

# SOUTH MARSTON VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2026

## Annex 10: Consultation Statement

This statement summarises the consultation processes undertaken by South Marston Parish Council as part of the development of the South Marston Neighbourhood Plan. References to more detailed reports of consultation activity can be accessed under the 'evidence' tab at [www.southmarstonplan.com](http://www.southmarstonplan.com).

Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 requires South Marston Parish Council to produce this Consultation Statement and submit it alongside the South Marston Neighbourhood Development Plan. Regulation 15 states that a consultation statement is a document that:

- contains details of the persons and bodies who have been consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan
- explains how they were consulted summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the person consulted and
- describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development.

A history of consultation prior to the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan is not required by the regulations. However, we have set this out to explain how local residents and stakeholders have been involved in planning the future of the village. This has been an extended process over many years and integrated within negotiations with the Local Planning Authority on the varying scale and nature of development expected under different versions of the draft Swindon Local Plan until it was finally adopted in March 2015.

It has also involved detailed discussions with officers from Swindon Borough Council, commissioned research on technical issues, the use of external consultants employed by the Parish Council and negotiations with potential developers. Together with the involvement of working groups and stakeholders from the community, this overall body of work has shaped the policies that make up the Plan. Throughout this period, results from consultations in early years were validated by reviewing them at subsequent community events

The Neighbourhood Development Plan is the culmination of a process that has been taking place since 2006 once the likely scale of expansion in the parish became known. The current parish population, comprising 325 households and 835 population (2011 figures), will all be affected by this to some degree. The consultations history can conveniently be divided into episodes and this summary highlights the main events and supporting documentation.

## Episode 1: The Gathering Storm

National Government allocates housing targets to the Regions. The South West Regional Government allocates a housing target of 35,000 by 2026 to Swindon Borough and the area to the immediate south of South Marston is allocated as an “Area of Search”. South Marston Parish Council makes representations and also began a process of informing, consulting and engaging with local residents.

2006: Visit to the Parish Council by representatives of Hallam Land (developer) announcing an intention to develop adjacent to the village and of Hartwells announcing an intention to develop their derelict Crown Timber industrial site.

Village Exhibition by Hartwells at the village hall. Villagers expressed significant support for the development of housing at both the Crown Timber site and the opposite industrial estate at Thornhill as they make an unattractive entrance to the village.

## Episode 2: Village Engagement

The Parish Council employed CF Consultancy to undertake a survey of village opinion by way of a **questionnaire**. This achieved a response from 233 (75%) households and was followed by a **Village Meeting** in September 2006 attended by 120 villagers.

### Evidence:

- Flyer advertising the meeting
- CF Consultancy Report:

### Outcomes

- Preserve the separate identity of the Village (96%) – para. 2.6.
- Support the Parish Council in taking an a planned approach to development (90%) para 2.7.
- Support for development at Crown Timber (75%) and Thornhill Industrial (61%) sites – paras 2.8-2.13.
- Mixed views as to development of greenfield sites. Desire for the village to control its own destiny - paras 2.14-2.15.
- Support for maintaining hedgerows and trees – para 2.18.
- Support for reducing traffic speed and rat running – para 2.21.

As a result of this activity and of a meeting with Swindon Borough Council planning officials, the Parish Council altered its policy of opposing all significant development to one of seeking to influence it. A Working Party was established to prepare a **Parish Plan**.

The Working Party of 16 villagers met on 4 occasions and a plan was produced in the form of a Powerpoint presentation proposing 310 new dwellings, doubling of the size of the village.

**2007: Village Meeting** in March with 104 attendees where the Parish Plan was presented and received widespread support and opinion was gathered and incorporated into the final version of the plan. It was then adopted by the Parish Council and lodged with, and praised by, Swindon Borough Council.

