

## **REPORT FROM SEPTEMBER WORKSHOPS**

### **Workshop format**

170 residents each attended one of the two hour workshops held between 12<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015. Attendees were split at random into groups of around 8-10 people allowing everyone a full opportunity to ask questions, take part in discussion and express their views. Each group was facilitated by a member of the NPSG and had a scribe to note the major points which arose. A questionnaire was provided to each participant and was used to provide a framework for the discussion. Completed questionnaires or substitute emails have been received from 126 people including a small number who did not attend.

### **Questionnaires**

The following questions were asked:

For each of the 6 sites assessed as sustainable or potentially sustainable

- *Is this site suitable to be included in the plan?*
- *How many houses would be acceptable?*
- *Reasons*

For each of the 3 Jeffreys Farm sites which had been reassessed as unsustainable since the January open day

- *Do you think it is correct to no longer consider this site?*

This general question

- *Which features do YOU believe contribute significantly to the rural character of Horsted Keynes*

### **Feedback summary, common themes**

The questionnaire was not a simple tick box exercise. People were encouraged to record their own thoughts as well as answering the yes/no questions. A certain amount of interpretation has sometimes been necessary. For instance someone might have said “yes” to a particular site but then qualified their answer giving conditions which cannot be met.

The NPSG team has done its best to evaluate responses as objectively as possible. We have not attempted to score opinions too precisely but have sought to identify the main themes coming across. We have each read at least half the questionnaires and all the scribe notes and have discussed our findings at length. We are confident that this report fairly represents the balance of opinion and that anyone else looking at the same material would come up with a very similar summary.

These are the common themes which all came through strongly:

- Huge concern over issues related to road traffic, safety and parking. All roads within and approaching the village are narrow and there are already regular obstructions caused by parked cars. People were worried over the impact of extra cars journeys to and from new dwellings and also about the impact of construction traffic during development. Pedestrian safety was also a major worry.

- The need for some of the new housing to be affordable.
- No large estates. The majority were clearly against creating a large development anywhere in the village.
- Concerns about defensible boundaries and the domino effect. This is an issue for nearly all sites.
- People did not want to open up any area of the village to uncontrolled development.
- Environmental concerns – we should respect and care for landscape setting of the village and make every effort to avoid harm to features such as trees, hedges, wildlife, views, peacefulness.
- Avoid urbanisation. A large majority wanted to keep the village free of street lights.
- Increased pressure on Infrastructure. Concerns about the capacity of water and electricity supplies, drainage, doctors' surgeries.
- Dwelling size policy. Before the workshops this draft policy required 20% of new dwellings to be 1 bed and 30% to be 2 bed. There was much discussion about this at the workshops and a view emerged that the balance should be changed in favour of more 2 bed dwellings and less 1 bed.

*Anonymised questionnaires and related material are available for public scrutiny. They may not be taken away but can be viewed in the Parish Council office between 10.00 and 12.00 on any Wednesday.*