

BOULMER REVIEW – CONCLUDING REPORT

TO: LONGHOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Longhoughton Parish Council is requested to approve the CONCLUDING REPORT of the Boulmer Review. The report puts forward the PREFERRED SOLUTIONS to a number of NEEDS AND ISSUES that have been identified. The report represents the views of the population of Boulmer and overall 60 percent of households have contributed to it. The review has been conducted by the Parish Councillors for Boulmer during the period May to October 2017. Once approved the implementation of the PREFERRED SOLUTIONS will commence.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

The Review has been conducted to engage with the population of Boulmer.

A public meeting was held on 05.07.17 to obtain the views of residents on a number of key headings relating to living in Boulmer. All residents were invited to this meeting by a personally addressed letter and several who could not get to the meeting subsequently forwarded their views.

The views from this stage were compiled into a NEEDS AND ISSUES Report that was delivered to all households along with a response form for them to complete if there is anything that that did not agree with or that needed adding. The NEEDS AND ISSUES report was updated for all responses received. From the NEEDS AND ISSUES Report a PREFERRED SOLUTIONS Report was developed and circulated to all households with a personally addressed letter. This included a form for return for any changes that residents required. Following this, a Public Meeting was held on 11.10.17 to review the PREFERRED SOLUTIONS and to give residents the opportunity to raise issues or questions. Throughout this process the Boulmer News Bulletin has been used to communicate progress to residents.

PARTICIPATION

In all 37 households have contributed to the report (60% of all households). This was made up of 33 permanently occupied households (67%) and 4 second homes contributed to the report (31%).

BOULMER PROPERTY AND POPULATION STATISTICS (At July 2017)

There are 81 properties in Boulmer. Of these 49 are occupied full time, 13 are second homes, 18 are holiday lets and 1 is currently unoccupied. The population of the properties permanently occupied is 93. A further 22 people occasionally occupy the second homes.

RESIDENTS OVERVIEW

Boulmer is a traditional fishing village with a unique character that has not changed in many decades. Residents wish to conserve these characteristics and protect it from inappropriate development.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

HOUSING

RESIDENTS VIEWS

The majority of Boulmer residents participating in the review do not want more houses.

However, if there was no option the majority view is that houses should be restricted to people and families who live and work in the area and they should be affordable.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 1 This view to be reported to Northumberland Estates via the Parish Council.
- 2 Northumberland Estates to be asked to review its policies to retain for rental the existing stock of Estate properties in Boulmer for people in full time occupation in the area.

- 3 Clarify the meaning of the term 'affordable' for Boulmer.

VILLAGE AMENITIES – MAINS GAS CONNECTION

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Based on the estimate obtained (£13,750 for each property for 10 properties), 4 residents were interested.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 4 A second estimate could be obtained by those interested so it can be compared to the estimate from First Gas.

VILLAGE AMENITIES - RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Twelve residents participating in the review would like to receive this information.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 5 The Parish Council to consider making available information on renewable energy systems from independent sources.

VILLAGE AMENITIES – BROADBAND

RESIDENTS VIEWS

There was full agreement from those participating in the review that the Broadband service is poor and that the Parish Council should mount a campaign to bring High Speed Broadband to Boulmer.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 6 The Parish Council to lobby the County Council, Community Action Northumberland and BT Openreach to ensure that high speed broadband is to be made available to the people of Boulmer in line with the Government policy for the distribution of Broadband.

NOTE (On 14.09.17 a County Council official stated that Openreach hope to deliver fibre broadband to Boulmer by the end of March 2018).

- 7 In parallel with (6) to investigate the possibility of a micro-wave Broadband system being available to the people of Boulmer should a cable based system be unavailable.

VILLAGE AMENITIES – MOBILE PHONE CONNECTION

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Twenty seven mobile phone users reported difficulty with reception. These were with EE, Vodaphone, BT and O2 and Virgin.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 8 The Parish Council to consider writing to these companies on behalf of residents with view to them improving their service.

VILLAGE AMENITIES – ACCESS TO SHOPS ETC

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Two residents said they have difficulty getting to the shops, Doctor's surgery, hospital appointments and other appointments. This number increases to 16 if the household's vehicle is not available.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 9 Known schemes to improve access for residents will be published in the Boulmer News Bulletin and the Parish Council web site.

EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Twenty eight residents of those participating in the review support the creation of new environmentally friendly small businesses in Boulmer but there is concern that there should be no impact on the village.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 10 These views to be fed back to the Parish Council for awareness in responding to planning applications.

ROADS, ROAD CONDITIONS AND ROAD SAFETY

RESIDENTS VIEWS

There is general agreement that the roads are in a reasonable condition but there are a number of pot holes that need attention and the side of the roads are cracking up in places. Some residents questioned the adequacy of the street lighting on the south side. Residents also expressed concern for the safety of all users of the road from Scots Gap to Seaton Point.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 11 A dossier of road defects and pot holes to be compiled by the Parish Councillors for Boulmer. A request will then be made by the Parish Council to Councillor Pattison for the County Council to make good the defects.
- 12 Publicise via the Boulmer News Bulletin and the Parish Council web site, the County Council telephone number for reporting pot holes and road defects to enable residents to make the reports themselves.
- 13 Although the Highways Act does not place a duty on the Northumberland County Council to provide street lighting, the Parish Council should liaise with Councillor Pattison to determine if there is a need for additional street lighting in the area of the bus shelter.
- 14 Liaise with Councillor Pattison to request the Highways Authority to carry out a risk assessment in relation to all users of the road from Scots Gap to Seaton point.

