

Report of the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Community Planning Event, Saturday 23rd July 2016



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Introduction

This report sets out the key outputs from the event held by the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan Group on Saturday 23rd July. Around 30 residents and local stakeholders took part. The latter included representatives from Cliffe Woods Primary School and Football Club. The aim of the event was twofold.

The first aim was to update and engage residents with the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2010. It is a land-use plan setting out policies for future developments within the civic parish of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods. For an overview of neighbourhood plans click on the link:

<http://www.neighbourhoodplanning.org/>.

The Plan is to be developed over the next 18 to 24 months by a steering group of residents and parish councilors. The plan will eventually go to a referendum of the whole civic parish and if more than 50% of those who vote support the plan, will become part of the Development Plan for Medway.

The second aim was to promote the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Community Trust. The Trust provide grants for the 'Relief of need and educational purposes for residents & parish of Cliffe at Hoo, Rochester, Kent.' Suggestions were sought on how to promote the grants and increase uptake. Trustees were present at the event.

The event was funded through a programme called Village SOS run by Action for Communities in Rural England on behalf of the Big Lottery.

Welcome and introductions

Nigel Moore, Chair of Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Neighbourhood Plan Group welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave a short explanation of the purpose of the day. He then introduced the speakers: Catherine Smith, Planning Policy Manager at Medway Council and Jim Boot, Associate with Action for Communities in Rural Kent who was to facilitate the event. Catherine started proceedings with a short presentation:

The local context including the Medway Local Plan

Catherine Smith gave a presentation covering town and country or land use planning in general, an explanation of the Medway Local Plan, an update and the next steps. She also covered neighbourhood planning and how the two processes complement each other. A copy of the presentation accompanies this report but here are the main points.

Local plans and Neighbourhood Plans are:

- Statutory documents produced by councils that aim to manage where and how development takes place locally
- Used to guide decisions on [future] planning applications

How Local Plans are prepared:

- Government sets out [national planning policy](#) that councils must follow
- Planning's main role is to help achieve sustainable development
- Plans should look positively at how the area can meet the needs for development, including housing
- Councils must consult widely at different stages in preparing a local plan
- Seeking information at early stages is called 'Issues and Options'
- Seeking views on potential development sites and types of policy
- Gathering responses on detailed proposals for sites and policy
- Independent Examination by Planning Inspector
- The Local Plan can only be adopted after 'found sound' by Inspector.

Neighbourhood Plans:

- Should not conflict with the Local Plan
- This means that the NP cannot allocate less land [than the Local Plan] for housing, only additional sites
- Medway Council must provide support to groups producing Neighbourhood Plans
- Medway Council takes on the final stages of consultation, independent examination and carries out the referendum

The Local Plan now:

- Medway Local Plan dates from 2003
- At early stage of work on new local plan covering period up to 2035
- Following legal process will take 2-3 years to get a new local plan in place

About Cliffe and Cliffe Woods:

