

Our Village, Our Plan

Bayston Hill Community Led Plan is your opportunity to help to shape how our Village will develop over the next ten years. We can work together to become a healthy, safe and sustainable village with your contributions and support. We need to involve and consult as many residents as possible to ensure the plan is truly community led and robustly based on community needs.

In this survey we will explore:

- What makes the identity of our village and what will strengthen it
- How as a community we can understand and improve residents' health and wellbeing
- What facilities and services need to be protected, improved or introduced
- What housing or business development is needed, and where it should go
- How the village can become more sustainable and improve our environment

A small group of volunteers, the Bayston Hill Community Led Plan Steering Group, has started the work of putting together a plan. We are now aiming to consult as widely as possible to enable everyone to have a say. The plan will cover the needs of all age groups from birth onwards and will be fully inclusive - considering the needs of all, including the vulnerable and the socially isolated. The Plan will eventually be adopted by the Parish Council and Shropshire Council and will be used to underpin the planning system - it will have a legal status for example when planning applications are considered. The key thing though is that it is community led.

A bit of history

Bayston Hill completed a Parish Plan in 2006 & reviewed it in 2010.

Briefly, what has happened since then:

- Improvements have been made to two community venues.
- Oaklands School site is close to a decision on a community hub, new library and Parish office, with a mixed development of 50 houses including some social housing.
- Allotments were extended in the last two or three years.
- There are now no youth clubs, though the Parish Council is looking into commissioning Youth Work.
- Improvements have been made to Long Meadow play area, and an Astro turf pitch has been installed. Since 2010, the Skate Park and BMX track have seen major improvements and are well used.
- Village celebrations have included the annual Santa's Grotto in the community woodland, Carols in the Parade and there is a planned bonfire for 2018 (marking the end of WWI)
- Flicks in the Sticks cinema was introduced and is very popular.
- A shortage of affordable housing was highlighted in previous plans. A development of 7 rented and 7 shared equity homes was completed in 2011.
- Buses are more reliable and two bus shelters have been provided. There is now a pedestrian crossing of the A49.

- Walking and cycling to school have increased since the merged primary school opened, with a new zebra crossing installed in summer 2011.
- Parking and general improvements at the Parade are ongoing, with flower baskets in spring and summer. The Parade is privately owned so improvements are limited.
- Street lighting is being replaced, gradually, by more efficient & reliable LED.
- Access improvements to Parrs Pool and an extension to the Community Woodland have been completed
- A leaflet on local walks produced.
- Negotiations on access to The Burgs are ongoing and positive via English Heritage and Shropshire County Archaeology Service.

Community Led Plans are led by local people producing a common vision of how their community should develop in the future and working together to achieve this through the statutory planning system and/or other means. In Shropshire, a Community Led Plan is an alternative to completing a full Neighbourhood Plan, offering communities the same opportunity to influence planning policy, but without all the statutory requirements of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is used to help decide planning applications as a material planning consideration. For more information see <https://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/neighbourhood-and-community-led-plans/community-led-plans/>

Here is a brief introduction to each of the four themes of the plan, with links to further information where available.

COMMUNITY THEME

We can strengthen our voice through our identity as a community. We can show how we work together to support each other, between generations and social and other groups, as part of our identity.

We need to show what our identity as a community looks like now, and how it will help shape our village in the years to come.

We are in a different world now for providing our services, facilities and community activities, where we need to think about alternatives to Shropshire Council or the Parish Council. Many rural communities have used community co-operatives, crowdfunding, and community investment to take over local assets or provide services unsustainable by public or commercial funding.

Locality <http://locality.org.uk> and Plunkett Foundation www.plunkett.co.uk give information, advice and support to local groups considering these routes.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING THEME

It may be that living within a Village has physical and mental health benefits which help us live well and support each other. We need to explore these benefits and find ways to define, protect and improve them. The Community Led Plan could help to us to commit to great quality of health and wellbeing in this village over the next 10 years and more.

Health and wellbeing can be measured in several ways, including:

- Time spent outdoors (known to promote wellbeing, especially mental)
- Levels of physical activity (linked with prevention of disease)
- Levels of smoking and drinking (associated with ill health)
- 'Social capital', how connected we are to each other (linked with physical and mental health)

Recent Shropshire statistics for health show:

- The health of the people of Shropshire is generally better than the English average. Deprivation is lower than average but about 13% of children live in poverty.
- Men in Shropshire are expected to live healthily up to the age of 65, with a life expectancy 80 years old, leaving 15 years of ill health on average. For women there is 18 years difference between healthy life expectancy and life expectancy.
- Fuel poverty in Shropshire is higher than the England average as are excess winter deaths and hip fractures.
- Emergency asthma admissions to hospital are increasing.
- Hospital admissions for young people self-harming have increased.
- Over a fifth of 4-5 year olds and a third of 10 -11 years olds are overweight or obese
- Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK

Social care is a big issue now and improving services and how we live now can have a big impact on supporting fellow residents to remain (affordably) in their own homes and community in the future.

Outside recreation spaces and our wealth of clubs and societies are also important for community wellbeing.

