

CULHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION STATEMENT

**Prepared by the Culham Parish Council's
Neighbourhood Plan Working Group June 2022**

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1. Introduction

Culham Parish Council has long wished to sponsor a Neighbourhood Plan (NP), but as a small village the resources available to it in terms of volunteers with time to spare are few. The parish council became increasingly concerned with the significant development pressure on the parish.

This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012. Section 15(2), part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain:

1. Contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
2. Explains how they were consulted;
3. Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
4. Describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

2. Community-led plan

A formal attempt to begin the creation of a NP started with a community-led Plan in 2014. That Plan led to a set of proposals which formed the subject of a community survey.

3. Consultation with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)

The threat of wholesale destruction of the parishes green belt further generated support for the creation of a NP and the possibility of commencing work on one was added to the councils agenda. The parish realised that to make a success of the NP then close liaison with SODC was important. Representatives of SODC were invited to attend a Parish Council meeting in autumn 2019 to understand more about the process of creating a NP and whether it was something that SODC, based on their experience of working with other parishes, would reasonably expect a small parish like Culham to make a success of. SODC were positive and represented that they would be helpful and encouraging towards the parish creating a NP and saw no reason why the parish should not be successful.

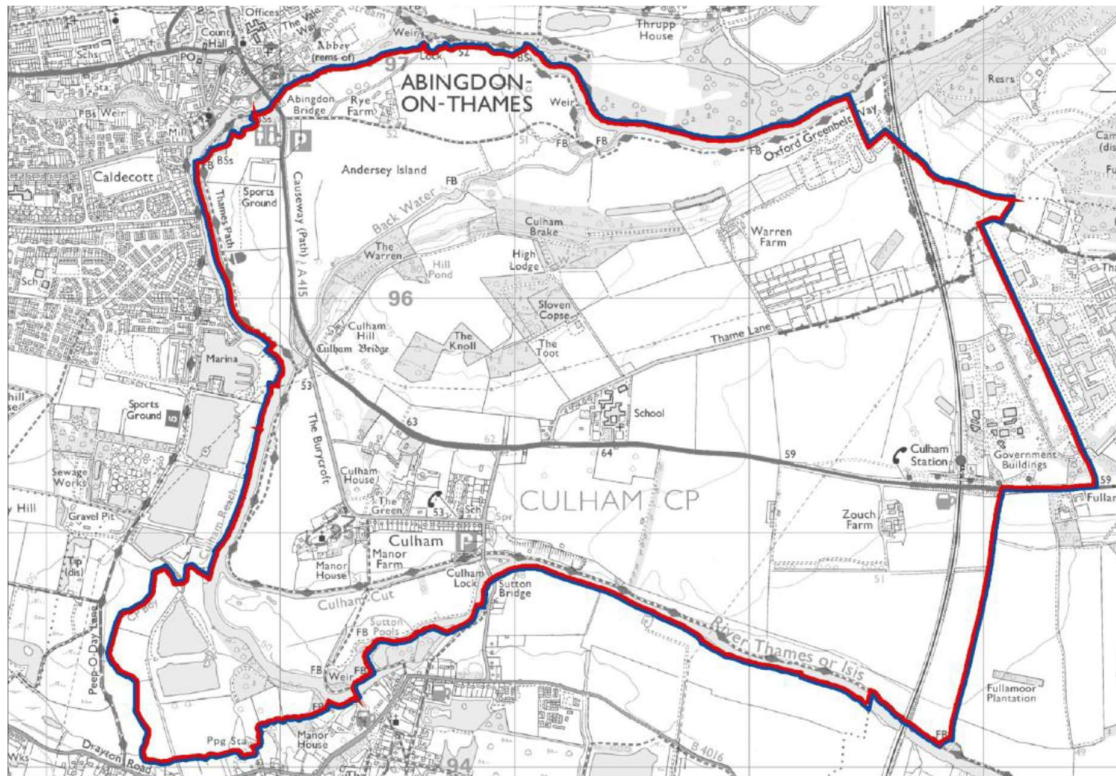
4. Establishment of NP Committee

Culham Parish Council formally created a NP Committee in early 2020 with the mandate to apply for grant funding to assist in the preparation of a NP.

