

DRAFT

NOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY MEETING HELD TO DISCUSS THE

PARISH PRIORITY STATEMENT SURVEY RESPONSES - SATURDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Chris Wilton (Chairman, Sheet P.C.), Gail Martin (Vice Chair, Sheet P.C.)

Approximately 20 members of the public present at the meeting.

In Attendance: Jenny Hollington, Clerk

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their detailed responses to the PPS Survey. He said that in total 78 questionnaires had been completed and returned which represents approximately 20% of households within the parish.

The questionnaire had been divided into seven main areas, covering land management and development, homes, design and local character, the natural environment, jobs, public spaces and infrastructure. There was also space for more general comments and what residents viewed as their most important priorities. The Chairman ran through the outcomes, starting with the areas that attracted fewer comments, these were:

- **Protect small businesses (19%).** There was a general wish to ensure that the existing small businesses (especially the pre-schools) were encouraged to keep operating, particularly as they could provide some local job opportunities. There was little support for any large-scale expansion of locally based businesses.
- **Flooding and sewage (22%).** This has been a long-term problem, particularly in Mill Lane and Long Lane. This was raised by around a fifth of those who responded. It seems likely that almost all of those in the affected areas raised it as a concern.
- **Need for a car park (27%).** This was raised as a specific concern by just over a quarter of respondents. Most thought that Church Field would be a suitable site for a “National Trust” type of car park, i.e. one that retained its rural appearance. This may appear to be a low figure, given the parking problems in the village, but **45% also commented on the difficulties of parking** safely around the village, particularly around the Village Green, but also along Village Street and School Lane. If the two items are taken together it is clear that this is a significant concern for many in the village.
- **More renewable energy (31%).** There was considerable support for the introduction of more renewable energy in the village. A small number of residents thought a local wind farm might be beneficial, but most respondents felt that the most effective response would be to ensure that any new builds had solar panels included in their construction.
- **Encourage more active travel (31%).** There was strong support for more cycling and walking pathways. A number commented on the gap in Sheet in the cycle pathway between Petersfield and Sheet. Most wanted to see the creation of a pathway along the River Rother between Sheet and Penns Place.
- **Maintain the Strategic Gap (31%).** Many felt that it was important to maintain the strategic gap between Sheet and Petersfield. In practice, this means avoiding significant building on the area between Town Lane/School Lane and Kingfernsden Lane. Many felt that the identity of the village risked being lost if that gap were to be closed. It should be noted that, in addition to the specific question about the strategic gap, residents were also asked for their views on the **public spaces in the village**. **68%** considered that the preservation of our green spaces was one of the most important priorities. As well as the large green spaces - Millennium Field, Recreation Ground, Sheet Common - **36%** wanted to see the **preservation of the centre of the village**. In terms of overall comments in the questionnaires, the preservation of the village’s rural aspects was

considered one of the top three priorities for residents. Many commented that they liked the village as it is and would not wish to see significant change or large-scale development.

- **Road Safety (55%).** Most respondents thought that improving road safety was one of their top priorities. They highlighted a number of concerns, in particular:
 - Speeding on Inmans Lane and Pulens Lane
 - inappropriate speed limits on London Road
 - The dangerous road junction of London Road and Pulens Lane
 - The absence of safe crossing points across London Road at both ends of the village
 - The high number of HGVs using Pulens Lane to access the A3
- **Housing:** The area of most concern for residents was housing. 92% of respondents commented on it, with many giving it their highest priority. Of the 72 questionnaires that raised it as a main concern, 63% were in favour of some development, while 29% did not wish to see any development at all. The great majority of those favouring some development would like to see it limited to low-cost starter homes for young families. Some commented that we had in fact already met our commitment for new housing through the previous designation of land to the east of Pulens Lane.

1. Conclusions

Some clear priorities and concerns emerge from the questionnaires, the vast majority of which were completed in detail and with a good deal of consideration. It is obvious that many residents are very attached to the village and have a clear vision of what they would like the village to look like in the future.

