

THE RAGSTONE

Otham Parish Council's Newsletter

June 2021



The tools that shaped our village

Otham Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum Thursday 8th July 2021

Following public engagement and 5 years of drafting by the Parish Council, our Neighbourhood Plan has now reached the referendum stage.

All eligible residents of Otham Parish are entitled and encouraged to vote.

A “yes” vote should see the plan adopted by Maidstone Borough Council. It will then be used with their other planning documents to decide planning applications in Otham until 2035. It reflects the views of residents made during the engagement process.

A “no” vote means that Maidstone Borough Council will continue to make housing allocations and decisions for Otham based on the Maidstone Local Plan, as they do now.

You should have received a poll card and details from Maidstone Borough Council.

Please visit your local polling station on **Thursday 8th July 2021** and cast your vote or return your postal ballot. The Parish Council would like to see a good turn out on referendum day!

How will the planning policies affect me?

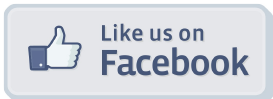
Our Neighbourhood Plan contains 15 planning policies which developers will have to abide by:

Policy	What it will mean in practice
HC1, HC2, GS1, GS4, PC1, ST3, BE1	No development allowed in Otham if: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It affects our Heritage Trails or public footpaths• It damages 20 key views or views of the North Downs• It's within 15m of ancient woodland, veteran trees or trees of amenity value• It affects rural character or amenity• It harms the character of the Conservation Area or views from it• The impact harms heritage or environmental assets• It replaces agriculture, leisure or community facilities• It harms listed buildings



OPC Facebook page where you can share views, discuss community issues and connect with friends in the village as well as the Parish Council.

<http://www.Facebook.com/othamcommunity>



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www.othampc.org.uk

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GS2	5 sites will be designated as Local Green Space, preventing any development on them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The field between Woolley Road and Church Road and The Glebe field next to it The allotments at Greenhill The Village Green Rumwood Cricket Club Bearsted Football Club's ground, Honey Lane
GS3, BE1	Protection of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trees that line Bearsted Football Club Ancient woodland, veteran trees and trees of amenity value Hedgerows near new developments
BE2, BE3, BE4	New developments must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local materials High construction standards, good ventilation, energy efficiencies Careful orientation of houses for better heating from sun New and smart technologies, low carbon heating Water efficiency and recycling Composting, EV chargers, allotments, solar panels Minimal light pollution
ST1, CL1, GS5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to some public footpaths The creation of new, safer walking and cycling routes The creation of a new, replacement Village Hall Support for proposals for new, native woodland

If the majority of votes are “yes” then the Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted by MBC.

NB Sadly, issues such as traffic and local services are not able to be included in Neighbourhood Plans.

During the statutory validation of the plan the Examiner commented:

“It is clear that the Otham Parish Neighbourhood Plan is the product of much hard work undertaken since 2015 by the Parish Council, its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the many individuals and stakeholders who have contributed to the preparation and development of the Plan. In my assessment, the Plan reflects the land use aspirations and objectives of the Otham community for the future planning of their Parish up to 2035. The output is a Plan which should help guide the area’s development over that period, making a positive contribution to informing decision-making on planning applications by Maidstone Borough Council.”

You can view the plan in full at: **[Appendix 1 Otham Neighbourhood Plan 2020 – 2035.pdf - Google Drive](#)**