5. Consultation on designated area

One of the first actions of the committee was to meet with SODC face to face which took place fortunately just before lockdown, in March 2020. SODC were supportive as they had promised to be and provided assistance in explaining how the committee could apply for a grant from SODC.

The first job of the committee was to agree with SODC the NP designated area. As a result of parish boundaries having changed in the preceding 10 years or so, a designated area for a neighbouring parish's NP happened to overlap into Culham Parish. SODC helped Culham parish council go through the consultation process which enabled the adjoining NP designated area to be reset to the current parish boundaries and therefore allow the Culham NP designated area to be coincident with the Culham parish boundary. The map of the designated area is below:



6. Neighbourhood Plan committee engagement

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee meet via zoom during the pandemic throughout 2020 and 2021, providing monthly updates at Parish Council meetings, and engaging with members of the public who attended those meetings. It provided short updates and articles into the village community paper, 'The Mouthpiece' and gave an open invitation to anyone who wished to join the committee or provide any contribution or assistance.

7. Village Wide survey

Community consultation has been a key priority for the NP working group from its inception. Culham is a small rural village community with <500 residents. Using the community-led plan as a starting point a new survey was prepared by the NP committee and a copy was posted to every property in the parish. The consultation included a stamped addressed envelope to encourage anyone who wished to reply in writing, or alternatively, provided an email address if the resident preferred that means of communication. The results of that survey reinforced the earlier results from the Community-led plan as well as providing additional feedback on climate and green energy issues, habitat preservation, the desire for better, safer and more sustainable transport infrastructure and the impact of egregious development on the parish.

8. Culham Festival Stall

Since it was not possible to engage face to face in 2020, the earliest opportunity was the first open air event which was held in the village, the Culham Village Festival. The committee organised a stall at the festival which publicised the NP proposals and also used a blown up copy of the ordnance survey of the parish to show villagers the extent of the parish and where the various aspects of the NP would have relevance. There was good engagement from villagers and notably from some younger residents.



9. Consultation with Morrells

Finally, there was consultation with the project planners representing the Morrells family interests who own the now derelict public house the 'Waggon and Horses' in the village. One of the continuing themes throughout the consultations was the wish for a vibrant village pub to be reestablished in the village. There were 3 pubs, one was converted to a dwelling during the 2010's, another is by Culham station and not easily reached on foot by the majority of Culham residents, and the third pub, the Waggon and Horses, became derelict again during the 2010's. successive planning applications by Morrells have been unsuccessful, the committee wanted to determine if it was possible to assist in enabling the pub to be reopened, but with its ethos very much aimed at a facility to be enjoyed by the community.

10. Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation 2022

The six week consultation period required under Regulation 14 ran from 17th January until 14th March 2022.

In order to encourage as many local people as possible the consultation was posted to every household in the village. In addition the existence of the consultation was promoted on the front page of the village website and included in the printed village newsletter, 'The Mouthpiece' which is delivered to every household. Posters promoting the consultation were prepared and posted at the two village noticeboards.

The SODC neighbourhood planning officer provided advice on process and also a list of consultees to whom we were advised to invite to respond to the consultation.

11. Main Issues Raised in Consultations

The 2014 village wide consultation which was followed up by a meeting and drop in display/workshop Key topics identified by the 2014 Community-led Plan were:

- Cycling – improving existing paths; adding strategic links to neighbouring communities
- Traffic – concerns about safety on Tollgate Road and A415; parking around the school
- School – Village School as part of the community; buildings could be more widely used (evenings / out of term)
- Pub – a village asset; sometimes noisy
- Shop – a village shop is desirable
- Church – could be enhanced to allow for a community space
- General – keeping the village a village; developing the mushroom farm (now defunct); investing in hydropower at the weir.

Several of these items are now out of date, such as traffic issues around the Primary School (closed in 2019), use of the Pub (Waggon and Horses, now closed and unoccupied), introducing hydropower (done but privately by the Morrells estate) and a proposal to lobby for the village to be joined to mains gas.