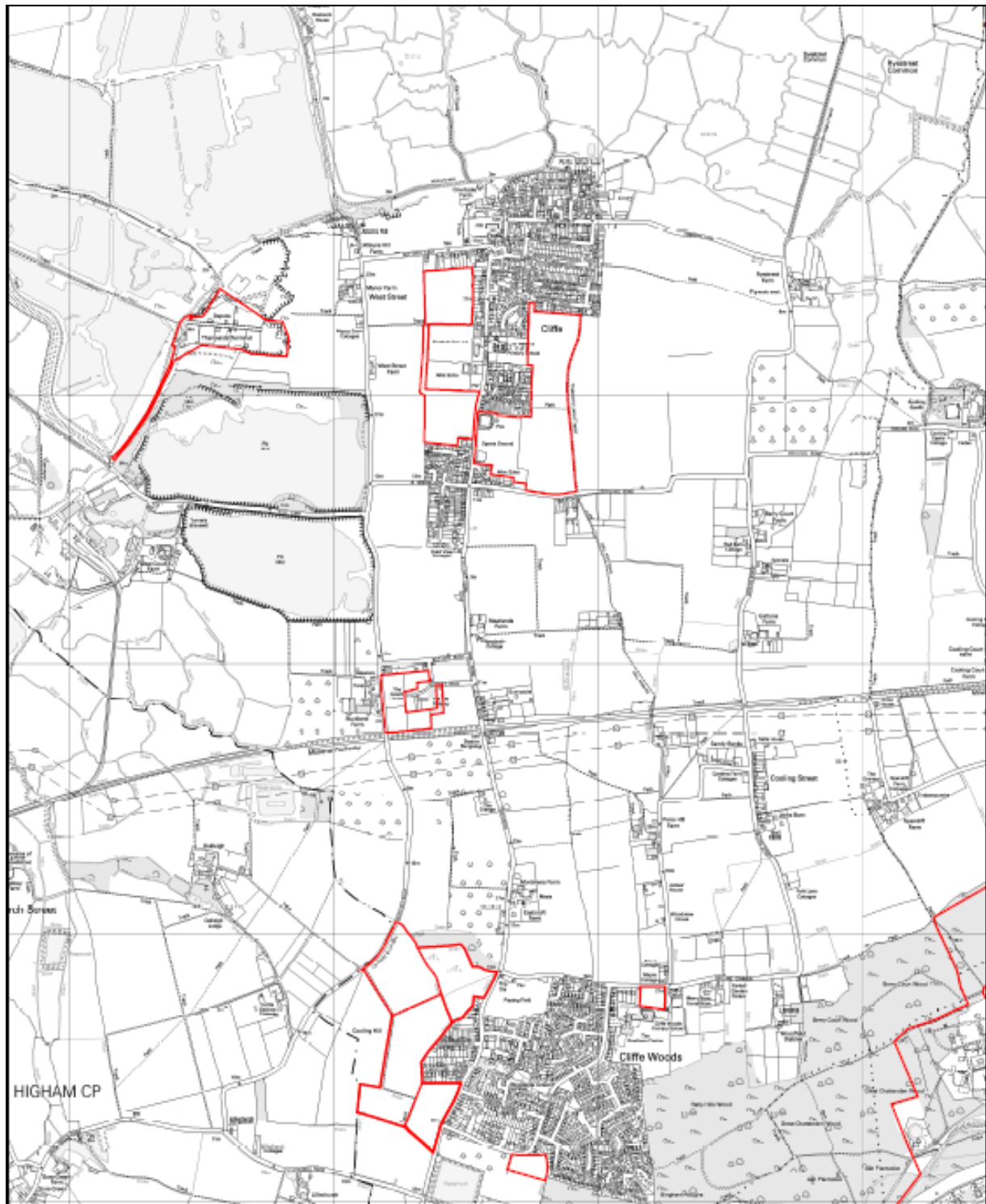
- Population of 5,370 in 2011 with small growth from 2001
- Around 15% of people are retired
- Around a third of households are families with children
- Range of village facilities, including schools, halls, shops, doctor's, churches and garage

At the Issues and Options events held in CCF in February residents were concerned about:

- Impacts of growth on roads, schools, health facilities and community services
- Loss of green spaces and rural character
- Supporting the agricultural industry
- Making best use of brownfield land
- Housing for local people
- Looking after the countryside and village life

- potential impact on landscape,
- services and roads
- and loss of good quality farmland.

- and loss of good quality farmland.



Questions

There followed the opportunity for a few questions for Catherine from the audience:

Q: How independent is the inspector?

A: Independent of government but follows legislation.

Q: What happens if a site allocated doesn't go ahead? (Medway)

A: Another site will have to be found.

Q: Why is it [the event] not more widely advertised?

A: Open to the public, but [as] a workshop about creating a neighbourhood plan [rather than a public meeting].