PAVEMENTS

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Thirty seven residents participating in the review consider that there is a significant problem in the village with vehicles parking on the pavement and causing difficulty to residents with prams buggies and wheelchairs. The worst area is from Church corner to Coastguard Cottages. Also, there is almost unanimous agreement that all the pavements in the village are in a poor state.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 15 This issue to be drawn to the attention of Councillor Pattison to request the Highways Authority (NCC) for advice on the best way of dealing with this problem.
- 16 Liaise with Councillor Pattison to request the Highways Authority to survey all the pavements and take corrective action.

SPEEDING VEHICLES

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Thirty six residents participating in the review consider that speeding does take place throughout the 30mph zone. Other road safety issues have been raised that need addressing.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 17 Liaise with Councillor Pattison to request the Highways Authority (NCC) to carry out a road survey of the speed of vehicles passing through the Boulmer 30mph zone and to inform on any further action.
- 18 Liaise with Councillor Pattison to request the Highways Authority (NCC) to review the 30mph zone to determine whether it should be extended towards the RAF Camp at the northern end away from the T junction and towards Seaton Point at the southern end.
- 19 Request the Parish Speedwatch Team to make an occasional appearance in the Boulmer 30mph zone.
- 20 Liaise with Councillor Pattison to ask the Highways Authority (NCC) to carry out a road safety review of the T junction by St Andrew's Church. This to include the need to drop the kerb at the north western side of the junction for the use of wheelchairs, mobility scooters and prams.

PARKING

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Thirty six residents consider that there is congestion caused by parked vehicles. The main area for concern is from Church corner to Coastguard Cottages. Some solutions were put forward.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 21 Liaise with Councillor Pattison to ask the Highways Authority (NCC) to undertake a review of the congestion and vehicle parking throughout Boulmer. The review to put forward any proposals.
- 22 Liaise with Councillor Pattison to ask the Highways Authority to re-instate the 'No Campervans' sign at Seaton Point.

HEALTH

RESIDENTS VIEWS

There is almost complete support for a defibrillator to be located in the village.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 23 The Boulmer Voluntary Rescue Service has offered to host a defibrillator. The Parish Council is considering the offer and the funding of the purchase of the defibrillator.
- 24 The Parish Council to consider passing to the Alnwick Medical Group the dislike of some residents of the new telephoning system in place of face to face appointments. A public meeting with the Alnwick Medical Group in Boulmer or Longhoughton may also help residents to express their concerns.

ENVIRONMENT – DOGS, DOG POO AND LITTER

RESIDENTS VIEWS

All residents say that there is a problem with dog poo and dog poo bags. The worst areas are around the Car Park and the footpath from the Car Park to the Caravans (going south).

Fifteen residents believe that there is a problem with litter and specific areas are identified. Some residents are happy to volunteer for litter picking. Some residents already do so.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 25 The Parish Council to establish an ongoing campaign to raise awareness and encourage dog owners to pick up their dog poo and dispose in the bins provided.
- 26 Publish in the Boulmer News Bulletin, the Parish Council web site and on the Boulmer noticeboard the contact details for the Dog Warden so that residents can report the names of perpetrators or their vehicle numbers.
- 27 The Parish Council to review the distribution of litter bins and dog poo bins.
- 28 The Parish Council to organise periodic litter picks to be advertised in the Boulmer News Bulletin and encourage volunteers to take part. Establish liaison with other litter picking groups so that resources are used effectively.

IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Boulmer is considered to be an unspoiled village with a unique character and residents would like these qualities to be conserved.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 29 The Parish Council to note this view and reflect it in future decisions.
- 30 The grass cutting of the Village Green. In 2018 the cuts will take place in April, August and October. The Meadow will be cut once each year in August/September.

COMMUNICATIONS

RESIDENTS VIEWS

Thirty one residents consider that Newspapers, newsletters and the internet are effective as a means of communication on local issues. Twenty six residents consider that an extended newsletter would help people to be more informed. There is a need to publish the web address for the Parish Council web site

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 31 Consideration to be given to extending the Boulmer News Bulletin to cover some news other than Parish Council news. This could be provided by residents and other organisations.
- 32 The web site address of the Parish Council web site to be included in each addition of the Boulmer News Bulletin and displayed on the community notice board.
- 33 Consider setting up arrangements for the distribution of the Boulmer News Bulletin by email to those households that are connected to the internet.
- 34 Request the Parish Council to fund the Boulmer News Bulletin.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

RESIDENTS VIEWS

The small numbers responding to this question along with the comments made, do indicate that, at the moment, those responding felt that they were not able to influence local decisions.

It is unanimous that people do know who represents them on the Parish Council and the County Council.

Opportunity to express views - not everyone responded to this so there may be issues to address.

PREFERRED SOLUTIONS

- 35 The Boulmer Community News to be developed to include more information about the issues and actions being dealt with by the Parish Council.**
- 36 Encourage the residents to send in their views, good or bad, to the Parish Councillors.**
- 37 Encourage residents to attend Parish Council meetings to use the opportunity to raise any questions or issues.**
- 38 Circulate information on the role and purpose of the Parish Council and that of Northumberland County Council. To be included in the Parish Council web site, the noticeboards the Boulmer News Bulletins and give links to other organisations.**