### Evidence and outcomes:

‘Parish Plan’ published with the following:

- Drew on the findings of the 2006 questionnaire report – slides 3, 4 & 18.
- Support for the development of the Crown Timber (97%) and Thornhill (89%) brownfield sites, greenfield land between Manor Farm and the hotel (63%)– map at slide 25, but conditional upon additional land, e.g. behind Bell Gardens, being available for recreational use- slide 68.
- 94% attendee support for traffic measures– slide 27. Road options considered at length.
- Recommendation for constructing new road from Old Vicarage Lane to Thornhill Road routed north of Manor Farm and trialling a one way system – map at slide 49.
- Recommended improved junctions onto the A420 at Gablecross and Old Vicarage Lane – slide 50.
- Noted that the Nightingale Lane pumping station is overloaded and the sewerage system needs reviewing – slide 54.
- Noted surface water flooding and recommended a review of the drainage system – slide 54.
- Noted need for improved footways beside roads, to include Pound Corner and Thornhill Road to Hoddinot's corner – map at slide 56.
- 80% support for improved recreational facilities for expanded village – slide 59 & 66.
- 90% support for a village shop – slide 61
- 58% support for new community centre – slide 63.
- Support for a new community centre (86%) but conditional upon the additional land behind Bell Gardens being available for recreational land (77%). – slide 68.
- Summary – slide 69, map - slide 71.

## Episode 3: Swindon Core Strategy and Eastern Development Area

**2009:** Swindon Borough Council published their draft Core Strategy with 12,000 houses proposed for the Eastern Development Area (EDA). This proposed 12,000 houses in the EDA area, to include greenfield development to the immediate south of the village and a new village of Rowborough to the immediate south east.

The Parish Plan was not mentioned and the Crown Timber and Thornhill sites were not within the EDA area.

**26<sup>th</sup> May 2009: Village Meeting** with 120 attendees organised by the Parish Council to explain the EDA proposals to the community. General support for the Parish Council approach of seeking to work with the Borough to influence development as set out in the Presentation. However, a few attendees opted to form a splinter group to oppose the plans.

**Evidence: Powerpoint presentation** reviewed the 2007 Parish Plan presentation and feedback comments in the context of the EDA proposals as follows:

- Need for an integrated expanded village – p.12
- Positive about brownfield development – map p.9
- Through traffic “unacceptable” p.24
- Concern about proposed new road from Rowborough to Keypoint roundabout p.24
- Links required between an integrated plan for the village and the EDA plans p.20
- Detailed housing layout fails to adopt the village strategy principles p.20
- Surface water and flooding will require more attention p.20
- Quality and longer term protection of green infrastructure needs enhancing p.20.

Meetings between Parish Council representatives and Swindon Borough Council planning officers resulted in the Borough confirming that the impact of the EDA proposals on South Marston village would be such that the Borough would prepare a separate **Village SPD** based on input from the community where this was compatible with the Core Strategy and EDA proposals.

The Parish Council decide to obtain professional help and, following a public selection process, NEW Masterplanning were appointed to lead the consultation process.

**2010: NEW Masterplanning** employed as consultants to the Parish Council

Workbook prepared (December 2009) and the consultants facilitated a **Village Workshop** in May 2010 attended by 70 villagers who were divided into 4 groups to articulate separate village designs. NEW then prepared a report in Powerpoint following discussion with Borough planners. This was presented to the Workshop attendees and then written up by NEW, incorporating feedback.

## **Evidence: NEW Workbook**

- Views of the Downs from the proposed village centre pp.7-8
- Village approaches pp 11-16
- Village layout and land uses pp.17-20
- Analysis of the village's character areas and housing densities pp.21-31
- Constraints and opportunities: Flooding and archaeology pp.32-39
- Sustainable growth considerations pp.40-41.

## **NEW Workshop output**

- Presentation: Summary of previous opinions p.7:
- The village overwhelmingly wishes to remain as a discrete and independent community.
- The village objects to any development north of the railway being viewed as part of the EDA rather than part of the village.
- The village could accommodate sizeable increase in housing, largely on brownfield land, configured to create a sustainable community.
- There is a strong feeling to protect all other green areas, particularly between the railway line and the village.
- An expanded village of the suggested size will require more local facilities.
- There was considerable concern expressed about the volume of traffic through the village.