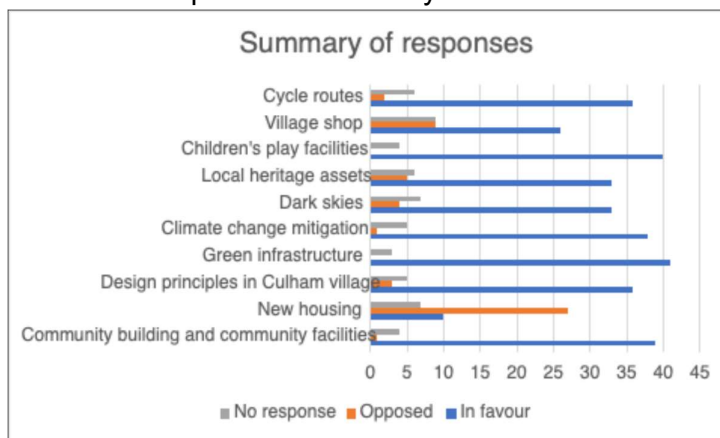
However many of the themes were not surprisingly carried through to the consultations that were done in 2020:

The topics for the Survey were:

- Community Building and Community facilities: “The creation of a community building will be supported, provided the improved / updated / new buildings or structures are designed and sited in such a way that their impact on the open nature, rural character and visual amenity of the Green Belt is minimised and that they will sustain and enhance the village”
- New Housing: “Do you think new housing should be promoted with the village of Culham?”
- Design principles in Culham village: “Do you think setting out design principles which any planning applications would be required to follow is desirable?”
- Green Infrastructure: “Do you think a policy on green infrastructure should be included?”
- Climate Change Mitigation: “Do you think a policy for climate change mitigation regards new housing should be promoted within the NP?”

- Dark Skies: “Do you think a dark skies policy should be included in the Culham NP?”
- Local Heritage Assets: “The NP can identify buildings and structures which are not nationally listed with a view to assess them for local listing (...). This gives them additional protection from being altered or obscured should any planning application be made in the future.”
- Play facilities for children of the parish: “The village has a play area on the recreation ground which is owned by the Diocese of Oxford. The NP could ask to ensure that any development the Diocese might have in mind for this land in the future would have within it a playground.”
- Village shop: “The NP could encourage the creation of a village shop.”
- Cycles routes: “The NP could encourage the creation of cycle routes to Abingdon and to Sutton Courtenay.”

There were 44 replies to the Survey and this is a visual breakdown:



Respondents often included comments and sometimes suggestions, and they shed some light on the motivations for these results.

Key negative feedback:

- strong aversion to new housing is linked to appreciation of huge impact of STRAT9 development
- ambivalence around village shop (is it viable? / where could it be sited?)
- uncertainty around local heritage: seen as restrictive, additional regulation
- a few questions on whether dark skies policy is necessary or a side issue
- several mentions of failure of previous applications for community facilities

Key supportive comments:

- near universal approval for green infrastructure and climate change mitigation
- wide approval for more attention to children's play facilities
- requests for allotments as part of green infrastructure and community facilities
- village shop ideas conflated with village pub / reuse of Waggon and Horses
- comments requesting cycle routes to be off-road and provide additional integration with neighbours (Abingdon, Sutton Courtenay, Radley then Oxford)

As soon as the opportunity arose after the lockdown restrictions eased, Neighbourhood Plan Committee members held a stall for the day at the Culham Festival on a mostly sunny Saturday 7 August 2021, and this served as an opportunity to raise awareness among villagers about the NP and gather further feedback on the issues that villagers cared most about.

Again, this was an occasion where strong opinions were voiced about the manner in which villagers felt that STRAT9 had been imposed, with the addition of mounting concern at the lack of consultation on the planning of the new road link from Didcot through our neighbours in Appleford.

In terms of specific contributions not already discussed, several residents of Tollgate Road expressed concern at the dilapidated state of the former Waggon and Horses and were very keen to hear about the site's future prospects. They were universally supportive of any proposed development that would replace what is now a near derelict building.

