC about Malborough. Don’t miss the boat!

Thank you. We would urge you to vote YES and allow this Plan to be ‘made’ on 27th February 2019.

Malborough’s Neighbourhood Planning Forum. January 2019