There is no appetite for radical change, with many commenting that they like the village as it is. Nor do residents wish to see any expansion of the village's Settlement Area. But within that, there are some real concerns, which should be addressed. Of these, the main ones are:

- **parking and traffic control,**
- **the A272, a dangerous road that cuts through the centre of the village**
- **the use of Pulens Lane in particular as a rat run to the A3**
- **The preservation and improvement of the village's green spaces, not least the strategic gap between Sheet and Petersfield.**

The Chairman noted that there are some obvious quick fixes - for example the use of Speed Indicator Devices to monitor traffic speed. In the medium term, proposed changes to the layout of the junction of London Road and Pulens Lane should result in a safer junction (the current proposals show a "no right" turn" out of Pulens Lane). Other improvements are likely to take time. There is a clear need for a car park in the village, but identifying an appropriate site has been a long time coming and is in no way settled yet. Similarly, lowering the speed limits on the A272 through the village is something the Parish Council continues to try to address via Hampshire Highways but is proving very difficult.

The preservation and improvement of green spaces is a priority for the Parish Council and will continue to be so. There is a plan in place to plant a significant number of new trees and the Parish Council will look at extending active travel ways through the village.

The Chairman confirmed that these priorities and conclusions will be submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority for them to take Sheet's views into consideration in SDNPA's review of its local

plan. Where other authorities are also involved or responsible (e.g. Highways for traffic concerns), they will also be included in lobbying.

Questions/comments were invited:

- In respect of traffic speed, it was pointed out that the SIDs are not currently working – the Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council is looking into the purchase of lithium batteries which although more expensive would last for longer. The PC are aware that they need to get the SIDs running in a more efficient way.
- Car Parking in Church Field - A resident noted that Church Field had historically been a market garden and its proximity to the Church makes it quite special and not everyone would wish to see it used for car parking. She asked how the Parish Council would ensure that people used a car park and control parking around the village green? Residents would not want to see double yellow lines within the conservation area and Village Street/Farnham Road residents would want their cars parked close to their homes.
- It was suggested that if a National Trust type car park was to be incorporated into Church Field, electric charge points could be sited there to encourage residents to use it.
- School Lane traffic – The potential for creating car parking spaces on land off School Lane was noted– residents felt that this would only benefit School Lane residents and if cars were not parked on the lane, speed of traffic would become an issue.
- Speed on A272 – It was suggested that if Hampshire Highways are not helpful in lowering the speed limit, it might be possible to approach the Police and get them on side.
- In respect of a reduction to the speed limit on the A272, it was pointed out that HGVs and large vehicles would need advanced warning/time to slow before entering the village so any speed restriction would need to be implemented quite a way up the London Road.
- Lanzante – Any expansion of the site will impact speed of traffic on London Road and potentially cause tailbacks to the Pulens Lane junction. Large lorries accessing the site already cause issues to road users.
- Improvements to the Pulens Lane junction (no right turn) are planned for implementation in Phase 4 – so still some time off.
- In respect of housing, it was pointed out that larger numbers of houses are not appropriate in the rural parishes and larger scale development should only take place where there are appropriate facilities – parking, schools, doctors’ surgeries, etc.
- A resident pointed out that starter homes are needed in Sheet.
- Pulens Lane – There is preliminary approval for 18 houses on land behind Pulens Lane which would meet the housing target for Sheet, meaning there is no requirement for further development in the parish. In response to concerns about traffic on Pulens Lane from this development, access to the site would be via Pulens Crescent not directly onto Pulens Lane.
- Lord’s Farm – A resident, working for the landowner, noted that a pre-app to re-develop the land as a mixed-use site (small industrial business and a small number of houses including re-development of the existing house) has been submitted to SDNPA, in conjunction with their call for sites. This site is out of settlement (the boundary stops at the railway crossing). The resident felt the proposal would not impact Sheet detrimentally as it is small scale, and the main house and industrial business are existing.

- Shear Hill – The loss of policy H9 which had previously protected this land was noted. The Chairman pointed out that there are covenants which prevent 2-storey buildings being built on the land to protect the long views towards the South Downs from the current homes. However, the Parish Council is aware that a pre app has been submitted to SDNPA for redevelopment of some of the land to the rear of the houses. This land is within settlement but traffic from any development would impact residents living in Merryfield and Love Lane (where there are already issues with School pick-up and drop off parking).
- Tree Project – An “Adopt A Tree” scheme was suggested, whereby regular walkers in the Millennium Field volunteer to be responsible for helping to keep the newly planted trees and whips watered - water could be made available from the allotments. The Clerk pointed out that water pressure is very low at the allotments and she felt that tenants may not be happy with this proposal. However, it might be possible to install a water tank to collect rainwater over the winter months for this purpose.

The meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.