



ALBURY MATTERS

The Albury Parish Council Newsletter

Serving Albury, Albury Heath, Brook, Farley Green, Little London & Newlands Corner

Chairman's Report

This edition of Albury Matters contains the results of the Neighbourhood Plan parish consultation. On behalf of the Parish Council I want to thank everyone who responded and gave us views on the site options and policies. This will help us deliver what parishioners want. A summary of the results can be found in the following pages and we will hold a meeting on Saturday 22 March (see below) to explain them and answer any questions and at the Annual Parish Meeting. We have already begun to instigate your ideas with some new play equipment for the Recreation Ground especially for pre-school children and have renewed our lease on the village hall.



Stu Bevan

On other matters, we continue to work on ditches and drains in Church Lane, Westonfields, Farley Green and Little London to relieve flooding. Surrey County Council are extending their speed reduction trial to include Albury Parish and we have asked Church Lane, Westonfields and The Street to be added to it. The Albury café runs every Monday from 10 until 12 in the Memorial Library at the village hall. Fresh coffee and cakes are provided and all parishioners regardless of age are welcome including those with children. Just drop in, no booking is required. We are very grateful to Carolyn Woods for running this with additional help from parishioners.

Lastly and regrettably, the precept will increase by 7.18% this year. This is because we are receiving less from SCC and GBC both financially and in practical terms for parish maintenance and because we have not increased the precept in previous years. We always resist these increases but this time we have little choice and we still anticipate that we will have to dig into our reserves this year.

Stu Bevan

Chair Albury Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Presentations

Saturday March 22 10.30am-12

Wednesday April 30 7.15pm at the Parish Annual Meeting

Both meetings at the village hall. All are welcome.



Neighbourhood Plan

Objectives

Between April and July 2024, we held a parish consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The objective was to find out parishioner's views on the draft policies and sites put forward for potential affordable housing and rural enterprise. This was publicised at 3 meetings at the village hall, 2 mailings to all households, posters around the parish, on social media sites and on the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan websites. Parishioners were encouraged to submit their comments online and in writing. The responses, many of which were lengthy, were analysed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and also by a Planning Consultant and a report was produced.



Housing Need

We commissioned a parish Housing Needs Survey in January 2024 which identified a need for 17 affordable homes for households with a local connection to Albury, with consideration also to be given for the 19 households registered on the Guildford Borough Council Housing Register. The breakdown should include 8 dwellings for affordable rent, 4 shared ownership and 5 open market, all small one, two and three bed properties.

We contacted landowners who expressed an interest in providing land to deliver the identified need. A map of the sites labelled A-F is shown on page 4. Site I was put forward for solar panels, and sites G and H (page 5) for rural enterprise development.

Response to consultation

68 parishioners responded to the consultation which is 8% of the Electoral Register. Of these 82% were in favour of building new affordable homes on one or more of the sites. However, many were supportive only on condition that the character of the village is retained including building style and density and if concerns about each of the sites could be overcome. There were suggestions that only those living in the village should decide the outcome of building there but as 78% of respondents live in Albury and only 22% live outside the village, this objection was overcome.

There was also good support for development at the rural enterprise sites, solar array site and for the plan policies.



Outcome by site

	SUPPORT any site	SUPPORT site	DO NOT SUPPORT site	Expressed no opinion	Properties delivered
Site F Land Behind the village hall	9%	51%	22%	18%	6
Site A Malcolm's Field	9%	51%	25%	15%	21
Site D Land behind Albury mill	9%	46%	32%	13%	6
Site C Birmingham Farm	9%	40%	31%	20%	6
Site B Land behind Rose Cottage	9%	24%	46%	22%	12
Site E Albury House	9%	21%	37%	32%	10

Is this the “go ahead” to develop these sites?

In short “NO”. Firstly, none of the proposals are planning applications and planning applications would have to be submitted by site owners first and assessed by the Council in the normal way. Residents and the Parish Council will be able to comment on these as usual. Each application would need to demonstrate how it addresses the concerns raised by respondents to the consultation and some of the more popular sites have the most difficult obstacles to overcome which makes others easier to develop. For example, Malcolm's Field received 68 comments expressing concerns that would have to be addressed (the highest of all sites) in order for the site to be acceptable to the community and these cover areas including: access, traffic, parking, loss of amenity and density.

