

There have been a number of public events since the project started, including the survey of residents' opinion last Autumn and the anniversary poster display in April this year. Currently we are going through the 'research' phase, with input from consultancies and our own efforts.

- Landscape Character Assessment (current)
Identification, mapping and description of New Buckenham and its geographical and visual setting
- Heritage Assessment (current)
ditto for the heritage aspects
- Parking, pavements and traffic (shortly to be commissioned)
- Wildlife - preliminary ecology appraisal (shortly to be commissioned)
- Tourism - probably interviews with stakeholders. Regrettable lack of professional expertise in district and county councils
- Design statement for any future development - would include things like standards of energy efficiency and generation, housing density, preservation of natural features such as trees and hedges, rear gardens at least size of a dwelling's footprint, access to rear without going through house, refuse and recycling out of sight. Any development to avoid adverse impact to the character of New Buckenham's existing buildings

All the reports and evidence will then be collated and the first draft of the Plan will be undertaken. This will be offered to the village for consultation and then revised as needed. The revised version is then sent to Breckland (the Pre-submission version, on which there is a further consultation). There are more statutory stages after that.

The NP publicity has been in the form of the website, on which everything is posted, and short reports are posted in Parish News and the NP's Facebook page with links to the website. We intend to use delivered newsletters at certain stages when we need engagement the most, such as during the consultations.

The NP project has stimulated some interesting initiatives that will benefit the village even if not part of the Plan itself. The business interest forum 'Biz Buzz' and the Vestry & Village group have been formed and are having meetings. Bat surveys are taking place in and around the village. These should be celebrated and are now on the NP website.

Planning for housing is bedevilled by the rules changing frequently. Yesterday's Cabinet reshuffle means that the 17th housing minister in 20 years has just been appointed (Kit Malthouse).

Other points:

- Mary Manning and Charles Oxley visited Yaxham yesterday and had a useful discussion with the Yaxham NP chair and vice-chair.
- Neighbourhood Plans have been 'made' in three Breckland towns, nine others are in preparation including New Buckenham.

CO