

## Dickleburgh and Rushall Neighbourhood Plan 2021

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### Section 2 The Creation of the Neighbourhood Plan

#### 2.1 Introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan

In 2011 the Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning to the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape future development at a local level. The Parish Neighbourhood Plan complements existing local, regional, national and strategic planning policy, providing valuable detail that has come directly from residents of the Parish.

The Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish Neighbourhood Plan is community-led. It has been created in order to guide the future development of the Parish. It is the first of its kind for the Parish and part of the Government’s current approach to planning.

The Neighbourhood Plan was conceived as a response and safeguarding measure to the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) process. For the Parish of Dickleburgh and Rushall, it has been localism at work.

#### 2.2 How the plan was prepared

The Neighbourhood Plan has been commissioned by the Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish Council following residents’ concerns about safeguarding the rurality of the villages and hamlets within the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have prepared the Plan, supported and encouraged at key times by officers from South Norfolk District Council and Broadlands District Council.

In order to inform and involve residents, the Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group believed that effective communication and community engagement was essential from the beginning of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) process. The NP process has therefore been open to all at all times. All meetings have been public, and ideas and concerns of residents have been sought at all times.

The Dickleburgh and Rushall NP runs through to 2042 to reflect the lifespan of the local plan (GNLP). The policies contained within the Dickleburgh and Rushall plan will:

- reflect and reinforce the importance of the rural identity of the villages of Dickleburgh and Rushall as small tranquil villages;
- limit new development to within the settlement boundary;
- provide guidance on the size and scale of any new development;
- ensure the provision of off-road parking.

#### 2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Team

The Neighbourhood Plan team consists of residents who between them have a wide range of skills, experiences, occupations, and interests, including:

Publican, Principal Architect, Advertising Executive, Delivery Driver, Bank Fund Management, School Secretary and Bursar, Health Service Trustee, Lawyer, Publishing, Long Distance Transport Haulage, Musician, Local Education Authority Team Manager, Author, Chairman Parish Council, Leaders of the Village Society, Marketing Executive, Deputy Registrar, Parish Clerk, Biodiversity Experts, Horticulturalist, Local Authority Manager, Education Authority Policy Officer, Captain Ladies Tennis Team, Higher Education Team Leader on Biodiversity, Psychotherapist, Teacher, Parish Council Finance Officer, Vice Principal of a Further Education College, Associate Head Teacher, Garden Designer, Printer, Retail Shop Manager, Captain Ladies Golf Club, Police Officer, Civil Servants, Advertising Executive, Company Director, Chiropterologist.

#### 2.3.1 The group members

Matthew Hill, Eleanor Pugh, Alan Patching, Julia Deighton, Allan Eavis, Karen Barker, Andrew Goodman, Abigail Watson, Brenda Eavis, Ivan Sandford, Pauline Goodman, Darren Watling, Judy Walker, Keith Moore, Ann Baker, Colin Kirk, Mary Hicks, Jackie Patching, Richard Hulett and Ben Grief

#### 2.3.2 Organisation of the Neighbourhood Plan Team

The Neighbourhood Plan team comprised three sub-teams that would meet separately from the whole team to analyse the outcomes of surveys and subsequent information gathering events and occasions, to formulate ideas and documents for the wider group to consider, inform and develop.

The three teams consisted of:

Housing and the Built Environment,

Transport and Connectivity,

Environment (Biodiversity) Heritage and Community.

All other themes such as economy, services were either addressed through those groups or as separate projects identified by individuals within the team who would then start a discussion within the larger group.

All decisions were taken at full committee meetings.

Further detail can be found in support documentation Appendix i Team Meetings

#### 2.4 Seeking a Neighbourhood Plan. The voice of the people.

In 2017 as a consequence of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), which was itself a response to government directives to build more homes across the breadth of the country, a significant number of sites were put forward by landowners and developers for housing development within the Parish. So large was the number and so concentrated on one village that it was thought that, were they to gain planning permission, then the village of Dickleburgh would be lost to the developments, and with that, the loss of its heritage and context. The decision was taken to start the process of creating the Dickleburgh and Rushall NP (D&R NP). The prospect of creating a Neighbourhood Plan team was advertised, and a number of people put themselves forward to join the team. The initial strategy to gather evidence of the views of the communities within the Parish was two-pronged.

On the one hand, a questionnaire was constructed and posted by hand to all addresses within the Parish. All houses were subsequently revisited (in some cases a number of times) to collect the completed forms. The second strategy was to engage the residents of the Parish in the GNLP debate. A public meeting was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2017 to launch the D&R NP. Its purpose was to outline the Neighbourhood Plan processes, the GNLP call for sites outcome and the possible implications for the Parish. Further public meetings were organised. These included; Sites Map, Have Your Say (HYS) and Have Your Say 2 (HYS2). In addition, information on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan was posted on the Parish website and Facebook page and a permanent display in the Village Centre.

##### 2.4.1 The Survey and initial public meeting.

The Neighbourhood Plan was launched on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017 with a public meeting. The initial thoughts of the community were provided at that meeting. The meeting was attended by around 40 members of the Parish. The thoughts, ideas and concerns generated by the public meeting made it quite clear the community was sufficiently concerned that further evidence was sought through a questionnaire.

#### 2.4.2 The Questionnaire

The Questionnaire was constructed during the Spring and Summer of 2017. It was issued during the Autumn and Winter of 2017/2018 and collected over the following months November 2017 – May 2018). In total, these completed questionnaires generated in excess of 2,000 separate responses. Further opportunities were provided for individuals to contribute. This included two public sessions (Have Your Say 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and Have Your Say 2, 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2020); the Neighbourhood Plan was discussed at every subsequent Annual Parish meeting with displays. It also appeared as an agenda item at all Parish Council Meetings.

