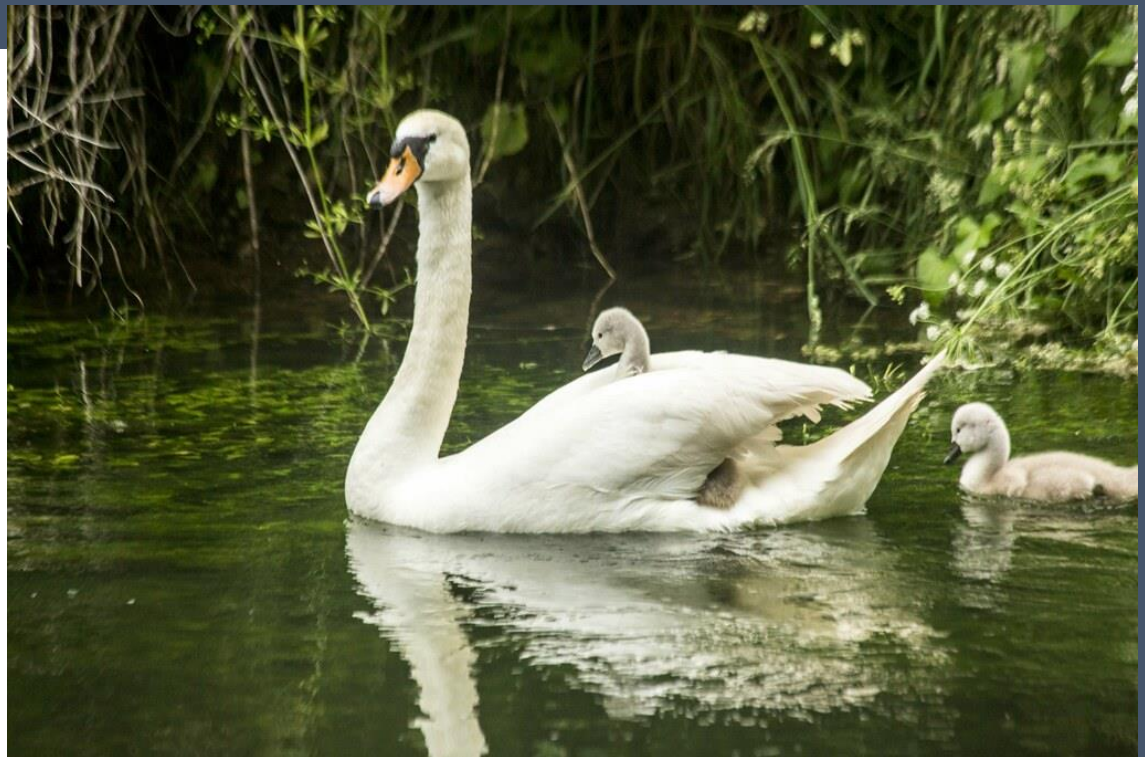


Communications & Engagement Strategy

*Supporting the development of the Chartham
Neighbourhood Plan*



Version 5

24 November 2020

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Chartham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in association with the Chartham Parish Council, is the group leading and coordinating efforts to create a local Neighbourhood Plan. If you wish to raise any queries regarding this document or what it includes, please contact us using the details below:

Email: charthamparishcouncil@gmail.com

Phone: 01227 738110 (Chartham Parish Council)

Address: The Clerk, Chartham Parish Council, Chartham Village Hall, Station Road, Chartham, Kent, CT4 7JA.

Aim & Objectives

- 1.2. The aim of this strategy is to support the Chartham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to create effective:
- Communication and engagement with the community and stakeholders, at all stages of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Ensuring that everyone knows about the plan and has an opportunity to participate.
 - To ensure the steering group is fully aware and has gathered information of the community & stakeholders views.
- 1.3. The objective is to ensure that there is consistent, good quality, coordinated engagement and communications with all the community who wish to influence the plan.

Our community

- 1.4. To be effective in communication and engagement, it is essential that the Steering Group has a clear understanding of the residential, social and economic communities; as well as an understanding of the village development.
- 1.5. Chartham parish consists of five distinct settlements within the wider rural landscape. The main settlements are:

CHARTHAM VILLAGE an area developed near the river Stour and centred around the 13th century church of St. Mary, The Green and Rattington Street; spreading out to Parish Road and Bolts Hill.

