



# Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Local Businesses Newsletter April 2022



## Background

Neighbourhood planning is a way for communities like ours to have a say in the future of the places where we live, work, and socialise. It gives us the power to produce a plan: the 'Neighbourhood Plan', that has real legal weight to direct development(s) in our local area. It helps us:

- choose where we want new homes, shops, and offices to be built.
- have our say on what those new buildings should look like, and.
- have greater control on planning permission applications for the new buildings/developments we want to see go ahead.

Work on the 'Barton-le-Clay Neighbourhood Plan' (The Plan) started back in 2011. Unfortunately, it was halted due to the launch of Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Plan, which was finally adopted in 2021. We have now restarted work on 'The Plan' and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. We are, therefore, consulting you to ensure we reflect your views and build on the work carried out previously.

## Local Industry

Faldo Road Industrial Estate together with the neighbouring Wrest Park Enterprise Centre at Silsoe provides a number of units for local businesses. A number of these are empty and there is currently no evidence that more are required.

## The Environment

The key message from a survey in 2014 was that residents wanted Barton to remain a village, in size and feel, with Bedford Road, the historic Village centre, remaining at its heart.

They said Green Spaces were important to them with Lime Close being singled out. We believe there are other green spaces that should be preserved, like Arnold Recreation Ground, and various greens around the Village, e.g., Nicholls Close, Arnold Close, Franklin Avenue, Simpkins Drive, Burr Close and Windsor Parade.

Throughout the Village, there are pieces of land/grass verges that are Amenity Land. Some of these areas are maintained by the householder(s) who adjoin it, but it is not for their sole use, and should not be misappropriated. The misappropriation of Amenity Land should be challenged so it remains available for everyone to enjoy.

We live in an area of outstanding natural beauty, full of wonderful fauna and flora, e.g., the Pasque Flower, and wildlife like the Red Kite and chalk-down Blue Butterfly. The Springs have proved particularly popular over the Covid Pandemic and walking around the Village, via its many footpaths, has been an important part of maintaining personal wellbeing.

Trees and hedgerows are important, and we are pleased to say that more have been planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the Platinum Jubilee and the Local Authority Treescapes Fund Projects.

'Garden Grabbing', where houses and other buildings are squeezed into gardens, needs to be discouraged.

It is vital we maintain these habitats and green spaces and, in addition, ensure that the Greenbelt surrounding our Village, including the allotments, school playing fields and football pitches, are not further eroded.

Flooding was identified as an area of concern and parts of the Village are identified on the 'Local Flood Map for Planning'. It is important that water can drain away naturally so, for example, front gardens should not be concreted over for parking, and water courses should be maintained.

### Getting around and Transport links

The previous work on the Plan highlighted that public transport links are extremely poor – bus services are infrequent and do not go to Harlington Railway Station. The service only goes North/South to Bedford and Luton and once a week to Hitchin.

The Village is currently well served by footpaths, linking to the village centre and it's important that any new developments incorporate similar connections.

The need for additional crossing points on Bedford Road and Hexton Road were identified, and a safer crossing to the Water Mill and Faldo Road Estate.

The need for better access to the railway station and Harlington Upper School, via footpaths/cycleways, was identified, but it is recognised this would not be easy to achieve.

### Housing

The previous surveys suggested that there was a need for more affordable and social housing, together with a need for more retirement bungalows, and smaller properties for local people wishing to downsize, which would in turn release larger properties back onto the market.

We are in the process of undertaking a new **Housing Needs Survey** which has been delivered to every household in the village. If you would like a copy, please contact the Parish Office. This will help us understand if these needs have changed significantly.

### Shops / Amenities

The Village has a good selection of shops and restaurants. Since the previous survey, we have also had the introduction of several cafes – something highlighted as a need – but we have lost the Bank (and its ATM), and the Post Office has been under threat.

The previous survey highlighted the importance of these facilities and emphasised the need for them to be retained.

### Doctors and Dentists

It is important that any future development recognises that we already have a stretched service, and any plans must take this into account.

### Schools

Village schools form Part of the Harlington Pyramid. Any increase in housing would need to be supported by an increase in local school places, either through expansion of existing schools, or the development of new ones.

### Leisure facilities

The Parish Council's new Leisure Strategy (link: <https://bartonleclay-pc.gov.uk/barton-le-clay-leisure-strategy-2021-2026/>) covers this in detail. 'The Plan' would support this.

**YOUR POSTCODE:**

**DO YOU AGREE WITH THE VIEWS THAT HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTED? YES/NO**

**IS THERE ANYTHING / ANYWHERE WE HAVE MISSED, SHOULD WE TAKE ANYTHING OUT AND IF SO, WHY?**

**DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS?**

**You can drop this back to the Parish Office at 1 Windsor Parade or respond via email to: [np@bartonleclay-pc.gov.uk](mailto:np@bartonleclay-pc.gov.uk)**