



# Smallford Community Plan

This draft Community Plan  
has been produced by members of  
Smallford Residents' Association Committee

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**This Version (June 2013) includes –**

- Edited ideas taken from St Albans District Draft Strategic Plan (2012)
- Edited ideas taken from Walton Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2028
  - Our Own Views and Ideas

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Thanks to our Authors –  
Chris Musk, Jackie Bates, Jeff Lewis, Rita Burhouse and Steve Ross

# Smallford Community Plan

Based on ideas taken from SADC Draft Strategic Plan + Walton Neighbourhood Plan (2013 – 2028) + Our Own Compilation

Authors: Chris Musk, Jackie Bates, Jeff Lewis, Rita Burhouse and Steve Ross

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## A Community Plan for Smallford

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is being drafted in response to Government legislation which is primarily designed to improve the country's housing supply.

In essence, if a community does not have a Neighbourhood Plan it becomes easy prey for speculative development over which it would have very little say. In introducing the newly published National Planning Policy Framework, the Minister for Planning stated that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. That sustainable development is about change for the better and not only in our built environment. He referred to protecting our natural and historic environment as well as improving our standard of design. He went on to say that sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.

So this plan reflects these benefits. It is intended to be a Modular Community Plan which will be integrated in to the Parish of Colney Heath Neighbourhood Plan. It addresses not only the need for development over the coming years but harnesses and structures that development to ensure that the village benefits as a result. It is about protecting our historic and environmental assets for future generations and improving the quality of life for all who live and work in our Village. We intend to use this plan as a strategic guide to prioritise activities over the coming years and deliver the needs of the Village.

**Smallford Residents' Association is developing this Community Plan.** The Plan is being developed through an iterative process:

- The idea was discussed by The Association Committee in Autumn 2012
- The possibility was raised at a Special Meeting of The Association held in October 2012
- This initial working document has been produced by a small Working Party
- Early in June 2013, the working document will be published on our Website – [www.smallford.org](http://www.smallford.org) – alongside an E-Forum where local people can share their views and read those of others
- On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, a report on the progress of our Community Plan will be presented at the AGM of The Association. The AGM will include an introductory workshop which will provide an opportunity for local residents to share their views and ideas on:
  - Our Guiding Principles
  - What we have/don't have and want/don't want in our village – from an individual and community perspective
- The working document will be updated by the Working Party – based on the views expressed at the AGM and via our Website Forum.

**The Parish of Colney Heath Neighbourhood Plan** will incorporate the Community Plans of 6 or 7 identified areas within the Parish – Smallford being one of them. A wider community consultative process under part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, will take place to finalise this Neighbourhood Plan.

Having gone through this process, when agreed, the Parish Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory document which will have to be observed by local landowners and potential developers.

**St Albans District Council will be producing a Strategic Plan** which will take precedence over the Parish and Local Community Plans.

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### 2. OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Everything we do – be it individually or as a group - is guided by a set of values/principles that define our character and culture; they influence and inspire our thinking, guide us in our decision-making, affect our emotions and underpin our behaviour. These enduring qualities are the shared convictions that we bring to our personal and professional lives – they are a fundamental strength of our community. They can be identified by posing the question – ‘*What’s important to you about .....*’ and ‘*What else is important to you about .....*’

The following Guiding Principles have been identified and will be referred to as our Plan develops so as to ensure we remain true to the aspirations of the Working Party and our Community.

#### PEOPLE

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Those living and working in the community:

- *should feel welcome, safe and secure*
- *should be treated with dignity, honour and respect*
- *have the right and opportunity to have their say on local matters of interest and concern*
- .....
- .....

#### LIFESTYLE

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*We will foster Healthy lifestyles*

- .....
- .....

#### COMMUNITY

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- *Fostering and developing a sense of caring, belonging and a community spirit*
- *Fostering and developing a pride, interest and involvement in village life and local matters*
- .....
- .....

#### ENVIRONMENT

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- *Developing a sustainable, ecological neighbourhood*
- *Required infrastructure should be in place before any development proceeds*
- *Any development should have regard for and complement the character and nature of our village and aim to enhance it*
- *Honour and respect our environment -*
  - *the greenness/openness*
  - *the boundaries and margins between us and surrounding communities*
- .....
- .....