CHARTHAM HATCH a hilltop settlement approximately one mile to the north of the centre of Chartham and separated by the busy A28 Ashford Road.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MYSTOLE | near the boundary with Chilham and developed around the original 16th century grand mansion with its farms and parkland. |
| SHALMSFORD STREET | on the western edge of the parish comprising of two sections. The lower end, from the River Stour to Bolts Hill, is the older, original settlement and the upper section and the roads off are mainly comprised of post World War II developments. |
| ST AUGUSTINE'S | the newest and largest development, consisting of 500 homes, built on the site of the former St. Augustine's Hospital. |

- 1.6. Whilst the majority of residents live in these settlements, there are also many isolated houses or groups of houses related to farmsteads. It is important to try and reach those residents also as they will have a unique set of needs.
- 1.7. Houses are of mixed age and style –with early manor houses, Tudor, Victorian, pre-war and post-war semi-detached, bungalows, and modern executive. Many of the older buildings are classified as “Listed”.

2. Consultation Principles

2.1. Effective communication and engagement requires clear direction, as well as strong guidance and inspiration to develop the Plan.

1. Be open and honest with the community

- Let people know why we are engaging and use the right methods that are proportionate to the significance of the issues to engage local people.
- Be clear about what can be influenced and what cannot.
- Use honest, accurate and unbiased information.

2. Listen to the community's view

- Listen and respond to individuals and communities, enabling and empowering residents to play an effective role in shaping our local area.

3. Include as many different people in the process

- Undertake fair and impartial engagement to a high standard to ensure that communities are offered equal opportunities to participate in issues that may affect them and make a difference.

4. Work together collaboratively with communities

- Act together when appropriate with a consistent approach to community engagement.
- Create a record of engagement activities to provide an overview of what consultation has and will be undertaken and use the findings where applicable to avoid consultation overload.

5. Keep in touch with the community

- Provide feedback and demonstrate the changes that are made as a result of engagement.

3. How will we consult?

- 3.1. Continuous participation and engagement with the community and stakeholders, whilst preparing this plan, is fundamental to ensure that relevant issues are identified and are covered in the plan. The following process and activities are to be included in the project's development:
- **Inform:** Provide information about processes, events, issues and proposals.
 - **Consult:** Obtain feedback and analysis on options and proposals.
 - **Involve:** Work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that their issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered
 - **Collaborate:** Create partnerships with the community in each aspect of the decision, including the development of options and analysis of the alternatives
 - **Empower:** Final decisions on all matters lie with the community

Who will be included?

- 3.2. The aim is to involve as much of the community as possible. Whilst the strategy will actively engage with stakeholders on an individual level, it is hoped that existing community groups will form the gateway to reaching much of the community.
- 3.3. The emphasis will be placed upon those that live and work within Chartham Parish as any policies set out in the plan will have a statutory footing in the area in which they spend their lives.
- 3.4. As well as approaching individuals throughout the public we will endeavour to engage with a wide range of groups including schools, sports clubs, community groups, churches, and residents' associations as well as small and large businesses.
- 3.5. It may be necessary to involve other local governmental bodies as our plan could have knock on effects outside of our area. This is also true in reverse, so open dialogue is required in order to account for external influences impacting upon our parish. We envisage engaging with Canterbury City Council, Police, Highways and adjoining Parishes, Environment agency, and Natural England.
- 3.6. The general public that come to Chartham to use its facilities, whether it's for the schools, the numerous foot paths, or the shops will also be invited to participate however in practice this may be hard to facilitate.

Hard-to-reach groups

- 3.7. There will undoubtedly be groups of people that either do not wish to be involved or cannot be bothered to participate. However, there are also those that may wish to be involved or

provide their views but are hard to reach for various reasons. We will actively seek to engage with these people. Hard to reach groups often include (but are not limited to):

- Primary school children (aged 5 to 11)
- Secondary school children (aged 12 to 16)
- Young adults (aged 16 to 30)
- Older groups
- People with physical needs
- People with learning needs
- Single parent families
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gendered communities (LGTB)
- Faith and belief groups
- Travelers and gypsies
- Migrant workers

3.8. It is important that we engage with all areas of the parish. This includes the 5 settlements and the business area along the A28 but also those who live and work outside these areas.

- Chartham Village
- Chartham Hatch
- Mystole
- Shalmsford Street
- St Augustines
- A28/Ashford Rd Business Area
- Those who live or work elsewhere in the Parish
- Those who live or work outside the Parish

Outline of Approach

3.9. Before community and stakeholder involvement occurs (and to ensure reasons for engagement are meaningful) typical questions that will be necessary to answer when developing communications and engagement initiatives include:

- What is the purpose – what are we trying to find out?

- From whom is the information required?
- How would stakeholders/community prefer to respond?
- What information do stakeholders/community need before they can respond?
- Is more than a simple exchange of information required?
- How will the information be recorded?
- What resources are available and what resources are required within a reasonable cost?