## **Evidence: Work Group outputs:** pp.38-46 Group output and plans; p.47 Summary of Group outputs:

- Priority was given to housing development in particular areas - no consensus and more analysis needed on how far south along Old Vicarage Lane new housing should extend and on the size of green gap needed.
- Redevelopment of employment sites was agreed.
- There was debate as to whether Isotron should be redeveloped for housing or for more 'local' employment.
- Redevelopment of northern edge should deliver a continuous green hinterland adjacent to the Brook.
- Heart of the village is the school and green. The consensus was for new playing fields to be concentrated within this area although some favoured playing fields on the southern edge.
- Need green routes through the heart connecting to farmland to the south and Nightingale Wood to the east.
- Need green areas protected to the south.
- Need for adequate flood mitigation.
- Need to retain 'green wedge' concept from village centre to open land to the south.
- Land to the rear of new development fronting Old Vicarage Lane to be retained as open.

There was debate on other issues, including:

- School location: most prefer to retain current location, retain Victorian building and create better standard classrooms around it.
- Whether a new route through the green would be needed to help solve the traffic problems of Pound Corner. No consensus and more analysis needed.
- Debate on redeveloping allotments to the north and bringing allotments closer to the heart of the village: no clear consensus.
- Debate on whether there should be a new route through the village to reduce traffic pressure on Thornhill Road: no consensus and more analysis needed.
- pp.53-56 Option plans based on Work Group options.
- pp.62. Option plan distilling workshop input.

**September 2010.** In response to SBC's emerging decision that the Core Strategy would allow more housing at South Marston than had previously been discussed by the village (850 compared with 350 units), a **Village Workshop** was organised by the Parish Council with over 50 attendees to further consult with the community to reconsider the options..

**Evidence:**

**Workshop Presentation and Output Report:**

Summary of matters already agreed:

- **Where to build housing:**
  - As much of the Thornhill Industrial Estate as possible
  - Alongside Vicarage Road, south of the Country Club
  - Between Manor Cottages and Church Ground
  
- **Where not to build:**
  - Keep the open green wedges from the central area to the south
  - The boundary south of Nightingale Lane, behind Manor Cottages
  - The drainage route from the back of Manor Park to Manor Cottages
  - The areas of valuable archaeology between Priory Farm and
  - The flood area opposite the Carpenters Arms
  - Anywhere that impedes the development of off-road footpaths/cycleways within and *across the village or from the centre of the village to Gablecross*
  
- **Roads and Access:**
  - Road junctions at the Carpenters Arms and Gablecross will need to be upgraded with roundabouts/traffic lights
  - Pound Corner issue has to be solved
  - Footways on Thornhill Road need to be joined up with the Keypoint bridleway
  - No east/west road across the village area should be designed to take through traffic to the planned 'Rowborough' development
  
- **Additional Output: Areas of Clear Preference:**
  - Mains sewerage for all new and existing properties
  - Eco-friendly design for all new buildings
  - Housing designed for elderly people
  - Community shop with Post Office and delivery/collection service
  - Retention of existing recreation area and its expansion into the village central area
  - Daytime bus service through the village centre
  - Safe pathways/cycleways between village and Gablecross

The event outcome report provides more detail on the attendee preferences.

## **Episode 4: Local Plan and Village SPD**

In **2010** there was a change of Government and with it a change in planning policy and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework. This, and the effects of the economic downturn, led the Borough Council to abandon the draft Core Strategy. The demise of regional targets for housing led to a reassessment of the housing numbers to be delivered east of Swindon.

Against this changing background, the production of the SBC was put on hold until the numbers were confirmed. The **Parish Council Expansion Working Party** met with varying frequency, but sometimes weekly, and discussed and assembled technical evidence for the SPD to back up village aspirations on traffic and flooding. The Environment Agency produced surface water and fluvial flooding maps for the SPD area and SBC commissioned consultants to work on traffic options at Pound Corner.