We also need a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This is a formal statutory requirement to assess sites for environmental, historic and other impacts. This report will be done by AECOM an independent consultancy. We are waiting approval from the Ministry of Housing to start this.

Can I read all the responses?

The consultation report is in 2 parts: a summary report and an Appendix. The latter contains the responses. The summary document can be found on the Neighbourhood Plan website www.alburyparishneighbourhoodplan.org and will form part of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Appendix will not be published. This is because of GDPR compliance and the promise we made to residents to keep their responses confidential. We understand there are respondents who rent their homes. Likewise, the nature of some responses could identify the author even when their address has been concealed. In due course the Steering Group will provide a report for each site summarising the comments both positive and negative that can be used going forward without identifying respondents.

Map of Albury village site options



Neighbourhood Plan housing policy

How will our comments on affordable housing sites be included in the Neighbourhood Plan?

There will be a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan for affordable housing. As 82% of respondents were in favour of building new affordable homes, we believe that all sites should be included as potential sites for affordable housing on the understanding that:

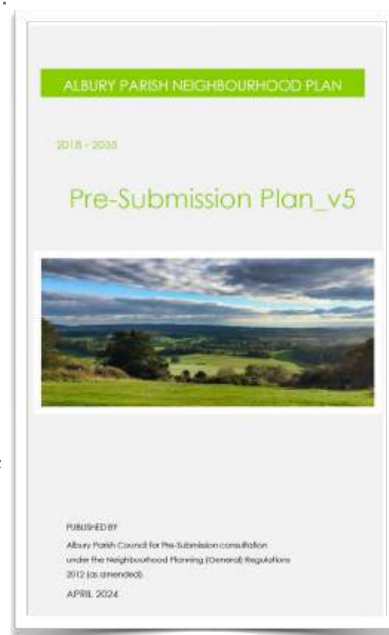
- The number of affordable homes built is no greater than the need identified in the current Housing Needs Survey (HNS). The Parish Council must commission a new HNS to assess need every 5 years. This would mean that no more than 17 homes should be built before 2030 as specified in the 2024 HNS.
- The type of housing must be genuinely affordable, remain so in perpetuity and meet the type of tenancy and size identified in the Housing Needs Survey.
- A small number of open market homes can be built to make sites cost effective to develop. 5 were identified in the 2024 HNS.
- New affordable homes must be offered in the first instance to those who can demonstrate a genuine link to Albury be it familial or work.
- Any homes built must adhere to the character of Albury village as laid out in the AECOM Design Guide and in accordance with heritage and the Conservation Area. This should include size, bulk, mass, density and built style and must comply with current net zero building design and regulations.
- Any planning application submitted for sites A-F for affordable housing must address the concerns raised by residents in the parish consultation 2024.

What will this achieve?

Parishioners know that most of the sites in the consultation have been the subject of speculation and development for years. Landowners could have submitted planning applications for the sites regardless and without including them in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, by doing so they allowed residents the chance to comment and provide input upfront, before plans are drawn up, and for us to assess the type of new homes we need, their size, how many, where and what they will look like. Once the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted the Council must take into account residents views included in the plan if and when planning applications are submitted. We believe this is a better way to approach planning.