3.10. The steering group, or their representatives, must always make sure that there is:

- publicity at all stages, so that the voting population know about the plan;
- close working with local stakeholders and community;
- robust community and stakeholder engagement throughout the plan-making process, engaging with as many people as possible, including minority groups;
- providing feedback on the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement and explaining
- how this has informed the content of the plan
- basing decisions on the content of the plan on a robust, proportionate and relevant evidence base;
- openness and transparency in decision making, based on clear and transparent methodology and planning criteria;
- clearly explaining the choices and compromises made in the plan;
- addressing the diverse range of local needs and wants.

Approach to consultation during Covid 19 pandemic

3.11. In March 2020, the government took action to limit the spread of the Covid 19 virus which included severe restrictions to limit contact between people. This included a ban on public gatherings, closing non-essential shops, limiting travel, banning meeting inside and outside etc. This package of restrictions has remained since March albeit with some easing of restrictions over the summer and a varying of restrictions by area depending on the number of cases in that area.

3.12. This has of course had an impact on how consultations can be undertaken. Key parts of consultations such as presentations, exhibitions, public meetings, and open days have not been possible since March 2020. This has led to a greater focus on the other ways of reaching people. This includes:

- Online surveys and questionnaires such as SurveyMonkey but also providing the opportunity to post responses.

- Publicising consultation events through social media/website and encouraging the sharing/reposting of these messages.
 - Emailing stakeholders encouraging responses to an online survey.
 - Placing posters in shops that are open. Including a tear off tag with the online links for residents to take home.
 - Placing information on noticeboards, bus shelters, railways stations, and other locations that are highly visible.
 - Placing banners in highly visible locations.
- 3.13. The following section includes all key consultation techniques. These will need to be tailored with regard to the level of Covid 19 restrictions in place at the time of consultation:

Key consultation techniques:

- 3.14. As well as the usual formal methods to gain information and present information, it is recognized that fun and inspiring techniques such as art, music, storytelling, humour and hands-on practical activities, has proved a fantastic way to involve people in influencing the future of where they live.
- 3.15. At the time of this strategy being written, working groups are being developed to assist the steering group with the development of the plan; and a specific webpage on Chartham Parish Council website has been developed to communicate updates of each stage of the development and provide key dates of consultations and results.
- 3.16. Several methods will be used to involve the whole community; some of which are as follows but are not restricted to, depending on the information or consultation required to complete the plan:

Branding website and newsletters

- 3.17. The creation of a 'brand' to be used consistently for the neighbourhood plan is vital. Having all publications, whether public notices, posters, or draft documents produced in a universal format is important to make the efforts of the plan easily recognisable.
- 3.18. Further to this a website will be created (www.charthamnp.com) to allow an easy place for the public to stay up to date with news & events, and access documents as they are published. By collecting email addresses on the site email newsletters can also be sent to engage with the community.
- 3.19. Updates can also be placed on the Chartham parish Council website <https://chartham-pc.gov.uk>

- 3.20. Details of the survey can be emailed to key stakeholders such as Chartham Primary School, New School Canterbury (Garlinge Green Road, Chartham), Community Warden Kevin Fannon, and The Wonky Parsnip fruit and veg shop.
- 3.21. Updates can be published on social media on the dedicated neighborhood plan page (facebook.com/CharthamNeighbourhoodPlan) and other facebook pages operating within Chartham:
- Chartham Parish Council
 - Chartham Local Community
 - Chartham Village Noticeboard
 - Chartham is Amazing
 - St Augustine's Residents
 - Chartham Hatch Village Group
 - Challock, Chilham, Chartham, Wye & surrounding businesses
 - Chartham and Surrounding Areas in Pictures
 - Chartham Gardeners' Society
- 3.22. Updates and posters will also be published in the parish magazine and local paper.

Public Meetings and Open Days

- 3.23. By utilising public meetings & open days, large groups can be accessed regarding a single issue, or range of issues in one event. They will form a vital point of communication and involvement with the community and should be linked to project milestones.

Interactive exercises

- 3.24. By hosting interactive exercises, it is hoped that both the wider community and smaller hard-to reach groups can be involved in the plan making process.
- 3.25. One group that can be involved using this method are the young. With cooperation from local schools and youth groups, this method will enable the views of the young to be heard and incorporated into the plan. Anticipated activities include photo competitions and school projects.

Public exhibition & information points

- 3.26. A permanent display within the parish will provide members of the public with a central point of contact. This will be located in the Parish Council Office.
- 3.27. Colour posters will also be displayed at the following locations around the parish.
- Bus shelter near Chartham Vineyard shop

- Chartham railway station, near level crossing
- Path facing fence on side of pumping station in the corner of Memorial Field
- Playground adjacent to Chartham Village Hall
- At the end of Great Stour Way
- On the gate for public footpath CB466 opposite the top of Baker's Lane
- Bus shelter on Shalmsford Street, almost opposite Pomfret Road
- Bus shelter on Shalmsford Street, adjacent to Arnold Road
- Fence at top of public footpath CB467 from Shalmsford Road to Bolts Hill
- Shop on the Green
- Arum News, Shalmsford Street
- The new Chartham Surgery

3.28. Large banners will be put up in the following locations:

- Near Chartham Village Hall
- St Augustine's
- Downs Road

Community Presentations

3.29. Presentations at Local Group meetings will keep the community up to date with progress and invite feedback; this will encourage further involvement & engagement.