**Evidence: Environment Agency Flood Map 2011; JMP report Part 1:**

- 20mph options pp.39-42 and plans 6a and 6b
- Pound Corner Options explored p.26 onward

In **2011** the Borough published what became the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2016-26 that replaced the EDA with an Eastern Villages concept, covering the same land but with only 7,500 dwellings, reducing the requirement on new housing at South Marston village.

The Parish Council continued to work with SBC on the South Marston Village SPD. The intention was that this would go alongside the Local Plan to the Examination in Public

The Parish Council produced a newsletter to inform the village of the changed circumstances and the plan to produce a formal SPD for the village.

**May 2011:** The Parish Council held drop in sessions in tandem with SBC consultation on the pre-submission draft of the Core Strategy. To tie in with this, the Parish Council Expansion Working Group issued a household questionnaire asking for residents' views on whether they supported the proposals of the Village Working Party. 122 residents completed the questionnaire, 95.9% of which supported the Parish Council fighting for moderate and integrated development.

**Evidence: Questionnaire results**

All the questions below received over 95% support for the Working Group's proposals:

- No more than 650 additional houses provided undeveloped land is protected
- Brownfield development first
- Lower % of affordable housing than the Borough's proposals
- South Marston to remain a family-friendly village
- Density to be lower than SBC proposals
- Maximum of 1200 houses at Rowborough
- No direct road access between Rowborough and South Marston

In 2011 the Parish Council worked in partnership with the Borough and JMP Consultants to produce Part 2 of the traffic report, updated to take account of the anticipated traffic flows resulting from the Eastern Villages. Chris Sibthorpe of JMP then prepared a Technical Note and Part 3 of the Report dated May 2012.

**Evidence: JMP Reports:**

**JMP report Part 2**

- Direct road from Rowborough to Thornhill Road not supported
- Street to the immediate south of the existing village recommended. Paras. 5.10-5.13
- Upgrade to Old Vicarage Lane junction with the A420 recommended

### **JMP Technical Note and Part 3**

- Repeats rejection of a southern link road Paras. 2.7-2.10
- Baseline assumptions p.7
- Existing access points to A420 from the north - signalised junction at Gablecross, A420 Old Vicarage Lane junction modified to provide a new signalised junction and new eastern access from 'Rowborough'
- 3 access points onto A420 for EV traffic from the south
- Reconfigured Police Station access
- New link between Rowborough and southern end of Old Vicarage Lane
- Considers one way flow at the Rowborough/OVL junction. Recommends unrestricted. Para. 4.6
- Puts forward options to be explored for Pound Corner. Paras. 4.7-4.10 & 5.7-5.9
- 300-400 metre queues at Gablecross and 250-300 metre queues at OVL/A420 anticipated. Para.4.13

## **2012: Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document Development**

The Parish Council commissioned Design Council CABE enabler Peter Sandover to prepare a report advising on taking forward the development of the SPD.

### **Evidence: April 2012 Peter Sandover Reports**

#### **Design Criteria for South Marston:**

- Describes landscape and character of the area p.8: Existing rural character
- Proposes different "Character Areas" of new building and suggests characteristics p.9-11
- Detailed suggestions for design criteria pp.12 onwards.

#### **Neighbourhood Plan Report:**

- Draws on the New Masterplanning output plans pp.18-19
- The remainder of the Report suggests detailed design criteria
- *'The minimum width of open space separating new development areas on many proposals is less than 20 metres. Such pinch points and lack of visual separation risk coalescence between development sites and compromising the establishment of sustainable uses and effective biodiversity corridors. It is recommended that the open space between developments is greater than 40 metres and if possible much wider'. P. 17*

**June 2012 Village Exhibition** arranged jointly by the Borough and Parish Council to consult on proposals for the EV and Village SPDs.

153 villagers attended together with 6 representatives from the developers HHT and 2 from Hartwells.

Attendees were given a Powerpoint presentation by Peter Sandover in the entrance lobby before moving into the 2 exhibition rooms, where they were given the chance to express preferences on a variety of topics. In addition a questionnaire was handed out for completion by attendees and later distributed to all houses in the village.

