

1. Workshop 1 – July 2018

The first workshop was held on Saturday 7th July 2018, between 10am and 4pm at Campton Village Hall. It was promoted as a ‘drop-in’ providing people with the opportunity to attend at any time, for as much or little time as they had to spare. This approach was favoured to maximise engagement.

Presented as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and with support from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the workshop was the first opportunity for residents to engage in the Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan process. General information around what the term ‘GI’ means and what a GI Plan is was presented via a display close to where people signed in.

The attendees were asked a series of questions around how they value their local environment, to provide some initial information for the GI Plan and to help influence potential policies, actions and projects. They were asked about their favourite places and walks, and also what they felt the problems/issues were in the parish with regard to the environment, and what might be done to address them.

The exercises were map based, with stickers and highlighter pens being used to mark and write on them. This approach provides an engaging way of obtaining information. Support was provided by the Greensand Trust and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members present to help anyone who required guidance on how to complete the activities or interpret maps, but did not unduly influence their participation.

The event was promoted with posters and via Neighbourhood Plan/Parish Council communication networks.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group carried out a wider survey during 2018 and there was some inevitable overlap between this event and the survey. However, this event was also intended to be a face-to-face engagement opportunity, with the ability to discuss issues in more depth than a survey.

Attendees

A total of 35 people attended, representing a reasonable turnout in a small parish. Although specific data was not recorded, it was noted that attendees were largely from Campton, with Chicksands residents under-represented.

Favourite spaces:

There was a reasonable spread of Favourite Places put forward by 15 people. The clear favourite was the Glebe Fields. This is slightly unusual, in that this space is not accessible, and is therefore appreciated purely for its views. This illustrates the strength of feeling about this ‘core’ area of the parish. The other popular space was not a specific ‘green space’ as such, but rather an area – the area around Mill Lane and the River Hit, accessible via a public footpath.

Favourite Walk

Unsurprisingly there was some correlation between Favourite Walks marked on a map and described by participants, and the Favourite Places, with the Mill Lane area/footpath featuring strongly. However, two sites were the main focus of Favourite Walks – Campton Plantation (an area

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of woodland close to both Campton and Chicksands) and Sandy Smith Nature Reserve, an expansive site with a network of public and permissive footpaths.

Issues and Problems

A number of issues and problems were highlighted (17). There wasn't a particularly strong theme, but accessibility and traffic issues were a thread through several.

Projects and Solutions:

Twenty projects, solutions to issues or ideas were noted. Several were focused on improving access (or knowledge of access), including access to the Sandy Smith Nature Reserve.

The results of this event were used in combination with the Neighbourhood Plan Survey results to shape the GI Plan. It was extremely useful to have the Neighbourhood Plan Survey happening at this time, and asking a good number of GI related questions.

2. Drop-in Event – February 2019

This second opportunity to engage directly with residents of the parish was a wider Neighbourhood Plan consultation event, held at Campton Village Hall on Saturday 9th February 2019, between 10am and 4pm. The event was very well promoted in the parish, with posters, fliers delivered to residents, social media and word of mouth all used. It had been noted that the previous event had been unsuccessful in engaging residents from Chicksands, and therefore specific effort was made to target this part of the parish. With the military base in Chicksands and many families living in this part of the parish, the Greensand Trust provided an additional children's environmental craft activity, specifically to engage young families (and allow parents to participate in the workshop whilst children were being supervised). It was therefore disappointing that the event had a relatively low turnout of around 45 people (although higher than the previous event, this was considered disappointing because it was a Neighbourhood Plan-wide consultation with all groups present across all themes).

There was no specific sign-in (numbers were estimated) but it was noted that the attendees were largely over 40 years of age. No families with children attended, despite the offer of craft activities, and it was also noted that the majority of attendees were again from Campton.

Consultation Activities

The Greensand Trust and the Environment Group had a display featuring work done to date, including draft GI policies, plus there were also opportunities for people to participate in a 'Favourite Views' exercise and identify/comment on projects and solutions. A Greensand Trust member of staff was in attendance at all times, along with an additional member of staff supervising the craft activity and members of the Environment Sub-Group.

It was noted that virtually everyone attending the event did at least visit the display and read information, with many of these having input into at least one element.

The event also provided the opportunity to engage with the other Neighbourhood Plan groups, and with the owners/tenants of several sites relevant to the GI Plan and Local Green Spaces.

