

Are we there yet?



Hands up if you need a holiday!

Thank you to everyone for their kind words this week, as we set sail past the Cabinet Advisory Board and prepare to dock at “The Cabinet” on Thursday 15th August.

The demonstration on Monday was fantastic. We are very grateful to everyone who whistled, waved and made some noise for Save Capel! This Thursday, as it’s a morning meeting on a work day, we’re going to glide silently and stealthily in to the Cabinet meeting and listen intently to everything they have to say. We have a number of speakers at the meeting and look forward to sharing our views. This is the last scheduled public meeting in 2019 where we can address Councillors. We have no right of reply and it’s not a debate or discussion. We expect the Cabinet will wave the draft Local Plan through to public consultation.

In September, public consultation begins and it will be time to get every single comment we can think of about the impact of the draft Local Plan on Capel in to the council. Even if you have written to Councillors or MPs or the Planning office before, every point you made must be sent in again (online or by post) in submissions in a form they will recognise. We will be creating guidance pages, to help everyone, on our website in September.

Sevenoaks—a ray of hope?



Sevenoaks District Council has interpreted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with diligence and intelligence, to challenge the housing need figure put before them by the government.

In their Local Plan submission to the Inspector (the stage that we will be at in December 2020) they say:

“Our ability to meet this housing need within our District is a key challenge for this Plan. National planning policy sets out that we should aim to meet the 'Local Housing Need' figure provided by central government unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This is a highly constrained District with 93% Green Belt and 60% AONB and therefore, despite exploring a range of different options including Green Belt release, we have been unable to meet our housing need in full.”

They strongly believe that the destruction of green belt should outweigh the benefit of delivering the housing the government seeks. They know that the NPPF excuses them from meeting the local housing need figure presented to them. They have had the courage to drop 8 of 12 green belt sites from their draft Local Plan, with the full support of their MP.

We wish them well for their Local Plan hearings, which run from 24th September to 15th November and eagerly await the Inspector’s comments. If their Local Plan is approved and adopted, maybe TWBC will follow their lead and adapt their Local Plan to save our Green Belt. We know that growth in the borough is slowing and that the housing market is at a virtual standstill, especially with London leavers waiting for house prices in London to start rising again (hope they’re not holding their breath!).

Their MP spoke out to protect their Green Belt. Read more at

<https://www.kentlive.news/news/backlash-plan-build-thousands-new-1689625>

The article’s statement about feeling “under siege” certainly rings true in our parish today.

Poundbury

We're not sure what the East Capel masterplanners have in mind, but we have received an insight in to the Tudeley New Town masterplan, via recent correspondence to all residents from the Hadlow Estate.

Here is a quick overview of their inspiration:

Poundbury: an urban extension to Dorchester on 400 acres of old quarry land, aiming to increase Dorchester's population by 5,000 people.

Tregunel Hill: 174 new houses on 10 acres on the edge of Newquay.

Truro (Eastern District): 98 new houses on the eastern side of Truro.

Tornagrain: Pet project of the Earl of Moray; a new town of 5,000 new houses on 620 acres with 3 schools, a secondary school and shops, adjacent to the hamlet of Tornagrain (between Inverness and Nairn).

Starts as a village and then grows to a town. A town centre will then be created. Design work began in 2004, planning submissions were approved in 2012. The first resident moved in in March 2017. 100 units were sold by Feb 2019. 39 more 'reservations' due.



The Prince of Wales is a huge supporter of the countryside. The Duchy of Cornwall projects undertaken and cited as the Hadlow Estate's inspiration are all extensions of existing urban areas.

Tudeley New Town will destroy 400 acres of living, breathing, fertile land, including meadows and ancient woodland in the heart of the Green Belt. It bears no resemblance to the starting point for Poundbury or any of the other Duchy of Cornwall projects listed above. All of those projects had sustainable transport infrastructure ready to be developed. At Poundbury, the Duchy of Cornwall team chose a site a short walk from two existing railway stations; a site adjacent to the A37; which is a good sized road with dedicated bus lanes. They understand sustainable transport. Network Rail won't build a station at Tudeley; the nearest station is a 45 minute walk away and the cost of putting in new roads, rail crossings and cycle paths to deliver sustainable transport from Tudeley New Town will be huge. Then there's the costs of flood mitigation measures and removing the protesters after they have glued themselves to the gates... the list goes on...

Chapelton: 4,045 new houses initially in four neighbourhoods, growing to 8,000 houses in seven neighbourhoods. A town centre will follow. Five miles south of Aberdeen.



Community Advice



There have been some terminations of tenancies in our parish, by a landowner who has much to gain from the draft Local Plan being implemented. We're not really sure why the properties need to be sold before the Local Plan is adopted. If the Local Plan makes it through the Planning Inspectorate's examination then it will be adopted at the end of 2021, with development work not really able to start until 2023 at the earliest. Before houses can be built, a masterplan must be completed and approved, roads built and other infrastructure established and tested and then detailed planning applications required before the builders can begin. We wanted to make sure that anyone who is worried about their tenancies being affected has good, free advice available to them. The Community Advice Centre in Paddock Wood is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 1.30pm. Their trained advisors have lots of experience in providing housing advice and would be happy to assist anyone in need of help. Please do contact them if you are worried. Their website is at www.pwadvice.org

Timeline

2019

September & October 2019: TWBC will run a public consultation period from Sep 20th to Nov 1st.

This is known as **Reg 18**. Every issue, big or small, must be raised here.

Neighbouring councils, businesses, residents and people working in Tunbridge Wells must comment at this time, even if they have written to TWBC before this time. Comments can be submitted online or by post.

We must be ready to object to specific questions with sound, evidence based arguments.

We will ensure that exhibition dates, evidence gathered by our teams, jargon busting policy guides and other useful information is available on savecapel.com and via Facebook and Twitter. We will attend every exhibition and public meeting. We will be inviting the London Green Belt Council, Campaign to Protect Rural England and others to participate in a debate about the future of Capel, Kent and beyond.

2020

May 2020: Borough & Parish Council elections. Please vote. We will help you to find and meet the candidates who understand Capel's issues and future plans.

August 2020: TWBC publish their Pre-Submission Local Plan. This will have been developed by TWBC from Nov 2019. **Reg 19** consultation on this plan begins for 6 weeks. This is narrow and more focussed, with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework's "tests of soundness" and formal legal points considered. Only issues raised in Reg 18 can be addressed in Reg 19. The process is run by TWBC.

October 2020: Final Development Plan developed by TWBC, to be published in Dec 2020. Submitted to Secretary of State for Housing, who appoints an Inspector to examine it.

2021

The examination by the Inspector will take place in May 2021.

This is the point at which **TWBC's plans are, for the first time, subjected to independent scrutiny.**

Hearings will be held where legal submissions can be made.

The Inspector should publish their report in September 2021 and a final "set in stone" plan should be adopted by December 2021.