### **Evidence: Peter Sandover presentation, Exhibition board contents and questionnaire**

#### **Exhibition output: Board 5.2 House design:**

- Strong support for green in front of houses.
- Overwhelming view against cars at the front of houses.
- Strong preference for a mix of housing styles of 2 stories, occasional 2.5
- Preference for maintaining open views from the new village centre
- Strong preference for winding streets
- Preference for elderly housing close to community centre.

**Questionnaire results** *(See also extensive additional comments)*

QUESTION 1: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES?

General agreement. See comments

QUESTION 2: DO YOU FEEL THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL AREAS (SHOWN RED ON THE MAP) ARE IN THE RIGHT LOCATIONS?

General agreement, if development has to be accepted

QUESTION 3: DO YOU AGREE WITH THE IDEA OF APPROVING DESIGN CRITERIA (A DESIGN CODE) THAT SET OUT THE QUALITY AND DENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL BE EXPECTED FOR THE VILLAGE?

General agreement

QUESTION 4: DO YOU FAVOUR A BROAD RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES OR PREDOMINATELY SUBURBAN STYLE DETACHED AND SEMI- DETACHED HOUSES?

Varying comments. Just under 50% favour detached/semi-detached

QUESTION 5: DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW HOMES SHOULD BE FRONTED ONTO THE RECREATION GROUND AND OTHER OPEN SPACE IN THE EXPANDED VILLAGE?

Over 50% say no

QUESTION 6: SHOULD NEW HOMES BE “ENVIRONMENTALLY – FRIENDLY” WITH FEATURES INCLUDING HIGH INSULATION, SOLAR PANELS, “GREY WATER” FOR TOILET FLUSHING ETC?

All agree

BOARD 5 PART 2: VISUAL CONSULTATION ON HOUSING DESIGN

See Report for responses

QUESTION 7: DO YOU AGREE WITH INTRODUCING A 20MPH SPEED LIMIT THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE?

All agree

Q8: WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POUND CORNER.

Responses show familiarity with the problem but no consent as to solution

QUESTION 9: ACCESS INTO AND OUT OF THE VILLAGE IS CRITICAL. DO YOU AGREE WITH THE PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE JUNCTIONS WITH THE A420?

General agreement

Question 10: DO YOU AGREE THAT THE PLANNED OPEN SPACE REPRESENTS A LOGICAL WAY TO PROVIDE AMENITY LAND WITHIN AN EXPANDED VILLAGE?

General agreement

Question 11: ARE THERE PARTICULAR TYPES OF OPEN SPACE THAT YOU THINK SHOULD BE PROVIDED?

See details. Top marks for: Wildlife Areas. Bridleways. Village Green/Formal Gardens. Equipped play areas

Question 12: BEARING IN MIND THAT THE SCHOOL OPTIONS APPRAISAL MAY RULE OUT ONE OR OTHER OPTION ON COST GROUNDS, DO YOU FAVOUR A) EXPANDING THE EXISTING SCHOOL OR, B) THE BUILDING OF A REPLACEMENT SCHOOL ON A NEW SITE TO THE SOUTH OF BELL GARDENS?

Preferences: 33 preferred (A), 20 preferred (B)

Question 13: SHOULD THE NEW SOUTH MARSTON COMMUNITY HALL BE OWNED AND MANAGED BY THE COMMUNITY ITSELF, OR PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overwhelming support for community management

Question 14: DO YOU THINK THAT A VILLAGE SHOP SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TO SERVE THE EVENTUAL INCREASED VILLAGE POPULATION OF ABOUT 1,800 PEOPLE?

Support, but concern as to viability given the proximity of Sainsbury's

Question 15: WHAT OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

See responses

Question 16: DO YOU THINK THAT IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL IF THESE NEW VILLAGE FACILITIES WERE LOCATED NEXT TO THE SCHOOL, WHETHER OR NOT THE EXISTING SCHOOL IS EXPANDED OR THERE IS A REPLACEMENT SCHOOL ON A NEW SITE?