Youth, education and leisure services can affect our health and levels of community safety, through shared activities, more for young people to do, more residents out and about.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT THEME

Planning decisions in Bayston Hill have to conform to national planning policy laid down by central government, and the planning policies of Shropshire Council. Shropshire Council is reviewing its Local Plan (for the whole of Shropshire) now, and we have the chance to have more influence on future planning decisions by taking a collaborative, informed approach to future development. For instance, identifying an area of potential future open space for the community could guide planning decisions and spending of the Community Infrastructure Levy. (See masterplanning approach below.)

Housing

A careful allocation of housing over the next 10 plus years could provide more homes for younger people and help support essential services. New housing might be within or outside the limits of the village at present. It could be of different sizes, types and quality. For example, many people have said that there is a need for new smaller properties, and affordable housing is also frequently mentioned when considering new housing, but is then often opposed by nearby residents.

New housing can be provided by commercial developers. They will have to provide a proportion of 'affordable' housing, depending on the number of houses, as a condition of planning permission, but generally they will seek to maximise profit. 'Social' housing to rent or part-buy can be provided by a Registered Social Landlord such as a housing association, or a local group like a Community Land Trust, which can ensure that homes stay affordable for ever. See

<http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/>.

Local need is defined by Shropshire Council as: 'the provision of affordable housing for people who have a strong local connection to a specific area who are unable to afford or secure open market housing in that area'. See <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/affordable-housing/single-plot-exception-site-policy/strong-local-connection-definition/> for more information.

A *masterplanning approach* sets out an approach to development and aims to build widespread support for a series of actions over several years. It prevents the need to react to new proposals piecemeal, one at a time.

A masterplan is a strategy that provides a vision for the future of the area. It includes a description (both visual and written) of the potential to create a place of lasting quality which can accommodate changes to its patterns of use over time. It should be based on appraisal of the area, including cultural heritage, history, current usage, services and infrastructure, understanding of the planning context, and future forecasts for demand, use and growth.

In the village or neighbourhood context, the master plan should be a strategic decision-making tool, in the form of a policy document including economic, cultural and social values of those living and working in the area.

[drawn from <https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Masterplanning>; DCLG

Devising and delivering masterplanning at neighbourhood level; Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment, Design Reviewed Masterplans]

Given the pressures for development, such an approach could be positive for the village – the survey will help to inform and shape the discussions about if or how this could be taken forward.

Economy - Industry and business

It is important to plan for employment land and buildings too. There are relatively few employment sources in Bayston Hill for a community of over 5000 people. New building for business on a significant scale can support local services, but it can also put pressure on those services if they are not grown in parallel with an increase in the numbers of people, cars etc.

Fact-check: there are at least 50 businesses in Bayston Hill. A recent business breakfast identified a need for local business networking and small start-up units.

ENVIRONMENT THEME

This very broad subject includes many issues: our countryside and ecology; transport; waste management; energy efficiency; and climate change.

Many communities throughout the country have taken on the challenge of creating a better environment, both at the local and more national scale, such as planning for carbon neutral villages and towns. Bayston Hill could follow this example, and if so, particular issues could be worth exploring to make the village a more environmentally friendly place. There are several possibilities to explore.

Energy generation and efficiency

There are many examples of community energy: a group of people coming together to generate, own, manage, or reduce consumption of energy. Projects can reduce energy costs and carbon emissions through renewable heat generation and storage, and improve the energy efficiency of local housing, for instance to reduce fuel poverty. Planning authorities have a duty to “promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources” (through PPS 22).

Community Energy England supports community energy groups and projects.

Examples include:

- Community owned solar PV panels or wind turbines.
- Collective purchasing to get a better deal on gas, electricity or other heating fuel
- Community solar hot water or seasonal thermal energy storage (heat or cold is stored for use in the opposing season)
- Renewable heat and power produced and distributed locally via a heat network or private wire arrangement

- Community owned electrical vehicle chargers

[extracts from good-energy_community-energy-report_oct-16, link

<https://www.goodenergy.co.uk/blog/2016/10/26/what-is-community-energy/>]

Information and support from local Marches Energy Agency, national Community Energy England

<https://communityenergyengland.org/>

Possibilities could be:

- a solar farm on the edge of the village, or one or two wind turbines, either community or commercially owned
- New housing development designed to be highly energy efficient – the technology exists to build houses with zero heating bills
- high standard retro-fitting of insulation to your home, for instance when funding or low-interest finance is available

Transport

We could make changes to the way we travel to reduce our climate impact, for example:

Walking and cycling more;

Taking the bus if the service could be expanded and improved

Setting up a car pool or cycle hire scheme

Street scene, Litter and Waste:

About 80% of waste is now reused and recycled. However, there are sometimes issues of fly tipping, litter and dog fouling.

Wildlife and Ecology:

Our landscape is still attractive, but we know the richness of our countryside is continuing to erode.

The community in Bayston Hill could press for local improvements, such as:

More community woodlands around the village; Local Nature Reserves;

Better footpath access out into surrounding countryside, which could also help our health and wellbeing.