#### COMMUNICATIONS AND CONNECTIVITY

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- *Travelling safely and securely*
- .....
- .....

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### 3. THE SMALLFORD CONTEXT

#### SMALLFORD – A BRIEF HISTORY

- Originally called 'Four Wants'
- Then became 'Horseshoe Village'
- Renamed Smallford - sometime after 1937 – **to check** (Smallford originally sited along Colney Heath Lane)
- The opening of the Hatfield-St Albans Branch Line and then Springfield (later Smallford) Station that served it, probably had a major impact on the growth and development of the Village

#### SMALLFORD – CHARACTER, STYLE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

- No village boundaries seem to have been earmarked, described or defined
- Defining our Village Boundaries may be an important factor in developing this Plan – eg Inset Village
- Located at the East End of St Albans District Council in the Parish of Colney Heath
- A Small Green Belt Settlement, part of the Watling Chase Community Forest
- Surrounded by open green space maintaining a boundary between the Village and neighbouring settlements, including St Albans and Hatfield, thus preventing Urban Sprawl and Coalescence
- A small brook – Boggymead Spring – runs alongside the village and we believe that there may be another one on our eastern boundary – close to Popefield Farm

#### MAJOR ARTERY AND GATEWAY INTO ST ALBANS

- From the North and East – from A1(M) and A414 via A1057 (St Albans Road West)
- From the South – from A1(M) via A414 and Smallford Lane (Sleapshyde) and Station Road
- Towards St Albans -
  - Hatfield Road
  - Oaklands Lane – Sandpit Lane

#### POPULATION

- Seeking Census Data – for 2011 and, if possible, previous data
  - ?Include resident workers on Glinwells?
- 600 people working in Smallford

#### TRANSPORT

The major East-West route through Smallford – running between St Albans and Hatfield and beyond – has an excellent bus service.

The North-South bus service -

- along Station Road is very limited
- along Oaklands Lane – eg to Marshalswick, Jersey Farm and St Albans City Centre - is non-existent
- Weekly Community Bus provided by CHPC – a very underused facility.

#### HOMES

- Number of properties – 150 – most built from 1920s - present day
- Mixture of detached, semi-detached, terraced, bungalows, and a small number of Maisonettes
- Most recent development – Albany Fields

#### BUSINESSES

We are a major local employment area with around 600 people employed mainly in Horticulture.

##### Market Gardening

- Glinwells
- Notcutts
- Chester Nurseries
- Radio Nurseries

##### Motor Trades

- Smallford Motors
- St Albans Recovery
- Shell Garage/Petrol Station

##### Other Businesses

- CEMEX Sand and Gravel
- Busy Bees Nursery
- Popefield Farm –
  - Apache Solutions Ltd
  - The TEDS Agency Ltd
- 3 Horseshoes Public House
- Smallford Stores
- Caytons Village Vets
- O'Shea's
- Cat's Whiskers Cattery
- PJ Camping
- Wilkins Green Farm –
  - J B Joinery

- Just outside our village boundary - Lyon Way

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The village is served by a pub/restaurant chain, The Three Horseshoes. Many years ago there was also an Ale House, The Four Horseshoes, which was compulsorily purchased and demolished as part of a road-widening scheme by Herts CC.

### EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

- Busy Bees Nursery
- Oaklands FE College (Smallford Campus)
- St Albans Rugby Club
- Harvesters Football Club
- University of Hertfordshire – 2 miles away

### Public Open Spaces and Paddocks

- Children's Play Area and Dog Walk alongside St Albans Rugby Club and Harvesters Football Club
- Potentially -
  - Horseshoe Field
  - Triangular Field along Oaklands Lane
  - Albany Field – several acres alongside the recently developed piece of land previous known as the BT Testing Station
- Close to Ellenbrook Country Park

### HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT

#### Smallford Station

This Grade 2 Listed Building closed in 1951 and will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its opening in 2016. In 2012, Smallford Residents' Association successfully applied for and received a substantial grant, for 2012-2013, from the Heritage Lottery Fund 'All our Stories' Project to 'Bring the History of Smallford Station to Life' – a local community exploration and research project. They also have plans to Renovate and Restore the Station and also to Renovate and Restore all the platforms along the original Hatfield-St Albans Branch Line – now the Alban Way.