Surveys & Questionnaires

3.30. Large scale surveys and questionnaires can provide quantitative data for easy comparisons of opinions alongside in-depth qualitative data to support Working Group research.

3.31. The delivery method of such will be thought through thoroughly to ensure that "hard-to-reach" groups are approached and encouraged to engage.

3.32. Engaging with the community on this level is vital however this technique must not be overused to avoid community fatigue due to over engagement.

Individual / Group Meetings

3.33. Where specific groups, bodies, individuals, or commercial enterprises have a stake in the Neighbourhood Plan they may be invited to attend an individual meeting with the Neighbourhood Plan Team.

Themed Focus Groups

- 3.34. A group of people, preferably representing a larger body of people, may meet to discuss a particular issue/theme. These events would be by invite only.

Suggestion Box

- 3.35. At all events, there will be a means for the community to provide feedback into the plan making process. A “Suggestion Box” will always be present at these events/places to facilitate this. They can also be placed in high footfall areas such as surgeries and shops to facilitate a good number of responses.

Locations

- 3.36. Consideration of venues to help reach the whole community, but not subject to, include:
- Chartham Village Hall
 - The Pavilion St Augustines
 - Chartham Primary School, Canterbury Steiner School and Chilham primary school which borders the village
 - Public Houses
 - St Mary's Church
 - Local Shops – The Village Green/Post office/ old post office/newsagents/wonky parsnip/car garages/garden centre
 - Other public locations
 - On the street – eg. bus stops, the lakes
 - Community events/festivals
 - Clubs/society meeting rooms

4. When will people get involved?

- 4.1. At each stage in the process, it is imperative that the community provides the information required to help develop the Plan and ensure that any concerns are brought to the attention of the Steering Group at each stage. The stages of the neighborhood plan preparation are set out below with the consultation and engagement highlighted in bold.

Stage 1 Getting Started

- Regulation 5 and 6 - Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area Application
- Regulation 7 - Neighbourhood Plan Designation Area
- Establish a Steering Group
- Secure grant funding & consultant support

Stage 2 Building the evidence base and writing the plan

- **Consultation** - The purpose is to gather information, awareness of people's views and to identify key local issues and themes to establish the vision and objectives of the plan.
- **Establish working groups** to consider each of the objectives and best way to achieve them.
- Review existing evidence and identify and develop further evidence required.
- Establish whether Strategic Environmental Assessment or Habitats Regulation Assessments are required.
- **Consultation** on draft evidence documents / plan strategy.
- Further develop and refine the issues, vision, aims and objectives as a result of **ongoing engagement** (workshops/discussions) and evidence gathering. Drafting of neighbourhood plan.
- Prepare accompanying documents including: Draft Consultation Statement, Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (if required).
- Update draft plan if required following the outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- Publish N.Plan & other Reg.14 Consultation documents.
- Parish Council approval to progress to Reg.14 (Pre-Submission) Consultation

Stage 3 Reg.14 and moving to submission

- Reg.14: Consultation period
- Consider responses to Reg.14 Consultation and Make amendments to neighbourhood plan and other documents (including Consultation Statement) as required following Reg.14 consultation.
- Prepare Basic Conditions Statement
- Publish Reg.15 (Submission) plan and associated documents.
- Parish Council approval to submit Neighbourhood Plan.
- Submit plan and associated documents required by Reg.15 (Submission) to the Local Planning Authority

Stage 3 Independent Examination

- Local Planning Authority to appoint examiner.
- **Reg. 16 consultation** (minimum 6 weeks and led by the Local Planning Authority)
- Examination.
- Examiners report published.
- **Meetings/discussions with Local Planning Authority** on the suggested recommendations and modifications to the plan (if any) within the examiner's report and next steps

Stage 4 Referendum

- Publication of pre-Referendum information and documents.
- Referendum
- Publication of Referendum decision
- Neighbourhood plan is 'made'

5. Reporting and Feedback

- 5.1. Any feedback from the consultation events will be made available to the general public on our website (www.charthamp.com). This feedback will influence the creation of the Chartham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.2. A report will be prepared for each consultation event and cover (but not limited to):
 - The purpose of the consultation event.
 - How the consultation was carried out in accordance with this strategy.
 - The results and analysis of the consultation results.
 - Commentary and conclusions.