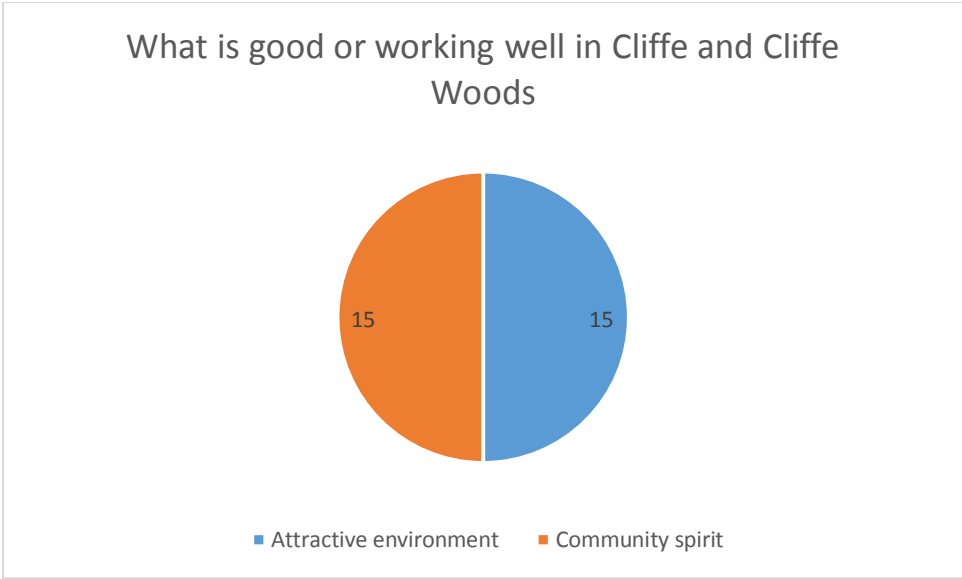
Activity: What are the challenges facing Cliffe and Cliffe Woods

To get the audience engaged, everyone was asked to complete 3 post it notes putting on each separate note:

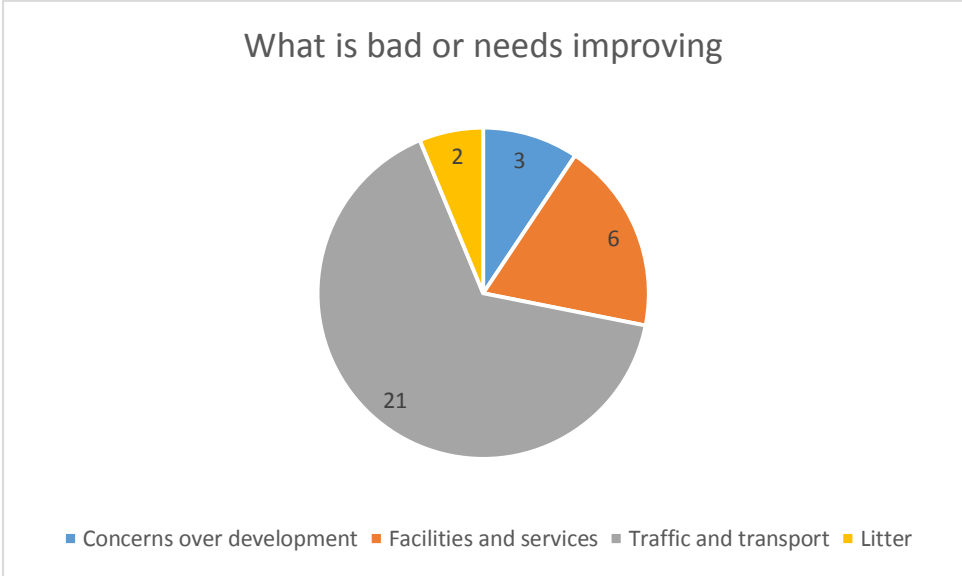
- what was 'good' or working well in CCW,
- what was 'bad' or needed improving and
- their 'dreams' or visions for the future