Currently 3 associated projects evolving around the station –

- 'Bringing the History of Smallford Station to Life' – researching the history of the station and branch line it served and the impact on our local community and environment
- 'Bringing Smallford Station to Life' – renovating and restoring the station and making it available to our community and the public
- 'Bringing the Platforms along Alban Way to Life' – collaborating with other communities and groups along Alban Way to renovate and restore the platforms and halts and make them delightful stopping places for walkers and cyclists where they can sit for a while and access some historical background information.

#### Other Historic Buildings

- Three Horseshoes Public House and associated cottages
- Popefield Farm – house and barn
- Old Forge Cottage
- Wilkins Green - Farm Cottages and Barn

### HEALTH SERVICES

Critical to the sustainability of any community the Working Party believe that even though it is a small settlement with no local health services, it is important that Health Services providers continue to provide for the Village needs as it develops over the next 15 years. We have considered the possibility of arranging a local weekly surgery in conjunction with a St Albans- or Hatfield-based surgery.

### EDUCATION SERVICES

The Village has a private nursery (Busy Bees) and a College of further Education (Oaklands College) nearby. The University of Hertfordshire Campus is located less than 2 miles away. All three of these facilities have excellent reputations.

The Village does not have any schools within its boundaries, nor does it lie within the catchment area of either a local primary or secondary school. Given that all St Albans schools within the immediate vicinity (3 miles) are over-subscribed, we have major concerns about this situation. We are mindful of the possible growth of population of school going youngsters in the village and on nearby larger developments it is important to ensure that the Education Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, continues to provide for the Village needs.

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### **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Service providers need to monitor the development of Smallford to ensure they build in the predicted growth into their service delivery models. The Working Party believe the response times of the emergency services is an important community attribute. We have some concerns that the firefighting facilities (eg hydrants and associated signs) are not maintained.

### **LOCAL RECYCLING FACILITIES**

The Working Party want Smallford to be a village with the lowest possible carbon footprint. Good kerbside collection of recyclable and compostable materials and access to the Household Waste Sort Site at Ronson Way, Morrisons and Marshalswick are important facilities which the Working Party believe must continue and be further improved over the life of the Plan.

### **VIABLE SHOPPING FACILITIES**

Smallford has a small Village shop with limited provision. The local petrol station and Notcutts garden Centre also have small shops.

The Working Party accepts that as Smallford is classified as a small green belt settlement within the SADC Planning Hierarchy the most sustainable means of going forward was for the Village to support viable shopping in the Town Centre (with its twice-weekly market) and Marshalswick. A number of large supermarkets are within a short distance and larger shopping areas are in Welwyn Garden City, Watford and Stevenage.

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### 4. KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING SMALLFORD

We have identified the key issues and challenges for our Village as:

#### PROTECTING AND PRESERVING

- Our semi-rural environment and green belt settlement status
- The village from individual, fragmented developments and over-development
- Our boundaries – with St Albans, Hatfield and Sleepshyde.
- Wildlife corridors running North-South
- Our scarce Water courses – eg Boggymead Spring + ?spring near Popefield Farm
- ?INSET Village Status? To ease minor green belt planning restrictions and provide added protection for the green belt.

#### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

- Fragmented Development – no overall vision or management
- Incremental Medium-Large Scale Development Pressures

