

## **Hough on the Hill Neighbourhood Plan**

The draft plan Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the Parish Council in May 2014. Throughout Jun and July there was another 6 week period of consultation with local residents and other stakeholders, including a stand at the Hough Summer Fete.

The project team then finalised the Plan and associated documents in light of the comments received and the final plan was approved by the Parish Council in September. South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) then checked for compliance and ran another consultation, before submitting the Plan to an independent inspector.

The inspector's report, issued in January, was very positive and recommended that, with only very minor changes, the Plan should go forward to local referendum.

However, along with Stubton, ours is the first Neighbourhood Plan to be completed in South Kesteven. SKDC internal procedures, as well as the May 2015 election, have delayed the local referendum until early July 2015.

The policies and guidance in our plan, which were derived from the results of last year's extensive local consultation, will guide every future planning decision in the Parish. Thanks to a government grant and the work of volunteers, our Plan has been prepared at no cost to the Parish.

## **Planning**

Once again, the main planning concern this year has been the application for a wind farm at Temple Hill, Hough on the Hill. The Council continued to work with reVOLT (the community campaign group) and neighbouring parishes to ensure local concerns were properly represented. Due to the size of this application and omissions in the initial evidence, the application has been hanging over the Parish for 18 months. Eventually, SKDC planners recommended refusal, reflecting the objections sent in by the County Council, the neighbouring districts and 23 parish councils. Just two days ago (17<sup>th</sup> March) the Development Control Committee unanimously rejected the application.

We now wait to see if the applicant will ask the Planning Inspectorate to overturn the local decision. Within sight of the Parish, a large wind turbine near Foston was refused this year, but another large turbine is being built near Marston Toll Bar after being allowed on appeal. There are understood to be imminent applications for wind farms on Fulbeck airfield and Sewstern Lane, Allington.

## **Other Council Responsibilities**

The Council owns and operates the play area in Hough. Councillors continue to regularly monitor the condition of the playground equipment and once a year a specialist company carries out a full safety check. The Parish Council has put aside £400 a year to pay for necessary repairs, replacement or additions.

The Council will be considering how to make more use of the playing field. Last August, with Council consent, a group of residents organised a successful Summer Music Party on the field.

The grass, hedges and all the other plots of land owned by the Parish continue to be well maintained by Mr and Mrs Flowers of Brandon.

## **Roads**

In May councillors met the County Highways area manager to discuss the state of the parish roads and road signs. Although most of the problems we reported were fixed, road surfaces have since deteriorated.

Excess speed was one of the concerns raised during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation. In December, the council arranged a survey by Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership, which confirmed that cars were speeding along High Road in Hough. Although the accident figures are not high enough to justify speed cameras, the police will be conducting spot checks in the area.

Meanwhile the Parish Council has obtained a number of temporary 30mph signs and permission to display these in a number of locations around Hough.

Over the year there were 2 serious crashes on the C001 road in Brandon. Only last week a milk tanker overturned, demolishing 2 garden fences and blocking the road for much of the day. In the past the accident figures and road configuration have meant that Parish Council requests for a lower

speed limit were refused. However, the County Council policy is changing and the Parish will continue to lobby for a safe speed limit here.

### **Other Issues**

Over the year Brandon residents raised money to provide the local LIVES volunteers with a portable defibrillator. The Parish Council has now adopted the telephone box in Hough on the Hill and local residents have installed a fixed defibrillator, with funding from a charity. This is now operational and available for anyone to use when advised by the 999 emergency service. The Parish Council is being asked to support similar arrangements for Gelston and Brandon.

The Council has taken part in consultations to close the railway crossings on the East Coast Mainline. The plan to replace the level crossing at Claypole with an underpass will be welcomed by motorists, but the Council is concerned about the planned closure of the footpath crossing on Frinkley Lane.

In October 2014 local farmer John Lord hosted the National Hedge Laying Championships at Moor Barn, near Hough.

### **Communications**

The council is well aware of the need to improve communications, both ways, between residents and the council. The Council and Loveden websites have been improved and we recently distributed the first edition of a Parish Newsletter. By doing so we hope to collect email addresses and thus make it easier and cheaper to distribute newsletters and any urgent or important messages.

### **Clerk and Councillors**

Our Parish Clerk, Andy Anderson, retired in 2014 after four years conscientious service. And we now welcome Lesley Frances as his replacement.

Brian Gray retired as a Councillor after many years' service to the community. He was always ready to welcome new residents and get them involved in village life. He was keen to preserve the countryside and rural life, always working in the best interests of the Parish.

Last May, Sue Morgan stepped down as chair, after running the Council for 10 years as chair, but continues to serve as a councillor.

Two new councillors, from Brandon and Gelston, were co-opted last year, but we still have 2 vacancies; so any residents with an interest in local affairs are invited to put themselves forward.

Lastly on behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank County Councillor Paul Wood and District Councillor Victor Kerr for attending our regular meetings and keeping us informed. Cllr Kerr stands down in May 23 years' service as our representative in Loveden Ward. The district council boundaries are being re-organised in May with Loveden Ward disappearing and Hough on the Hill Parish becoming part of Loveden Heath ward. I'd also like to thank Cllr Sampson, who currently represents Heath ward, for attending our recent meetings.