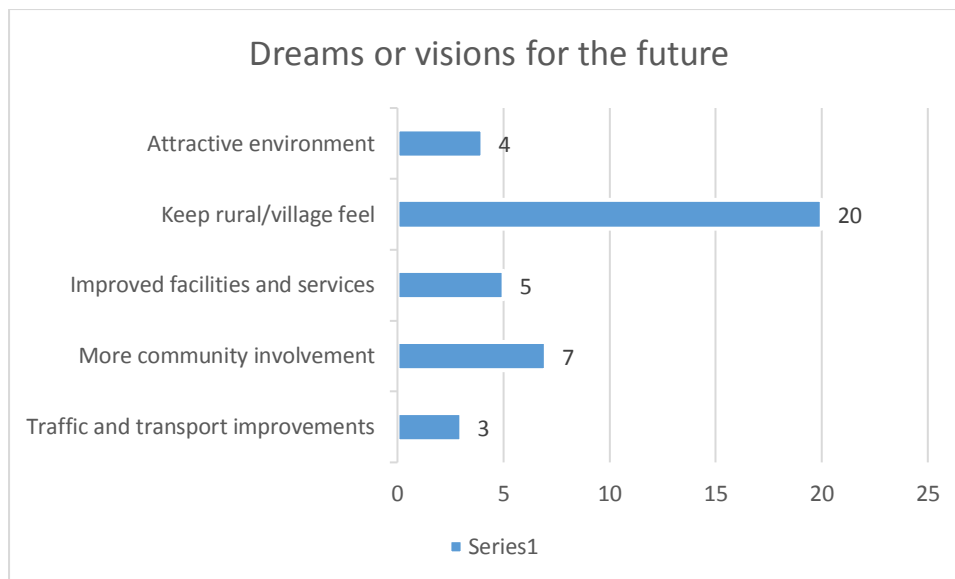
These were placed on large sheets of paper on the wall. These have then been sorted into categories so that the key issues can be identified. A full list of the comments is included at the end of this report in the Appendix.



In terms of the attractive environment typical comments included: ‘Still a rural location despite pressures. Lots of open space on North Kent marshes.’ And ‘Nice village, quiet rural environment.’ The positive community spirit was also emphasized with comments including: ‘Village community - we look after each other!’ and ‘Village life – it makes an excellent and much safer environment due to its community’ and ‘Small enough to care.’ There was a strong sense that any future development would need to take this sense of a village community into account.



In terms of Traffic and transport, concerns included: ‘Road through villages not wide enough for lorries’, ‘Public transport, lack of buses at top of estate’ and ‘Speed of traffic in and around village’. These factors may act as a constraint on future development in the villages. Facilities and Services comments included: ‘Medical needs, extra clinics, mini hospital’ and ‘Medical facilities, more retirement accommodation’. New developments may need to contribute to improving these facilities.



Many residents were concerned over the potential impact of new development on a rural village community. Comments included: 'Keep Cliffe Woods as a small rural community' and 'A quiet rural community which is not overdeveloped.' Maintaining this aspiration in the face of demand for new housing in the south east will be extremely challenging summed up by one resident as: 'To retain small village character if more building is done.' Another resident's dream or vision was: 'Cliffe becomes an example of how Green credentials can inform a local plan' and another pragmatically: 'No more building without adequate infrastructure.' Linked to this was the aspiration to maintain or enhance the sense of community characterized as: 'Community to keep working together.'

In terms of service and facilities, picking up from the 'bads/needs improving', one resident was keen on 'Expanded services for young and old' while another focused on 'Building for older people, we want independence, but with care as well' which is becoming a common theme in Neighbourhood Plans. There was also mention of a 'better community hall' 'green spaces' and a 'leisure facility with a pool'. Neighbourhood Plan policies can require contributions for improving community facilities, can protect important local green/open spaces and if there is to be a major development could even contribute to a pool (see [Broughton Astley Neighbourhood Plan](#)).