We currently have around 150 homes in our village

#### JUNE 2013: Published Plans To Build Over 2500 Homes In And Around Smallford

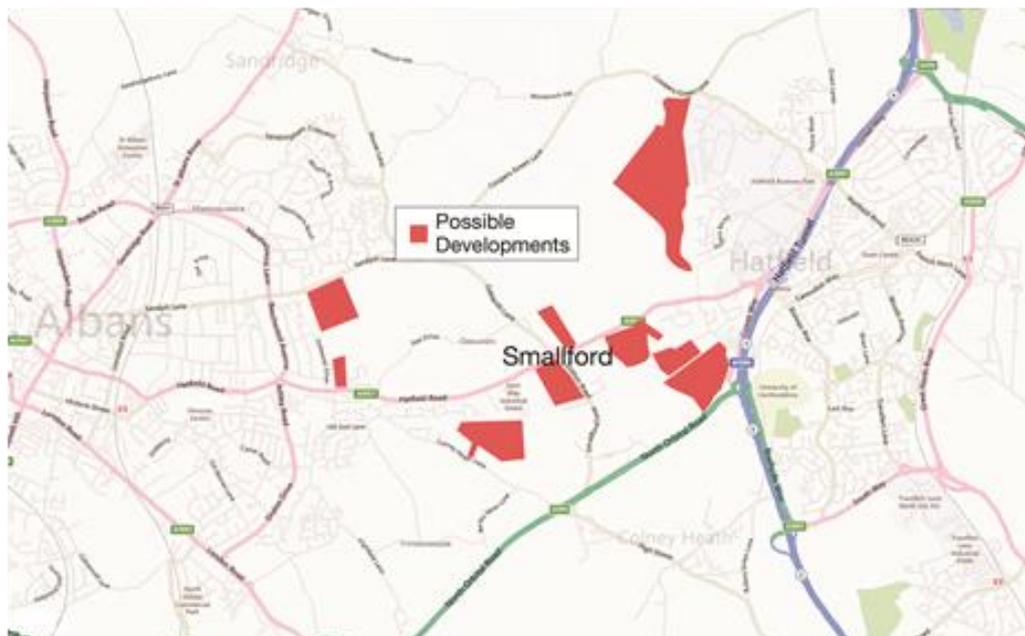
The following landowners and developers have published and are promoting plans to build a large number of new homes in and very close to our small village –

##### Pressures from close proximity to Smallford (within 2 miles)

- |                                                                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Welwyn Hatfield District Council (HAT3)<br>In and round the Ellenbrook Area        | 360 homes?  |
| • Gascoyne Cecil Estate (Salisbury)<br>Close to Ellenbrook, Sleepshyde and Smallford | ? homes ?   |
| • Goodman Development Plans<br>Hatfield Business Park – 2 'garden villages           | 1000 homes? |
| • Oaklands College                                                                   | 350 Homes?  |
| • Beaumont School                                                                    | 75 homes?   |
| • St Albans Football Club<br>Along Colney Heath Lane                                 | 170 homes?  |

##### Pressures within Smallford

- |                                                                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| • Smallford Consortium<br>Glinwells, Notcutts, Chester Nurseries, Radio Nurseries | 750 homes? |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|



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### INFRASTRUCTURE FACTORS

#### Access to Primary and Secondary Education

- All local schools oversubscribed
- Smallford not in currently accepted/defined catchment area for any particular school

#### Transport and Travel

- Buses and Community Transport: Excellent bus services radiating to and from St Albans (East-West)
- Poor provision to nothing North-South: along Station Road and Oaklands Lane
- Lack of footpath between Oaklands Lane and Sandpit Lane

#### Roads

- Close to maximum capacity (especially during rush hours and school/college opening and closing times)
- Traffic Congestion: Especially during rush hours and school/college opening and closing times

#### Health

- No local doctors or dentists
- A restored Smallford Station could potentially provide facilities for a weekly surgery
- Nearest Hospitals – St Albans Town Centre, QEII in Hatfield and The major hospital and Accident and Emergency Services based in in Stevenage/Watford

#### Water and Sewage

- Drainage systems at capacity
- Regular incidents of ponding after minor rain on occasions preventing foot access
- Boggymead Spring + AN Other (Popefield Farm?)

#### Telephone and Communications Networks

- Campaigning to improve extremely poor broadband provision
- No Cable available – so totally reliant on BT Infrastructure

#### Potential new Gravel Pits

### DEVELOPING THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES – EG

- Landscaping – eg Smallford in Bloom activities
- Community Activities – eg Village BBQ
- Horseshoe Field
- Smallford Station
- ?Albany Fields?
- ?Village Green?

### COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT

- Public Transport – non-existent along Oaklands Lane – St Albans
- Major artery for traffic with associated pollution - utilising what are still country roads and lanes
- Currently no footpath/cycleway connecting Oaklands Lane and Sandpit Lane
- Currently no street lighting along parts of Oaklands Lane
- Tackling Serious Traffic Problems and safety Issues eg Congestion, Speeding
- Pedestrian Crossings – eg access to Oaklands Lane to Rugby/Football Clubs and Children's Playground
  
- Providing better access to existing facilities and activities – eg in St Albans and Hatfield
- Protecting the environment for the future.
- Encouraging community engagement and participation.

