

Getting started

In 2013 Clutton Parish Council decided to create a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish and delegated councillors to set up a Steering Group.

The aim was to engage the community and base the Plan on their wishes as to how they wanted Clutton to develop. Letters were sent to all businesses, clubs, groups and organisations in the parish inviting them to select a representative to serve on the Steering Group.

Anyone who came forward as a member of any of these groups was invited to take part. No-one was refused.

A wide range of people volunteered and we held our first meeting to introduce everyone and explain how we were going to work.

The expanded Steering Group eventually evolved to become a core group of 10 people who were prepared to put in the time to see the Plan through. These individuals were from a broad cross section of the community. They included :

A farmer who ran the Scouts Group and served as a Parish Councillor

The owner of a retail business, working from a shop in the village

A parish Councillor with detailed experience of publicity through his current business

The owner of a child care business in Clutton

The managing director of a printing business with employees at his factory in the parish

A member of Clutton Women's Institute and a keen member of the Local History group.

The leader of the Youth Club in Clutton.

A retired teacher, keen cyclist, walker and officer of Clutton Football Club.

A member of staff from the Railway Inn who was also a Parish Councillor and member of The Women's Institute

The Chair of the Parish Council recently retired from banking administration at Lloyds head office

A Parish Councillor recently retired from a career in materials supplies to the printing industry

The membership profile of the final group was as follows

5 female and 5 male

5 parish councillors.

Ages from early 30's to late 60's

Some with children ranging in age from 2 to 40 years

7 in current employment, 3 retired.

Several had family connections in the parish going back several generations

All lived in widely ranging parts of the parish as shown on the map below.



It was essential to find out what, in the parish, residents and businesses wanted to see kept, changed and improved over the period of the Neighbourhood Plan so we set about commissioning a number of surveys of views and needs, including a comprehensive Housing Needs Survey. The Housing Needs Survey was carried out by a specialist company based in Worcester and all personal information was kept confidential by them. Only the statistical results and report was presented to the Parish Council. The response was unusually high at around 30% and we could be confident that conclusions drawn from the survey had an excellent statistical base.

In addition, we held open days where all residents and business representatives were invited to come along to discuss their ideas for the future and see the sort of areas of policy which we were considering.

From this feed-back we identified 5 policy areas as the basis for our plan and we divided the policies so that each was dealt with by 1 councillor and 1 lay person. This combination brought some experience of planning and community policies to each pair.

As policies began to develop they were reviewed by other members of the group so that there was a broad range of opinion on each topic.

Throughout the process we took advice from the BANES planning officer allocated to us and a specialist adviser from Locality.

At all times we employed best practice as advised by BANES.

At a number of events organised through 2014 the first drafts were put on show for the community to see and comment on. The Parish Council was shown the first draft of policies for comment.

We tried to encourage as much participation from residents as possible by combining our open days with a visit by a local film star, holding an art competition for all parishioners, visiting the primary school to tell pupils about their village Plan and encourage them to discuss it with their parents and come back with ideas, having a stall at Clutton Flower Show, Clutton Fun Day and other events.

Amendments were made to the Plan reflecting opinions expressed during these consultations.

A web site was set up to keep parishioners up to date with the Plan and encourage comments and views.

Reports to the Parish Council were made very month to advise on progress and these were reported, with announcements of open days, on the Parish Notice Board and the clutton.org website.

Leaflets were placed in dispensers at shops, doctors' and the pub.

Regular reports appeared in the Clutton and Temple Cloud magazines as well as local papers such as the Somerset Guardian.

Every effort was made to engage the community to ensure that the Plan they will be asked to approve is the one which they helped to create..