There is big difference in opinion with some expressing a view that they are indifferent to the location of facilities providing that they can be accessed easily by residents

QUESTION 17: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES?

See detailed responses

These results fed into the development with Swindon Borough Council of the draft Local Plan and the draft South Marston Supplementary Planning Document.

### July 2013: Local Plan and SPD public consultations

**A Village Exhibition** with over 192 attendees was hosted by the Borough and the Parish Council as part of the formal consultation on the South Marston and Eastern Villages SPDs. Additionally developers HHT displayed a draft plan of their proposals and the Parish Council consulted on options for the village centre and a 20mph zone.

#### **Evidence: Village Centre Design Options and Feedback**

Illustrative option plans were used to reflect different design criteria. Attendees were asked to rate the importance of the individual criteria. Ratings in order of priority:

- Minimise traffic on OVL and Pound Corner: 42 votes
- Retain the rural feel by avoiding ribbon development on OVL 36 votes
- Minimise the distance between school, community facilities and elderly units 22 votes
- Minimise any building on the existing Recreation Ground 21 votes
- Shared car parking for the hall and the school 19 votes
- Minimise distance to facilities for existing residents 15 votes

#### **Evidence: 20 mph zone:**

- The display showed a map and 3 options as to how far a 20mph zone might extend along existing roads and attendees were invited to express a preference.
- The 'centre only' zone: 11 ticks, 4 crosses
- JMP Report option 6b – zone extended to Ash Gardens chicane: 8 ticks, 4 crosses
- JMP Report option 6a – zone extended to Isotron and the allotments: 45 ticks, 3 crosses

**Evidence: Green Spaces ideas -** see Report for comments

**April 2014: Developer Meeting:** The Parish Council hosted a meeting with the three main developers on land within the NP – Hallam/Hannick/Taylor Wimpey (HHT), Hartwells and the Hotel owners. The purpose was how best to secure an integrated plan for the centre of the expanded village. Actions were agreed as was a commitment to share proposals between developers. HHT did not follow up on these commitments.

#### **Evidence: Circulated Note of Meeting**

## Episode 5: Neighbourhood Development Plan

At the Examination in Public in October 2014 elements of the draft Village SPD were uplifted into the draft Local Plan, but for technical reasons the SPDs could not proceed.

**February 2015:** South Marston Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan and appointed a Neighbourhood Plan Committee as a sub-committee of the Parish Council.

### Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 2015: Application made to designate a neighbourhood area.

**March 2015: A Village Public Meeting** was held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015 to launch the Neighbourhood Plan process, advertised by a leaflet drop to all households and notices on the village notice boards and the village web site. The 50 attendees were all supportive of the proposal and of the concept that the Plan would be based on the draft SPD. A new footpaths group was formed to develop this area of policy.

#### **Evidence: Flyer distributed to all households and published on website**

- Gives reasons for producing a Neighbourhood Plan
- Explains that it will draw on previous consultations and the draft SPD
- Invites residents to open meeting

#### **Evidence: Presentation slides**

- Rehearses the process so far
- Explains the plan's aspirations

#### **Evidence: Note of meeting**

- 50 attendees, Q&A session, workshop dialogue on footpaths/cycleways

**March/April 2015:** Invitations were publicised for anyone interested in joining the formal Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Parish Council – 2 residents and 6 parish councillors took up this offer. The Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Parish Council was established, with appropriate constitution, budget and communications strategy. Membership and conflicts of interest were published on the website alongside agendas, papers and minutes of meetings.

### **April/May 2015: Engagement with stakeholder bodies during the development of the Plan.**

A briefing re the proposed Neighbourhood Plan was prepared and sent to a list of local **home based businesses** obtained from the South Marston Enterprise Group. The group met on 7 May 2015 was addressed by representative of the NP committee and minuted, with points being noted for inclusion within the pre-submission draft.