There were also several requests in support of enhancing the cycle route network and improving pedestrian access across Culham. Lockdown lifestyles have left their mark, with villagers seeing increased value in having a wide network of walkable and cyclable paths across a natural resource that became very dear to them while national travel was restricted.

The pre-submission consultation elicited no further comments or insights from villagers other than reinforcing those already provided above. There was also very minimal response from other consultees ie non parishioners other than SODC whose comments have been reflected.

12. How the NP has included comments

The NP has reflected the views of the villagers within the proposed policies to the extent able to do done within the scope of the NP. Each of the policies is driven by a specific area of concern or feedback from the original village survey and subsequent consultations as part of the NP process. The policies listed below are mapped to the topics raised in consultation in bold and set out in section 11 above.

CUL1 Community Facilities

Community Building and Community facilities
Play facilities for children of the parish
Village shop

CUL2 Former Waggon & Horses Public House

Community Building and Community facilities
Village shop

CUL3 Early years provision

Community Building and Community facilities

CUL4 Enhancing Culham Conservation Area

New Housing
Design principles in Culham village

CUL5 Design Code for Culham

New Housing
Design principles in Culham village
Climate Change Mitigation

CUL6 Local Heritage Assets

Local Heritage Assets

CUL7 Nature Recovery and Climate Change

Green Infrastructure

CUL8 Sustainable Travel

Cycles routes

CUL9 Zero carbon buildings

New Housing
Design principles in Culham village
Climate Change Mitigation

CUL10 Light Pollution

Design principles in Culham village
Green Infrastructure
Dark Skies

Appendix I List of Reg 14 Consultees

Oxfordshire County Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
SODC Ward member for Sandford and the
Wittenhams
Clifton Hampden Parish Council

Nuneham Courtenay Parish Council
Radley Parish Council
Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Sutton Courtenay Parish Council
Appleford-on-Thames Parish Council
The Coal Authority
Homes England
Natural England
Environment Agency
Historic England
Network Rail
Highways England
Marine Management Organisation
BT
EE
Three
Vodafone & O2
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
NHS England
National Grid
Scottish and Southern Energy Power
UK Power Networks
Southern Gas Networks Plc.
Thames Water - Developer Services
Friends of St Paul's
Save Culham Greenbelt
St Paul's Church Parochial Church Council
Local Businesses:
Cupcake Baker
A W Grace & Son Limited
CP Steel Processing Limited
Lasergaming UK Ltd
The New Lawn Company Oxford Limited
Mix 14 Ltd
Laser Tag In A Box Ltd
GKP Grab Hire Limited
This Is Your Garage Limited
Culham Science Centre
Charlotte Storrs Stoneware

Abingdon Vale Cricket Club
Abingdon Town Football Club
Kingfisher Barn
Europa School UK
Culham Parochial School
Railway Inn
Zouch Farm Guest House
Culham MX Park
Cracklin Pig
Warren Farm
D&G Homes Ltd
Vale Paving Ltd
Warrior Women In Business Ltd
High Lodge Farm
Colmoor Farm

Appendix 2 Reg 14 Poster and 'Mouthpiece' Article

Culham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Public Consultation

January 2022

Dear residents of Culham, the Parish Council has prepared over the course of the last 12 months a draft Neighbourhood Plan and we need your input. The draft plan is available from the website at www.culhamvillage.org.uk and is available for download. The Public Consultation lasts from January 17th until March 14th.

You can respond to the consultation by writing to

Culham Neighbourhood Plan 6 The Green Culham OX14 4LZ

Or by sending an email to

culhamnp@gmail.com

The comments will be collated, reviewed by the parish council and changes made to the plan. The plan will also be reviewed by South Oxfordshire District Council and then an independent examiner prior to their being a referendum in the parish to decide whether to adopt it or not.

Responses received after March 14th 2022 will not be able to be considered.

A public event is not considered appropriate in the current environment but questions can be sent to the email address or postal address and responses provided, or please attend a parish council meeting if you would like to speak to one of the parish councillors.