

Neighbourhood Planning

Application to designate a Neighbourhood Area by Hargrave Parish Council

Supporting Statement

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012**

Background

Hargrave Parish Council has submitted an application to designate a Neighbourhood Area on the form supplied by St Edmundsbury Borough Council which makes the case for the designation. Question 13 of that form optionally invites applicants to express their aspirations from the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and this supporting statement summarises the ambitions which have emerged from Hargrave's NP process so far.

The Vision

As stated on the Application Form, many of the currently identified themes envisaged for the proposed Neighbourhood Plan emerged from the Village Review (available on www.hargrave.onesuffolk.net) undertaken in 2013, such as:

- No or no significant housing growth.
- Preservation and enhancement of community activity.
- Preservation of the open countryside and its tranquility.
- The importance of the green environment and protection of grass verges, hedges and trees.
- Protection of flora and fauna.
- Maintenance of the historic network of footpaths.
- Reducing vehicular speeding through the village and rebalancing of the highway domain in favour of the safety of pedestrians.
- 63% responded that they like Hargrave as it is.

During the investigations and consultations that have been undertaken so far, other matters of importance were raised:

- Widening the range of housing.
- The lack of public transport.
- The loss of local employment opportunities, primarily due to poor broadband speeds.
- Access to shops, services and amenities.

Most of these local topics are micro planning issues within the context of the current formal planning hierarchy and Vision 2031 understandably focuses on macro issues across the large administrative area of St Edmundsbury with "standard" approaches across the varied rural settlements of West Suffolk. The solutions appropriate to Hargrave in some instances need to be tailored to the character of the village and the aspirations of its residents. A Neighbourhood Plan is seen as the best vehicle to identify the right solutions and manage progress.

To express the broad objective of protecting and enhancing the distinctive character of Hargrave, the NP Working Group have defined a vision statement:

To protect and enhance the distinct character and assets of the village community for young and old.

This is a provisional vision which will be refined as the NP process advances and options are selected to bring the final NP proposal in to sharp focus.

The Objectives

The NP Working Group have taken the themes outlined above and have summarised them in a logical series of NP objectives to provide a working framework to "flesh out" options for discussion and consultation which will lead to the selection of the ultimate NP policy proposals. These were presented to this year's Annual Parish Meeting and approved as the brief for the Group to take forward:

Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan - The Objectives

The Character of the Village and Countryside

Identify, define, protect and enhance the distinctive features of the village settlement and its setting within the Parish, including:

- Buildings and groups of buildings.
- Heritage and historical references.
- Community infrastructure and assets.
- Local design exemplars and benchmarks for new building.
- Opportunities to enhance with appropriate new development.

The Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment

Appraise, define, protect and enhance all the green features of the Village and the Parish, in particular:

- Public and private open space.
- The roadside environment, in particular grass verges, hedges and trees.
- Protect and encourage wild life.
- Liaise with, support and protect agriculture and its husbandry of productive land within the Parish.

Highways, Transport and Access

Assess the needs of our community and define its existing and future requirements for:

- Rebalancing the competing demands on highways between dominant vehicular traffic and a safer pedestrian environment.
- Improving public footpaths to enhance accessibility and connectivity.
- Improving access to bridleways to offer safer equestrian facilities.
- Securing access to public transport.

Prosperity and Welfare

Assess the scope to improve the resident's access within the village and within the region to:

- A range of housing to meet lifetime and generational need.
- Employment, including the facilities necessary to support home working.
- Communications and technology.
- Education.
- Health and welfare.
- Shops, services and amenities.
- Sport, leisure and culture

Hargrave Parish Council

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