A meeting on 29 April between representatives of the NPC was held with **businesses located on Thornhill Industrial Estate** to ascertain their situation and the likely impact of expansion in South Marston.

**The Rights of Way group**, consisting of twelve local residents, met three times during March and April 2015 as well as engaging in email discussion. They developed a full ROW Report, the outcomes of which were accepted in full by the Neighbourhood Plan Committee and reflected in Policy 8 and reproduced as the appendix to Annex 5:Justification Schedule.

The **Expansion Working Group**, which has, for many years, led the work on community engagement within the development of the Local Plan and the South Marston Supplementary Planning Documents, has been fully involved in the work of the NPC:

- All members have been circulated with updates re development of policies throughout April to June.
- A special meeting was held for members of the group in May 2015 in respect of the development of the Village Centre
- All Expansion Group members have been circulated with agenda papers and invited to attend and speak at meetings of the NPC in August, October and November which agreed the pre-submission versions of the NP and the proposed amendments that were subsequently approved.

**The Neighbourhood Plan Committee** has met on 6 occasions between April and October 2015. Agendas published on the website 5 days before a meeting. Members of the public invited to attend and take part in the open 10 minutes at the start of the meeting. Progress has been noted in monthly reports to full Parish Council meetings.

#### **Evidence:**

- Minutes of meetings <http://southmarston.org.uk/category/village-development/neighbourhood-plan/>
- About the committee: **Appendix 9: Governance & Process**

**16<sup>th</sup> June 2015:** the draft Neighbourhood Plan approved for Pre-submission Consultation by the Parish Council (minute 072/15)

#### **June /August 2015: Pre-submission draft NP consultation:**

- **Dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website** set up. NP and Justification Schedule (JS) made available as single documents or viewable in sections with electronic links to relevant supporting documents.
- **Leaflet distributed** to all households 20/21st June:
  - announcing the start of the consultation period,
  - advertising the NP website at [www.southmarstonplan.com](http://www.southmarstonplan.com)
  - offering to supply paper copies on telephoning the Clerk
  - inviting attendance at presentations of the NP at the Annual Parish meeting and at the Village Fete.
- **Stakeholder communication:** Information on the plan and how to access it sent to significant stakeholders and local businesses.
- **Annual Parish Meeting 23 June 2015**  
8 members of the public attended. Displays erected around the room summarising the major topics and issues that had been noted from community consultation and how those issues had been tackled. Attendees were taken through the NP website, noting the major policy areas. Hard copies of the plan offered if required. Responses invited through the website or by email or post to the parish clerk.

Questions (and responses in italics) on:

- A420 traffic – concerned about increase in traffic. *The NP Policies aim to*
  - a) *reduce through traffic using village roads*
  - b) *minimise need for new housing to use existing roads in the centre of the village*
  - c) *increase shift to sustainable modes of transport.*
- Is the diamond interchange at the White Hart likely to come forward – *government has offered upfront investment, in principle, to support it coming forward early in the development process.*
- Are the boundaries shown on maps indicative – *the Local Green Space Designations are fixed by the policy, but housing areas were not specific allocations, though constrained by other policies eg cycleways and flooding measures.*
- What is the legal status of the Neighbourhood Plan – *once the process is complete, and if 'made', it has the same status as the Local Plan.*
- Are there any plans relating to the Mercure Hotel – *we are awaiting proposals for development.*
- Have the developers agreed the school will remain on the present site – *the LEA and school governors are proceeding with plans for the school expansion; no developer proposals for the school on an alternative site have been brought forward.*
  
- The existing graveyard is full and natural burial site is not an option on waterlogged land – are there any proposals for a new/extended site – *none at present, but something that the PC could take up with the Church.*
- What is the turnout required for the referendum – *no minimum turnout, the vote will be decided by an absolute majority of those voting.*
  
- **4/5 July: Second leaflet drop** to all households and significant stakeholders and local businesses
  - Repeating the invitation for responses to the Plan
  - Restating the availability of the Plan on the website and by telephoning the Clerk
  - Inviting attendance at Village Fete display.
  