Activity: Priorities and criteria for community grants

As mentioned in the introduction the event had two aims including how to promote the Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Community Trust more widely within the two villages. The way the Trust works currently was explained to the audience. Following that the audience was asked to contribute their ideas on:

Small grants: what/how might we do/fund differently?

- 'Silver surfing'- ICT support, not just for older people
- Linking to NHP 'dreams' suggestion
- Improve community centre
- Reluctance to accept charity - how to get to people in need without damaging pride- food trusts may have good practice and advice
- Access to work and education (support)
- Self-help village clean-up groups

- Not aware of schemes [grants] - improve communication - leaflet drops, need ongoing info and word of mouth
- Greater knowledge of wider grant schemes→increase take up- could be a 'grants fair' e.g. Sheppey [Swale CVS organised speakers from Big and Heritage Lottery Funds at a village hall event for local groups].
- Small grants role as match funding to open up larger grants
- Table outside village shop/village fair

The audience were thanked for their ideas and contributions which would be considered by the Trustees moving forward. A key recommendation was using the opportunity provided by the community engagement required for the neighbourhood plan to double up as an opportunity to encourage more residents to find out/apply to the Community Trust.

Activity: How to engage wider community?

The next activity followed on with the theme of how to engage the wider community but this time in the context of developing the neighbourhood plan. The activity started with asking participants to write down on post-it notes key groups or types of residents who needed to be involved in the neighbourhood plan. Acknowledging that not everyone has the time or wants to join a steering group but that everyone should have a say, participants were asked to place their postit notes on the outside of 5 concentric circles on four sheets of flip chart paper joined together to form a target (see illustration). Any duplicates were placed together (the numbers in brackets). Circling the table participants were asked to move the post its towards the centre of the circle depending on 'how involved' that group needs to be in the neighbourhood plan. Directly at the centre were the 'residential community' 'schools' 'disabled people' and 'retired people'. One ring further out were: 'the parish council' 'RSPB' 'green space users' 'young families' 'medical practices' and 'church'. This exercise suggests that these groups need to be either involved in the steering group or else at the next level of engagement attending public meetings and workshops. Groups further out might be engaged through a consultation activity and maybe in time brought closer to the heart of the process.



Participants were then asked to reflect on this exercise and make any further suggestions for involving local people. These included:

- NHP group members – [to give] talks to community groups
- School email function - link to parents/carers [ask permission to use this function to engage parents and carers]
- Parish noticeboards
- Leaflet drop - esp. for reaching housebound (e.g. Wye NHP- patchworkers¹- build up into local areas)
- Use existing newsletters and magazines (dedicated communications role on NHP)
- Photo and article→Medway Messenger
- Community organisations and groups- how best to involve- piggyback on existing meetings/go where they are

¹ Wye recruited a team of 50 residents who took responsibility for communicating with their neighbours about the neighbourhood plan dropping off leaflets, questionnaires (and collecting them) and attending regular briefings. Some doubled up as the core of residents who attended workshops as well.

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<http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/home> and guidance on:

The final activity of the morning was aimed at identifying key events in the parishes calendar over the next twelve months at which the Neighbourhood Plan could be promoted, residents engaged and their views sought.

Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 17	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July
			St Helen's Church Christmas Fayre Applications for heating grants from Community Trust	St Helens School Christmas Fayre Cliffe Woods Christmas Fayre						Cliffe summer fete	Cliffe Woods Village Fayre Cliffe Woods School Fete

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- A period of preparation between now and November perhaps including the first themed workshop in October to generate interest.
- Reporting back on these, seeking residents' views on the emerging issues and options in November and December and promoting further workshops in the New Year.
- Further follow up work including perhaps a questionnaire in the late spring
- Consulting on a draft plan including policies in June and July.