#### 2.21 We concur with the following District Council and the NPPF statements -

..... greatly value the fundamental aim of the retention and openness of the Green Belt. This openness plays many important roles; including preserving the setting, special character and historic nature of the district's settlements as well as providing accessible high quality open areas for London. This overriding value of openness is clearly recognised by the NPPF as development in Green Belt is specifically excluded from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.23 ..... the study concludes that it would be unwise to permit further urban development in the District on undeveloped land. Where development is permitted a Compact City<sup>2</sup> approach is recommended

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### 5. A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

3.5 *The St Albans Draft Strategic Plan stated - ..... In villages, the great value that local shops, services and open spaces add to the community and quality of life has been recognised with support and protection given.*

**Celebrating that we are an important entrance/gateway to the Historical City of St Albans.**

**Protect the openness of our environment and maintain the small settlement nature of the village.**

With only 150 homes, the place has a small village feel. Most residencies are contained within one locality with a small number of houses on the periphery. Within our boundary is open green space some of it used for horticulture – and we would want to preserve the character this brings to our environment. With only one pub, a phone box, and two post boxes, there is limited scope for expansion – an aspiration in accord with St Albans Draft District Plan.

**PROTECTING AND PRESERVING OUR SPECIAL CHARACTER -**

- Our semi-rural environment and green belt settlement status
- The village from individual, fragmented developments and over-development
- Our boundaries – with St Albans, Hatfield and Sleepshyde
- Wildlife corridors that surround us

**Ensure any new development complements the existing village buildings.**

The Working Party feels that all new development should complement, and certainly not conflict with, the predominant existing village style.

**Define Boundary of Village?**

- INSET Village Status?
- ?Affordable housing?

**Protect Smallford Station, The Three Horseshoes Pub and its Cottages**

These buildings provoke memories of the historic past of Smallford – previously known as Horseshoes Village and before that 'The Four Wents'. The Working Party felt strongly that they should be protected for future generations.

**IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT**

**Village/Community Activities**

Continue the leading, collaborative work of Smallford Residents' Association to enhance our environment, engage residents and bring the local community together – being pro-active –

**Continue and further develop the Smallford Station Related Projects**

- 'All our Stories' – historical research, digital story telling
- Renovation & Restoration
  - Smallford Station
  - Platforms along Alban Way

**Smallford in Bloom Project**

Building on previous activities -

- 2011: Hanging baskets (collaborating with SADC)
- 2012: Planting 2000 spring flowers (sponsored by CHPC and Notcutts Nursery)

**Maintain clean and tidy public areas**

The community should work with the various service providers to continue to improve the quality of cleanliness of public areas within the parish. This will have a beneficial impact for all residents and workers in the Parish

**Grass Cutting and Ditch Maintenance**

- Organise Events/activities that build on the BBQ we held in 2012

**Developing Community Spaces**

- Horseshoe Field: 2013-2014
- Albany Fields: 2013-2014
- Possibility of creating a Village Green

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### **Travel, Safety and Security**

The Working Party believe that to encourage less reliance on cars by residents and workers in the community and to support viable local district shopping facilities, that

- the North-South bus services should be improved
- Footpath/Pavement connecting Oaklands Lane to Sandpit Lane should be installed
- Traffic calming measures along Station Road and Oaklands Lane should be installed

### **Health, Safety and Security**

- Promote active lifestyles by encouraging –
  - use of local footpaths
  - Improving facilities that encourage cycling
  - Providing 'adult keep-fit facilities' close to the children's playground and dog walk
- Encourage neighbourhood Watch Groups
- Residents' feelings of security will be improved by the establishment of a Community Plan which removes the threat of uncontrolled development and adds certainty to the community as to how it will improve over the life of the Plan.