- **11 July 2015: Fete Display**
  - 5 big display boards outlining the major issues tackled by the draft NP.
  - 106 unique visitors to the display tent; 3 councillors plus support on hand to answer questions. The turnout was particularly useful since we spoke to a number of villagers who had not attended any of the previous “formal” consultation events in recent years.
  - Overall support for the NP Policies. No objections to policies or substantive new input in terms of issues raised but useful information gained to support our evidence base.

Major topics raised:

- Traffic
  - a) The A420 – major concerns that the impact of the increase in traffic would not be mitigated sufficiently.
  - b) Through the village – support for the ‘preferred route’ for the internal road network and opposition to the Rowborough/Keypoint link once the options were explained. One villager had found the plan in the JS and commented favourably (*comment: the plan should be elevated to the NP itself*)

- c) Road safety – several areas of concern highlighted, in particular the stretch of Old Vicarage Lane from Pound Corner to the school, entrance to Chapel Lane and Pound Corner itself.
- Would the plan deliver well designed housing in keeping with the village context - support for the Design Principles.
- Can the development be stopped? If not, what is the timescale? Can the NP be effective? Explaining the relationship between the Local Plan and the NP. Explaining the timetable for the NP and the frustrating uncertainty with the timescale of other aspects of the development process
- Support for the housing for the elderly and design requirement for lifetime homes.
- Support for the proposed footpath and cycleway network – also the creation of circular routes for horses.
- Questions over the layout of the Village Centre – understanding that the uncertainty over the road network to the south of the village precluded detailed plans being part of the NP. Support for the policies re general recreational use rather than just sports pitches. Concerns over parking arrangements. Query over the boundary between the new Recreation Ground and the expanded school – *this is indicative on the map, but demonstrates the area to be taken up by the school* – pleased to see the retention of green space in the centre of the village.
- Interest in the wider Eastern Villages – the Local Plan details are hard to follow.
- Flooding – support for the recognition of surface water flooding and provision for swales in eastern green wedge.
- Query separation from Rowborough – would not want to see development spill out onto Nightingale Lane.
- Families with children queried what will happen re schools, what the size would be and would there still be preschool.
- Confirmed the support for faster, more reliable broadband

**Other comments:**

- Appreciated the display in easy format – the volume of ‘words’ in the NP on the website is a lot to take in. *We have stripped down the introductory words on the home page. Not much we can do with the NP text itself.*
- Problems understanding the timeline of the process - *perhaps a flow chart would help*
- Several attendees took away hard copy plans – non internet users or suffering from poor broadband speeds. *Publicised the arrangement for written responses to be placed in Village Hall post box.*

**August – November 2015:**

- **Consideration of Written Responses** from the community and other consultees. Reports on all matters raised in the consultation were discussed by the NPC on the 17 August and the first tranche of amendments discussed and agreed on 19<sup>th</sup> October
- **Further Meetings** and correspondence took place in September and October 2015 with representatives of the principle developer (HHT) to negotiate agreement on the detailed wording of a number of policies and text. Notable failure to agree with developer representatives on:

- Policy 2 – Design: Wording finally agreed with Borough officers to be compliant with the Local Plan para 4.30
- Policy 6 - Internal road network –HHT persist with a proposal that looks like a by-pass that will deliver traffic from the new village of Rowborough to the Keypoint/Gablecross junction despite the findings of the JMP report and opposition of the community as set out in the JS. Further research and discussion with SBC confirms proposed indicative route for the link street is deliverable as evidenced in the JS section on the road network.
- **Further meetings** and correspondence with Borough officers to check detailed wording of policies.
- **Remaining Amendments** made to the Plan and circulated to NPC members and members of the Expansion Working Group for comment.
- **November 2015: Remaining** proposed amendments examined in detail and approved for adoption by the Parish Council.

**11 November 2015:** Submission draft of the plan approved by the Parish Council

**SMNP Annex 11** shows how the consultation responses to the pre-submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan led to modifications in the final submission draft plan.