Contact us

Find contact details for Albury Parish Councillors and our Parish Clerk on the Parish Council website <https://alburyparishcouncil.gov.uk> or call our Clerk Cj Bishop-Wright on **0785 6010600**



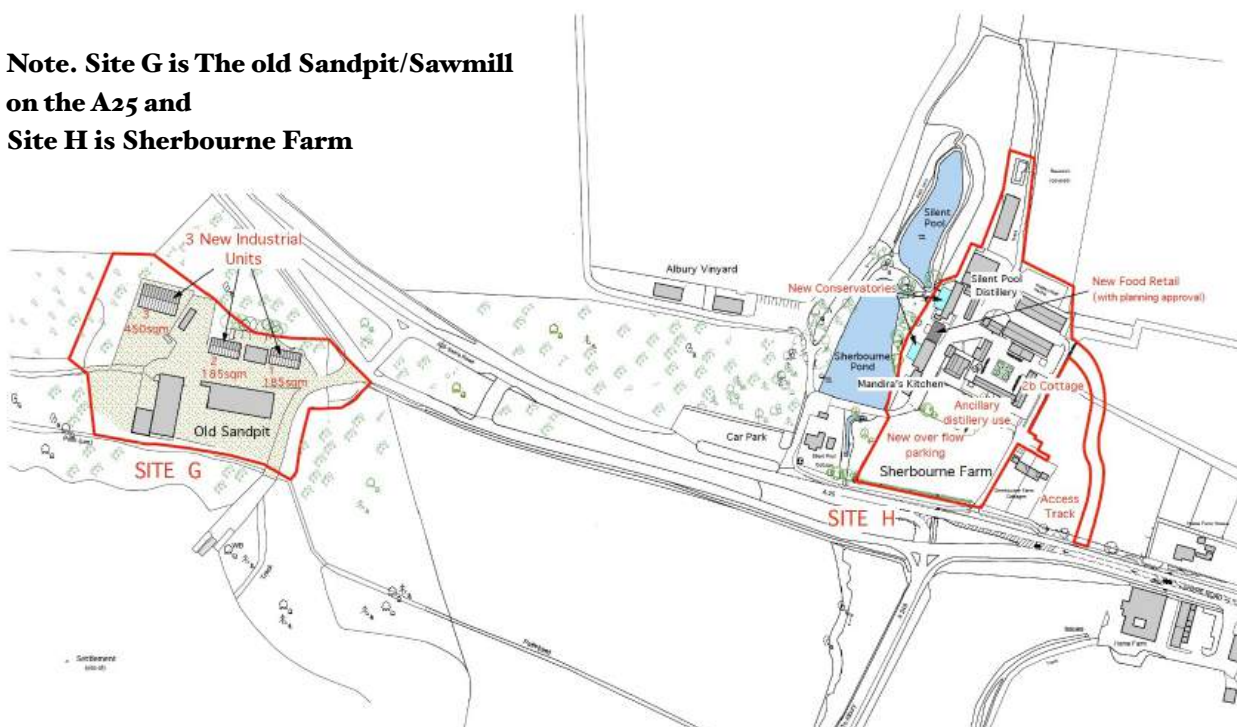
Rural Enterprise Policy

Response to Rural Enterprise and Solar Array sites

Although parishioners made fewer comments regarding the 2 Rural Enterprise sites (site G The old Sandpit and site H Sherbourne Farm both on the A25) and the Solar Array site (site I on the map on page 4), those that did were supportive of proposals at all 3 sites, though like the affordable housing sites support was given on condition that concerns could be overcome. We will produce summary documents of the responses for each site, and once again the identity of respondents will remain anonymous. These 3 sites will also be assessed as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

	SUPPORT	DO NOT SUPPORT	EXPRESSED NO OPINION
Site G Sandpit/Old Sawmill On the A25	34%	1%	65%
Site H Sherbourne Farm On the A25	28%	12%	60%
Site I Solar Array Albury Village	26%	3%	71%

Note. Site G is The old Sandpit/Sawmill on the A25 and Site H is Sherbourne Farm



Next steps

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are currently updating the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan to incorporate the comments received from the parish consultation. We are aiming to have a next stage draft plan in a few months. Local residents will be consulted on the draft plan. Alongside this we hope the Strategic Environmental Assessment will take place. Once the draft plan has been through an examination it will be returned to the community via a referendum for adoption. We will keep the community fully apprised of progress. In the meantime, if you want to read any part of the Neighbourhood Plan you can find it and all the supporting documents on the website at www.alburyparishneighbourhoodplan.org or come along to the meetings on March 22 and April 30 where you can find out more (see front cover for details).