### **Improve harmony between local business operations and the residential community.**

### **Minimise the Carbon Footprint of the Village**

The Working Party want to ensure that as the village develops in the future not only should the developments and improvements themselves be designed to minimise the carbon footprint but those developments should encourage further improvements by changing the habits of people who live and work in the Village. Better access to cycle tracks, bridleways and footpaths will all contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the Parish

The Working Party suggests that we be open to ecological ideas such as community power generation.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND CONNECTIVITY**

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### **Improve Broadband speeds for residential and commercial properties.**

The current broadband speeds are slow. The Village is served by BT copper line broadband system. The acceptable download range estimated by BT is 1.2Mbps to 4Mbps and that 4Mbps is the maximum achievable speed. This compares poorly with the average British broadband speed of 8Mbps The Working Party believe that in the future, to encourage a more sustainable lifestyle better broadband speeds are essential. Home working will be a greater part of all our lives in the future and to ensure that our residents are not disadvantaged this service needs to be addressed.

### **Develop a Community Website and E Forum.**

The residents' Association has developed a Village Website – [www.smallford.org](http://www.smallford.org). This includes a Forum, which supports the concept of a community e-forum or an internet village forum. This will hopefully improve social interaction and community cohesion.

### **Safe pedestrian links to Sandpit Lane**

Principally a Highways Authority road safety issue, pedestrian access to Sandpit Lane via Oaklands Lane needs to be improved.

### **Improve cyclist/rider connectivity with the National Cycle Network.**

The Working Party support the idea of developing a link to the cycle network so as to encourage greater use of the national cycle track network by residents and workers in the Village.

### **Reduce the volume and speed of light traffic**

We want to address the high numbers of HGV, commercial traffic and cars which currently travel through the Village using rat runs. More action needs to be taken to address speeding.

### **Introduce traffic calming measures where needed.**

The use of traffic calming measures along Station Road and Oaklands Lane should be examined. Over recent years there have been a number of deaths and a large number of 'near misses'.

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### Controlling HGV movements along Station Road to and from Sleepshyde

There is a weight limit on vehicles travelling along Station Road over the hump-back bridge that traverses the old railway line. There's a growing number of lorries ignoring this weight limit and we would like the restriction enforced.

## 6. AREAS FOR PROTECTION

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- |                                                  |                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.1. Sports and Recreation Facilities            | 6.7. Albany and Horseshoe Fields and triangular field (Oaklands Lane) |
| 6.2. Pub and cottages                            | 6.8. Green Belt                                                       |
| 6.3. Popefield Farm                              | 6.9. Areas of employment – 600 people work in Smallford?              |
| 6.4. Wilkins Green Farm Cottages, Old Forge, etc |                                                                       |
| 6.5. Smallford Station                           |                                                                       |
| 6.6. Oaklands East Lodge                         |                                                                       |

## 7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

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- |                                                                                       |                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.1. Footpath linking.....                                                            | 7.7. Develop a cycle track/bridleway                       |
| 7.2. Link... Road... to ...                                                           | 7.8. Introduce North-South bus services                    |
| 7.3. Ensure new residential developments are served by properly constructed footpaths | 7.9. Promote an area within the village as a Village Green |
| 7.4. Move 30mph Speed Limit to provide safe access                                    | 7.10. Divert HGV Traffic                                   |
| 7.5. Improve standards of footpaths                                                   | 7.11. Install a Pedestrian Crossing                        |
| 7.6. Develop a children's play area                                                   | 7.12. Install Traffic Calming Measures                     |
|                                                                                       | 7.13. Alban Way                                            |

## 8. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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- 8.1. Option Appraisal Process
  - > Declare areas for Protection
  - > Declare areas for Development
    - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
    - Development Numbers
    - Development Sites
    - Development Styles
    - Windfall Developments
    - Conservation Areas

## 9. ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

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- 9.1. Smallford Stores
- 9.2. Smallford Station
- 9.3. St Albans Rugby Club and Harvesters Football Club Grounds – 100s of young people each week.
- 9.4. ....

## 10. POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

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### 11. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING REGULATIONS

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#### Background

The Localism Bill was first presented to Parliament on 13th December 2010. It gained Royal Assent on 15th November 2011. It has now become an Act of Parliament. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) recently held a consultation exercise on the regulations that will govern both Neighbourhood Planning and the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). These regulations come into force on the 6th April 2012.

In March 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework. The legislation replaced the old lengthy and top down planning regulations with the new 50 page planning rulebook which effectively puts localism at the heart of future planning.

