

Bridge Neighbourhood Plan

“The Issues”

i Countryside Protection and Green Spaces

The village of Bridge lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is a nationally important landscape. It is vital to ensure that development in this area is environmentally acceptable and sustainable. Through the production of a Village Design Statement which describes the distinctive character of the Village and the surrounding countryside, design principles can be identified based on local character. A survey undertaken by the Parish Council indicated that 94.8% of residents had a strong desire to maintain the green spaces between Bridge and Canterbury and 96.9% wanted to maintain green space between Bridge and surrounding villages. Areas such as Church Meadow should be protected as they serve an important purpose to the community.

Existing allotments are an asset to the Village and should be maintained and enhanced. The provision of a Community Orchard to encourage self-sufficiency and provision of beehives should be in future plans.

ii Environment

The porosity of the existing foul sewer system is well demonstrated immediately the water table rises. Pressure must be maintained on Southern Water to find and resolve these issues and return foul water capacity to the main sewer as it was originally designed.

The river Nailbourne, with its cyclic nature, is an important feature of the Village. Flooding from the river is infrequent now that blockages down stream have been removed and maintenance put in place.

The Neighbourhood Plan will endeavour to reduce carbon emissions and energy demand. Any new built development in the Village should embrace this concern.

The Village should consider reducing its reliance on fossil fuels and encourage more sustainable energy sources by promoting electrical charge points for electric cars and wheelchairs and cycle paths to Canterbury (see Transport). Reducing light pollution while maintaining security should also be considered. Having a pedestrian-friendly High Street could reduce local pollution.

iii Community Facilities

The protection and enhancement of the community facilities in Bridge is vital to the future development of the village. Key assets such as the Mill Centre, the Village Hall and the Parish Church play an important role in village life providing facilities for people of all ages especially young people. The shops, pubs and businesses in the Village are fundamental to the economy of Bridge and the Neighbourhood Plan should set out policies to ensure these businesses survive. Bridge and Patricbourne CEP School is at the heart of the community and although the general consensus is not to expand it, more importance should be placed on ‘locality to the school’ when offering places. The recreation ground is also essential being the only sports and recreation facility in the Village.

iv Economy

Local employment is very limited with most wage earners leaving the Village for employment. Improving local services should provide further employment opportunities. Agriculture is the only local primary employment.

There is probably a growing trend towards working from home in Bridge. The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to produce a directory of services and special skills available within the village, which might benefit the local economy further.

v Housing

House prices in Bridge are relatively high in a district which itself has above national average house values. The demographics are skewed towards the older population and families have traditionally reported members leaving the area to find suitably priced accommodation.

The recent affordable homes project of 8 units with 'local connections' criteria was massively over-subscribed, suggesting that further housing supply should address this need. The major village survey, which initiated this Neighbourhood Plan, indicated that 50.5% wanted no development in Bridge at all. Where development was contemplated, the major demand was for 'affordable housing'.

The Canterbury Local District Plan draft was issued on May 3rd 2013 and, in principle, respects the *status quo* for the rural area with development limited to minor infill. It does, however, recognise a village hierarchy in which Bridge features prominently as a centre with well-established services. The plan does not rule out limited organic growth in such settlements.

A Village Design Statement will be an important tool to ensure that the character of Bridge will be maintained and enhanced in future.

vi Transport

Bridge has a relatively good bus service. The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to retain, and potentially, expand the service by encouraging the use of public transport. Bridge should liaise with the City Council and Kent County Council to develop safe cycle links with Canterbury as a priority.

Parking is an increasing problem in the Village. Lack of parking spaces could deter people from visiting the local village shops and amenities. There is an increasing demand for on-street parking. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to identify a parking strategy for the Village.

vii Security and Well-Being

Bridge does not have a high incidence of crime. However, it does suffer from persistent vandalism, which is a drain on the Parish Council's resources. There is no routine Police presence in the village and only infrequent contact with a shared PCSO (Police Community Support Officer).

Bridge currently has a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, Speed Watch Scheme and an Emergency Plan Committee, all run by volunteers. The Bridge Emergency Plan is partially complete.

Issues and Sustainability Checklist

Consultation Response Form

The preferred method of responding to the consultation is online, you may also use this form or write a letter

<p>1. Have we identified the right issues? Yes or No</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>(i) Countryside Protection</p> <p>(ii) Environment</p> <p>(iii) Community Facilities</p> <p>(iv) Economy</p> <p>(v) Housing</p> <p>(vi) Transport</p> <p>(vii) Security and Wellbeing</p> <p>Are there other issues the Neighbourhood Plan should address?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">please continue overleaf</p>
<p>2. Comments on the Sustainability Checklist (this will be used to assess the options):</p>
<p>Additional comments:</p>

Your Name & Address:

Send/hand completed form to:

Clerk to Bridge Parish Council or
Christobel Seath
Bridgeford House
Mill Lane
Bridge
CT4 5LF

Mervyn Gulvin Architects
92 High Street
Bridge
CT4 5LB

All responses will be made public and will not be accepted without your name and address.
Please use the reverse side for further comments.

Further copies of the Draft and Form can be obtained from Mervyn Gulvin Architects, 92 High Street.