GI Display (craft activity in foreground)



Results

The suggested policies across landscape, historic environment, biodiversity and access were supported by attendees, with some additional comments/thoughts provided to help strengthen them. Comments around biodiversity policy illustrated a good level of understanding of the need to protect wildlife and habitats. Comments around the historic environment policies showed the value people place in the history of the parish and the way it has been shaped by it.

Insert photo 278

The Favourite Views exercise reinforced the results of the Neighbourhood Plan survey, and particularly highlighted the value of views over the Glebe.

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The Projects exercise showed a general level of support for proposed projects, but there were some contradictory views around access to the Glebe Fields, with some people wanting to have access, but others (notably nearby residents) being unhappy with potential intrusion.

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Participants were presented with a draft of the 'Access to Greenspaces' map, illustrating areas considered to have poor/no access to greenspaces. There was general consensus that this was an issue in these areas, and comments also supported project ideas in this area.

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The principle of protecting identified sites through Local Green Space (LGS) designation was supported, with further suggestions made. These were investigated further in the second stage of the LGS assessment exercise and the 'Walking Workshop' (see below).

3. The Walking Workshop

The standard approach following the second engagement activity is to take the projects list and consult via a questionnaire, in order to ascertain priorities from the local community. However, there was a relatively small list of projects in this parish, with general consensus and a relatively even level of support expressed through the workshop. However, there were two areas of difficulty requiring further exploration, which a simple 'ranking' questionnaire could have exacerbated. These were:

- Proposal to create access around the Glebe Fields
- Sensitivities around access to Sandy Smith Nature Reserve and impacts on wildlife.

In addition, there was a concern that the relatively low turnout at the February event was the result of the local community suffering from 'consultation fatigue'. A further questionnaire may not have yielded significant input (as had been experienced in a similar exercise in an adjacent parish earlier in the year).

It was therefore agreed that a 'Walking Workshop' with the Greensand Trust and the Environment Group be held, to work through these issues, look at projects on the ground and also re-visit some of the proposed LGS where it was not clear whether designation was appropriate.

The Walking Workshop was held on 14th March 2019, and involved two members of the Environment Group plus a member of the Housing Group. Large areas of the parish were covered, despite torrential downpours!

Walking Workshop



The key discussions and conclusions of the Walking Workshop were:

- Access to the Glebe Fields was not necessary to enjoy them, but if a path could be created along the edge adjacent to Rectory Road this could support safer access to the lower school. This could be a project/non-policy action for the wider Neighbourhood Plan.
- Campton Plantation would make a good location for Forest School activities, with potential locations and next steps identified.

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- An area adjacent to the river and the Mill lane footpath would make an excellent location for a small quiet recreation/picnic area. An adjacent area would also make a good wildflower meadow. 'Curly's bench' could be re-located to this (Campton) side of the river, or perhaps a new bench installed (Curly was a former gamekeeper and much-loved local character in the parish).
- The field adjacent to Kiln Farm did not present sufficient evidence for LGS designation. The key difference between this field and the nearby Glebe Fields was that the latter were valued for their character, features and appearance as well as views, while the former is valued purely for the views across it – it is otherwise a relatively sterile agricultural field. It was therefore agreed that protection of these views through policy was a better solution.
- The fields adjacent to Campton Manor and Camptonbury Farm did warrant LGS designation.
- The footpath/cycleway adjacent to the A507, whilst providing access from Chicksands to Sandy Smith Nature Reserve (SSNR), is an unpleasant route to walk, with fast (National Speed Limit) traffic constantly passing at most times, including HGVs and other large vehicles. It was recognised that by linking the dead-end footpath into the Annington estate, while creating quick convenient access, this would also have significant negative impacts on the Reserve. SSNR is owned and managed by the Greensand Trust with the main objective of protecting wildlife and creating new habitats. Existing access has already resulted in significant problems with dog waste not being cleared up, and creating a quick convenient access close to a significant population would not only exacerbate this problem but would also significantly impact upon ground nesting birds. It was agreed that providing an alternative to the A507 route is highly desirable, and options through the narrow tree belt or adjacent fields should be explored. It was noted that these were under multiple ownership.

It was agreed that a further appendix to the GI Plan would be created, providing a more detailed Action Plan for a small number of key projects. This would provide a clear plan for the Trust and the parish to work together towards delivery.