#### Key powers

##### New Planning Powers

Neighbourhood Plans will allow local communities, via a Parish Council, to set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land. It will be about local rather than strategic issues. For example, it could cover where new shops, offices or homes should go and what green spaces should be protected. It could also include local design standards such as the type of materials, scale and character that must be used for any new property. The plan does need to be compatible with national policies and the policies in the authority's local plan. It should be focused on guiding development rather than stopping it. If adopted, it will become a statutory plan and be used in making decisions on planning applications.

Neighbourhood development orders (NDOs) can grant planning permission for specified developments in a neighbourhood area, for example, certain types of household extensions, shop fronts, 'green energy' proposals. Where there is a neighbourhood development order in place there would be no need to apply to the council for planning permission for the development it covers.

Whilst local residents should not be under any illusion that this action would completely repel all prospective developers (especially on allocated sites), a Neighbourhood Plan would allow local communities to genuinely help shape the areas where they live and work.

Any Neighbourhood Plan would be subject to both an independent examination and referendum – where it would need to receive 50% + of vote share – as well as being in "general conformity" with the St Albans Strategic Plan/Core Strategy). If accepted and ratified by a referendum, any Neighbourhood Plan would become part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and have real legal weight as a statutory document. This legal standing is a key differentiation from existing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) such as Village Design Statements and Parish Plans, which are only material considerations in the planning process.

There are also the perceived financial benefits of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. By producing a Neighbourhood Plan, communities can effectively offer-up areas of land for potential development. As part of the government's drive to encourage new home building in the absence of the recently defunct Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), communities will be eligible for New Homes Bonus monies - where the government will match the council tax raised from new homes for the first six years - as well as monies from the mooted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). These monies could then be reinvested back into the local community in line with aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan and the associated infrastructure requirements of any new development.

Neighbourhood planning is not led by the local authority. These are the 'Qualifying Bodies' who can prepare a plan:

- Parish and town councils
- Neighbourhood forums -These can be set up to prepare neighbourhood development plans in areas without parish councils.
- Businesses, investors, developers and other commercial organisations will be able to get involved with the forums or parishes. With their agreement, businesses could potentially sponsor the process.

#### Community Right to Challenge

Voluntary and community groups, parish councils and certain public sector employees, can challenge a local authority by expressing an interest in running any service for which the authority is responsible.

## A Community Plan for Smallford

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A local authority must either accept, accept with modification or reject an expression of interest. If accepted this will trigger a procurement exercise for that service in line with relevant procedures.

The challenging body, alongside other interested parties, could then enter a bid to run the service.

### **Community Right to Buy**

Under the Community Right to Buy important local amenities and buildings - such as old town halls, community halls or the last village shop or pub - can be nominated for listing by the local authority as assets of community value.

If listed assets come up for sale, communities will have extra time to prepare a bid to take them over, making it easier to keep much-loved assets in public use and part of local life.

### **Community Right to Build**

Similar to a Neighbourhood Development Order, appropriately constituted community groups will be able to identify land for new, small scale development such as new homes, shops or other community facilities.

The benefit of this type of development is, for example, that the profits made from letting the new homes will stay within the community. Any proposal would be subject to a local referendum

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### 12. THE PROCESS TO PRODUCE THIS COMMUNITY PLAN

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- Initial Exercise and discussion at our AGM
- Establishing a Community Plan Working Party
- Presentation and Introductory Workshop – SRA AGM June 2013
- Letterbox Drop
- Liaise with Colney Heath Parish Council
- Advice from David Lane
- Advice from CPRE
- Establish Outcomes – Guiding Principals

### 13. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

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- Initial Exercise and discussion at our AGM
- Presentation and Introductory Workshop – SRA AGM June 2013
- Letterbox Drop
- Publish working document on Website – [www.smallford.org](http://www.smallford.org)
- Public discussion enabled by website forum – [www.smallford.org/forum](http://www.smallford.org/forum)
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### 14. DELIVERING THE SMALLFORD COMMUNITY PLAN

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- A 15-Year Plan
- 5-Yearly Review
- Up-to-date reports – eg on our website
- Review after 15 Years

### 15. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

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### 16. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, LIST OF REFERENCES AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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