Further detail can be found in support documentation Appendices ii, iii, iv and v

#### 2.5 Principal Evidence from the public

The trend in recent years has been for new developments to be built at high densities. This is not in keeping with the South Norfolk Spatial Assessment of retaining a rural character that is both peaceful and tranquil<sup>1</sup> and is not in keeping with the notion of rurality. There is concern within the community to retain the village and rural feel. Parish residents wish to see new developments positively contribute through sympathetic and visually attractive design. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) objective to achieve excellence in design, especially design that will help establish a 'strong sense of place' and 'create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit' (NPPF para 58). While the main focus of this policy section is residential development, the policy section is also intended to apply to commercial development should any proposals come forward. The public questions and meetings provided a very strong steer. The communities of Dickleburgh and Rushall are extremely concerned about the quality of life within the Parish, both for current residents and potential new residents. The overarching concerns of the people of the Parish can be found within the terms of beautification and rurality. The list below must be viewed through the prisms of rurality and beautification.

##### 2.5.1 Housing

- Housing must be in sympathy with, and reflective of, the current housing stock and the environmental setting and must be future-proofed.
- There is a strong desire to see housing that supports people at different stages in their life including affordable homes, homes for young families, homes for the elderly that support independent living such as bungalows.
- Gardens and the size of gardens are seen as of paramount importance not just to provide a green lung for the house itself but also to provide adequate space for children to play and explore and to ensure levels of privacy (sight and sound).
- The distance between houses is an important factor to the people of the Parish.
- There is a desire that new homes should be well presented.
- Parking should be off the road and not in front of houses; parking spaces should be provided beside the house or behind the house.
- There should be enough parking space per house to negate the need for cars to be parked nose to tail.
- New houses must be environmentally friendly and environmentally compliant.
- Houses and structures should incorporate features such as electricity generation, water harvesting (grey water usage) and other features that will help optimise biodiversity, protect the environment and conserve natural resources.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.southnorfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LUC\\_2001\\_RPA\\_A5\\_Waveney\\_Rural\\_River.pdf](https://www.southnorfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LUC_2001_RPA_A5_Waveney_Rural_River.pdf)

### 2.5.2 Connectivity

- WiFi. The residents are keen to see improved connectivity in the Parish, particularly Wi-Fi which at the time of publication is still not universal throughout the Parish with different areas having different strengths.
- Rural isolation and isolation through rural poverty is a concern within the Parish. Cars form an essential part of the connectivity. Residents are highly dependent upon the car in order to access work, basic necessities such as food shopping and amenities such as health and wellbeing.

### 2.5.3 Transport and traffic

A significant concern across the Parish is the number of heavy goods lorries driving through the villages at all times of day and night. In Dickleburgh, this movement of traffic is focused upon The Street and Rectory Road. In Rushall, it is focused upon The Street and the Harleston Road.

- Residents would like to see heavy goods lorries using alternative routes to get to their destinations.
- Traffic calming featured significantly, both as a separate issue and also in relation to; pedestrian, cyclist, horse and horse rider safety. Concern was expressed about people ignoring speed limits and pollution generated as a consequence of the high volumes of traffic on some streets.
- There is concern over the lack of car parking spaces available in the villages.

### 2.5.4 Heritage

- Residents are proud of the heritage and history of the Parish and the villages and hamlets within the Parish. There is a strong desire to add to the knowledge and understanding of the villages within the landscape.
- The Moor at Dickleburgh received a significant number of positive comments expressing a strong desire to maintain all views on and off the Moor and to protect the surrounding environs of the Moor.
- Other sites across the Parish were identified as needing protection. They included St. Clements and Langmere Commons, Olivers Wood, the allotment sites in and around Dickleburgh, the open spaces along Rectory Road and toward the Moor, the playing field on Harvey Lane.

### 2.5.5 Conservation and Biodiversity

Protecting flora and fauna is a principal concern that affects everyone. It adds to wellbeing and an understanding of place. There were many examples of areas that needed to be protected in order to maintain flora and fauna, especially in and around the villages. A number of rare plants were identified as existing in the hedgerows of the Parish and on the verges. Mammal routes for food, and flight corridors of birds and mammals, were identified as requiring special protection.

### 2.5.6 Wellbeing

There was a strong expression of the desire to preserve open spaces, to protect open spaces and add to the public open spaces in the heart of the village of Dickleburgh, enabling easy public access to the open countryside. Engagement opportunities were identified, such as holiday learning and after school clubs for school-age children, and youth clubs, adult learning opportunities for people to re-skill, learn new skills or develop new interests.

## 2.6 Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a marked influence on the lives of residents in Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish, changing their perception of three aspects of the Parish plan. First, they recognise a need for secure and safe housing with appropriate amenities and enabling local neighbourhood-based support systems (neighbourliness) while safeguarding individual interests. Secondly, they value the ease and safety of road and footpath access, particularly remarking on the pleasure of reduced traffic on roads. And thirdly, there is a far higher appreciation, with marked emphasis placed on the 'green

environment<sup>2</sup>. The Parish has seen abundant use of country walks, people tending their gardens for pleasure and to encourage wildlife, observation and preservation of the Parish's flora and fauna and sharing this on local social media sites. This has led to a call for the introduction of Quiet Lanes across the Parish

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<sup>2</sup> Green Exercise Linking Nature Health and Well Being. Joe Barton et al. Routledge 2016. p. 102