

# LAVENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVISION 2021



## NEWSLETTER 2

May 2021

You can find the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan 2016, plus lots of supporting information, on the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan Website [bit.ly/LNPhome](https://bit.ly/LNPhome).

The 2016 Plan's official status runs until 2031 when it will lapse unless its revision is formally validated. This is likely to extend the Plan's scope until 2037, but as changes to Lavenham will not stop then, in this newsletter we are taking a longer view.

**The questionnaire is on its way! What do you need to do?  
Read on...**

### **Imagine Lavenham 25 years into the future!**

It's easy in Lavenham to focus on the past, but the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan looks to the future. We will need to maintain and extend our plan in years to come.

Will a Lavenham baby born this year benefit from growing up in the village? Is the current Plan paying enough attention to their health, education, employment and housing, all in the context of the pressures of climate change?

There will be some 'incomer' residents who can look back over the past 25 years and reflect on the changes they have noticed in this short period of time.

There are also many local families with a longer perspective, who will have Lavenham memories passed down through several generations.

For people who have only moved here fairly recently, the Plan and its supporting documents can provide an introduction and background to the village today.

Change happens, and the revised Plan needs to accommodate the future.

## **Think about Lavenham's heritage**

Lavenham is immensely lucky to have a photographic record of some of our buildings in decline, which can be used to compare with their restored versions. Many were reclaimed by people showing early concern for our heritage.

The Neighbourhood Plan is continuing this tradition – thinking about what we need to protect without damaging the economy of the village or preventing people from taking advantage of current and future benefits of technology.

For example, at one time roovescape concerns were about the visibility of television aerials, then satellite dishes; now it is solar panels. Electricity and telegraph poles supporting overhead wires once intruded into our street views before public pressure had some of them buried out of sight; now street and traffic signs provide the clutter.

Our characteristic timber framed buildings and splendid Church are a legacy of the period of Lavenham's greatest prosperity, 500 years ago. These buildings sit alongside other evidence of Lavenham's more recent industry.

We have a 'listed' 19th century gas holder which will be properly acknowledged when our newest car park is completed. The 16th century house which became a school attended by John Constable is adjacent to a horsehair weaving factory active in the 1870s, and there are similar 'industrial' buildings throughout the village.

Protecting the historic core of the village while accommodating the needs of modern living is at the heart of the Plan.

Is the Plan doing enough to balance ancient and modern?

## **As you walk around Lavenham, take a look at the views**

The Plan isn't just about buildings. It includes 12 'defined views' which were selected by the residents as being significant to the character of Lavenham. Appendix 3 to the Plan includes pictures of these views.

Covid restrictions have encouraged walking on the many footpaths identified on the Plan, where you can look in towards the village, or you can stay within the core cluster of steep streets to look out over the local countryside and towards the church from the vantage point of the Market Place.

As you walk, stop now and again to compare the views today with the photos taken a few years ago, to judge how much has changed, how much has stayed the same.

## Consider the attractions of Lavenham

The relaxation of Covid rules last summer brought tourists flocking back, to the delight of high street and hospitality businesses, but tourism brings traffic, and litter, and developers eager to find a site to build houses.

If you have recently moved to Lavenham what brought you here? Family ties? The appeal of one of the country's most famous villages? The range of day-to-day shops and facilities? The primary school? The surgery and dental practices? What might prompt you to move away?

Lavenham has a lot to offer residents but its future will need a careful balance between heritage, honeypot attraction and basic local needs.

The Plan's objectives recognise that tourism is essential to Lavenham, but that Lavenham's unique character must be retained and enhanced. Is the Plan too cautious, or too ambitious?

## Housing for everyone?

The Plan's largest section looks at all aspects of housing and details the sources of the information used. The Plan recognises that new housing is needed but confirms the community's preference for small (24 unit) estates.

A separate project - the Lavenham Landscape Character Assessment - looked at Lavenham as it sits in the surrounding countryside, assessing the visible impact housing developments might have.

Another strand in the Plan looks at the needs of people with jobs locally – the people who support and provide the shops and services we value.

Our Plan lists, and has a map showing, the development of housing stock in the village, much of which is post war. There has been some more development since the Plan was published, but within the preferred limits of 24 properties, and always including some affordable housing, well supported by Lavenham's Community Land Trust. Check out the link on the LNP2 website to a series of interviews on BBC Radio 4 The World At One in September 2016.

***This newsletter started with a Lavenham new-born. In 25 years time where will the young adult be living and working? Where will their family be living? If their choice is to remain in Lavenham, will there be somewhere for them to live?***

## A reminder of what the Plan is about:

Its stated objective is *“to make Lavenham a more sustainable community and to formulate and define the policies that are required to achieve this”*.

The Questionnaire wants to find out if you think the following policies in the Plan contribute positively to the future of Lavenham.

- Housing Strategy and Housing
- Design
- Community and Wellbeing
- Environment
- Economy

Supporting information will be provided to help you consider your answers.

There will also be questions on specific projects in the Plan. These are mostly around traffic management, tourism, footpaths, the surrounding countryside, and the preservation of our unique history. The progress on many of these was summarised in the Parish Council Christmas 2020 Newsletter (find it on the LNP2 Website).

### **Why is the plan important?**

It has a legal status as a reference point on the village's future and must be used to inform Babergh's local planning decisions.

Our Plan has to comply with Babergh's local plan, which in turn has to fit into Suffolk's, which in turn is governed by the National Planning Policy Framework. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. These are currently being revised and the Government has recently outlined a new approach to housing development giving extra emphasis to the importance of Neighbourhood Plans.

A Neighbourhood Plan 'does what it says on the tin'; it sets the need for housing into the immediate social and economic environment and must be able to show that local communities have given their support.

Although Government and Babergh may set housing targets that look tempting to developers, a strong Neighbourhood Plan like Lavenham's is a great barrier to developers (and land owners) speculating on likely looking plots.

The Plan also protects the balance between residential and commercial properties in the village's historic core.

The experience of Covid 19 has shown us how quickly things can change, and a Plan published in 2016, based on information gathered in the previous three years, needs us all to look at it with fresh eyes, and make adjustments if necessary.

***Your views are essential to show that the Lavenham Neighbourhood Plan represents the values of the Lavenham community.***

**Make your voice heard by completing the Questionnaire**