With this the meeting closed. Everyone who took part though was invited to have a photograph taken outside the hall.

[insert Nigel's photo].

Recommendations:

- A. Circulate the report to attendees and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group. Invite attendees to the next Neighbourhood Plan Group meeting for a presentation of the findings and a discussion on the next steps (see end of report).
- B. Build on the strong relationship with Medway Council Planning Policy Team by scheduling regular meetings with the Planning Policy Manager for the duration of both plans. To keep up to date with the development of the Local Plan.
- C. For the neighbourhood plan group to familiarise themselves with the National Planning Policy Framework as well as developments with Neighbourhood Planning via: <http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/home> and <http://www.neighbourhoodplanning.org/> and planning issues generally via <http://www.pas.gov.uk/plan-making>.
- D. Consider repeating the Good, Bad, Dream exercise at other community events/activities or groups as part of a programme of on-going engagement. Particularly visiting and speaking at clubs and societies. Combine with the results from this event.
- E. Start to identify 'important local green/open spaces' to protect in either/both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan:
<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>.
- F. Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Community Trust to contact Medway Food Bank/Trussell Trust to seek referrals to the Community Trust for individuals/families in need. Seek Trussell Trust advice on how to get to people in need without damaging their pride/self-esteem. Help in The Community, Unit 19, Riverside I, Sir Thomas Longley Rd, Medway City Estate, Rochester, Kent, ME2 4DP Tel: 01634 757057 or info@medway.foodbank.org.uk.
- G. Link up the Neighbourhood Plan Group and Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Community Trust on publicity and engagement activities to promote both.

- H. Consider a grants fair with Medway CVS <http://mva.org.uk/> to encourage groups to consider match funding Cliffe and Cliffe Woods Community Trust with larger grant funders such as Big Lottery, Rochester Bridge Trust etc.
- I. For the Neighbourhood Plan Group to review their membership to ensure that it is representative of the community particularly the groups identified through the circle of engagement activity. To invite the identified groups to future events and workshops.
- J. Also to consider the recommendations for engaging residents including:
 - a. Talks to community groups, clubs and societies
 - b. Linking with schools' communications with parents and families ie e-mail and newsletters.
 - c. Use parish noticeboards.
 - d. Leaflet drops using patchworkers (Wye Neighbourhood Plan)
 - e. Use existing newsletters and magazines
 - f. Local papers/photo opportunities – send photo from event to Medway Messenger
 - g. A board outside shops to promote key events and workshops
 - h. Themed workshops to encourage participation and explore issues and options starting with transport
 - i. Link up with youth club to engage young people – recruit a representative on to NPG
 - j. View case studies on: <http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/home>
- K. The two clusters on the timeline in November/December and June/July suggest a pattern to the Neighbourhood Plan's programme of engagement:
 - a. A period of preparation between now and November perhaps including the first themed workshop in October to generate interest.
 - b. Reporting back on these, seeking residents' views on the emerging issues and options in November and December and promoting further workshops in the New Year.
 - c. Further follow up work including perhaps a questionnaire in the late spring
 - d. Consulting on a draft plan including policies in June and July.

Report author: Jim Boot, Freelance Community Planner and Associate with Action for Communities in Rural Kent, 4th August 2014.

Appendix: Good Bad Dreams exercise results

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Good	Social	Best of both worlds rural but not isolated	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Greenery	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Rural environment	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Rural environment	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Still a rural location despite pressures. Lots of open space on North Kent marshes.	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Greenbelt, farmland, environment.	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Social	Quiet	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Social	Peaceful	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Environmental area, open views/land	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Lovely surroundings	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Environment - wildlife, heritage, river marshes, SSSI, nightingales, agriculture, working close to home, village life, community, church, peace, tranquility, walks, cycling, painting, landscapes, Dickens country.	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Local environment	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Environment.	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Social	Peaceful.	Attractive environment

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Good	Environment	Nice village, quiet rural environment.	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Good	Social	Community relations	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Amenities community	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Community working together when the need arises	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	The community and care about the community.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Rural community.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Village community - we look after each other!	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Village life it makes an excellent and much safer environment due to its community.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Community spirit	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Small enough to care	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Village life, community spirit.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Community spirit	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Good community spirit. We are a village.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Welcoming.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	More get together in all areas.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Community spirit.	Community spirit
23.07.16	Good	Social	Urban rural mix	Other

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Abuse of our local environment by local people	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Gossip	Community spirit
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Area blighted by this 'planning'	Concerns over development
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	1970s overdevelopment of Cliffe Woods	Concerns over development
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Not to be enveloped into main Medway	Concerns over development
23.07.16	Bad	Social	To prevent crime rising	Crime

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Doctors	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Local services e.g. doctors being overwhelmed	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Medical needs	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Provide adequate housing for the elderly to keep them in the community	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Medical needs, extra clinics, mini hospital	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Medical facilities, more retirement accommodation	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Litter on the green	Litter
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Litter	Litter
23.07.16	Bad	Social	Area blighted because of the unknown	Other
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Roads	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	No pavement from Cliffe Woods along B2000 towards Wainscott	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Parking, lorries, loss of village feel, hards to create a community Cliffe Woods taken over 40 years and still doesn't quite have it	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Traffic problems	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Traffic belting down the B2000- despite objections to lorries etc.: tgiise living on or immediately off the B2000 take their lives into their own hands merely by walking to the shops	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Road through villages not wide enough for lorries	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Public transport, lack of buses at top of estate	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Traffic, parking	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Traffic problems (parking, roads)	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	B2000 transport	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Transport	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Roads	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Road infrastructure, specifically commercial vehicles	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Ever-increasing lorries from Bretts and visitors from Bretts using the B2000	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Transport	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Speed of traffic in and around village	Traffic and transport

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Parking on pavement	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Lorries, smell as you come into the village	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Parking	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Parking, cut down on lorries	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Bad	Environmental	Too many cars and lack of provision for them	Traffic and transport

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Better footpaths	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Healthy and clean environment	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Everyone to enjoy our beautiful countryside in good housing	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	More wildlife, farming for wildlife as well as food	Attractive environment
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Keep Cliffe Woods as a small rural community	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Keep a rural environment	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	For Cliffe Woods to remain rural	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	A quiet rural community which is not overdeveloped	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Ensure that any development is not piecemeal across adjoining sites	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Keeping Cliffe and Cliffe Woods as near perfect as we can	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	No overdevelopment	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	No overdevelopment	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Keep rural feel to area	Concerned over development

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Less housing	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	No more building without adequate infrastructure	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	To retain small village character if more building is done	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Less building in both areas	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Remain a rural community	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Minimal disruption to our community and village life and improvement to the issues of B2000 not to increase them as these plans will do	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Cliffe becomes an example of how Green credentials can inform a local plan	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Status quo- no further housing development	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	To live a long and happy life getting along with people. Leave things alone!	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	To always be able to walk in countryside with no more development	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Retain environmental and heritage protection	Concerned over development
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Expanded services for young and old	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Leisure facility with pool	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Leisure, green space for organised groups	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Better community hall	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Building for older people, we want independence, but with care as well	Facilities and services
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Community to keep working together	Involving community
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Improved communication	Involving community
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Community involvement	Involving community

Date	Theme	Impact	Comment	Category
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Good community spirit	Involving community
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Communication not gossip	Involving community
23.07.16	Dream	Social	To stay as a great place to live and enjoy	Involving community
23.07.16	Dream	Social	Continue village feel, peace and tranquility	Involving community
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Stop closing of Rookery Lodge	Other
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Both villages 20mph zones	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Better transport links e.g. bus	Traffic and transport
23.07.16	Dream	Environmental	Road improvements	Traffic and transport