



Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2035



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Foreword

Neighbourhood Development Plans are a product of the Government's desire to ensure that local communities are closely involved in the decisions that affect them. The Stoke Fleming Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to establish a vision for the village and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the period 2016 - 2035. Our Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document that will be incorporated into the district planning frameworks and must be used by South Hams District Council to determine planning applications.

Our Plan has been produced using the views of the residents of the parish. The Steering Group has consulted and listened to the community on a wide range of issues that will influence the well-being, sustainability and long-term preservation of our rural community.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the views and policies contained in this document reflect those of the majority of residents.

A Neighbourhood Plan has many benefits. The Stoke Fleming Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to:

- protect the area from uncontrolled large-scale or badly sited development
- ensure that development is sympathetic to, and improves, the look and feel of the village
- minimise the loss of greenfield sites by, where possible, using previously developed sites
- give the village the potential to access funding to improve village facilities, and identify, in an Action Plan, additional actions to improve Stoke Fleming's facilities, services and local environment

The Steering Group received more than 160 suggestions from residents to its initial round of consultation in May 2014. More than 260 people took part in the major consultation, Choices for Change, which followed later. Each comment was reviewed by the Steering Group and those views shaped the policies contained in the Plan.

An electronic copy of this Plan can be found at www.stokefleming.org.

The Parish Council would like to thank the members of the Steering Group and pay tribute to their work. The Council is also grateful for the help and the engagement of many others in the parish without which it would not have been possible to produce this Neighbourhood Plan.

Katie Franks
Chairman

Mission Statement

The parish of Stoke Fleming is a rural one, centred on a coastal village of the same name, and largely lying within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The intention of the Neighbourhood Plan is to preserve the best of what currently exists within the Plan Area and build upon that in order to ensure that the legacy of the Neighbourhood Plan is a sustainable parish and thriving community, enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

The objective is that it should make a positive difference to the lives of local residents.

The Purpose of the Plan

The Localism Act of 2011, which came into force in April 2012, introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape development through a Neighbourhood Development Plan able to establish planning policies for the use of land within the designated Plan Area, and the future development and growth of the Area.

Neighbourhood plans relate to the use and development of land and associated social, economic and environmental issues. They may deal with a wide range of issues like housing, employment, heritage, roads, transport, infrastructure and the environment, or they may focus on one or two issues that are of particular importance in an area.

The Stoke Fleming Neighbourhood Plan, once subjected to expert examination to check that it complies with UK and EU legislation, and has been approved by a local referendum, will form part of the wider South Hams Area Plan. This statutory status gives the Stoke Fleming plan considerable weight and there would have to be very good reasons for going against its provisions.

The Plan is a blend of what we wish to see happen over the next 20 years, and what we want to guard against. The objectives are to preserve the best of what we already have, enhance it wherever possible, allow the community to thrive and flourish and ensure it remains sustainable for future generations.

The purpose of this Neighbourhood Plan is to:

- ❖ Set out a framework to guide residents, local authorities and developers on how the community wishes to manage and control future development in the parish over the next 20 years, along with its facilities, infrastructure, services and environment.
- ❖ Record the historical and existing status and nature of the community and its environment.
- ❖ Establish an Action Plan that provides the community with a prioritised plan to improve facilities, infrastructure, services and environment on a voluntary and assisted basis.

The Neighbourhood Plan therefore:

- ❖ Identifies the main community issues and objectives for Stoke Fleming parish as a whole.
- ❖ Makes proposals for the development and use of land and allocates land for specific purposes.
- ❖ Sets out the community's policies for the management of development.
- ❖ Provides an Action Plan that schedules a series of desired projects arising from the residents' vision for sustainable growth in their Area.
- ❖ Documents the mechanisms for monitoring and the timescales for delivering the Plan and its proposals.

The Plan Area

The Neighbourhood Plan Area corresponds to the boundaries of the civil parish of Stoke Fleming.

The parish is 4.1 kilometres from North to South and 4.3 kilometres from East to West at its widest point. It is some 1,280 hectares (3,200 acres) in area. Its southern boundary lies along the shores of Start Bay from Warren Point to Blackpool Sands. The northern flank is the boundary with Dartmouth along the A3122, and the western one the boundaries with Strete and Blackawton. To the east and south it follows the line of the A379 south from Dartmouth, then to sea at Warren Cove and along the coast as far as Blackpool Sands.

The topography is dominated by the catchment area of the Blackpool River, which reaches the sea at Blackpool Sands, after flowing down the steeply wooded Blackpool Valley. The western arm of the river rises at Wadstray on the northwest boundary and flows south and east to join the other arm partway down Blackpool Valley. The eastern arm rises close to the first but flows southeast and then due south to Blackpool Valley, gathering the waters from several small tributaries (from Woodbury, Cotton, Venn and Bowden) en route.

The resultant river valleys are steep-sided, and the surrounding high ground is between 100m and 150m above sea level – the highest point being 158m near Ash. Although there are level areas of higher ground the topography places severe constraints on development. The area is largely agricultural. Beef, dairy and sheep farming predominate, with some arable production – much of it for animal fodder – on the flatter upland areas.

The village of Stoke Fleming lies along the A379 coastal road on high ground. Parts of it overlook Start Bay. The bay is 15 kilometres in length, running from the entrance to the River Dart in the north to the prominent headland of Start Point in the south.

The lower River Dart is a deepwater harbour, with the town of Dartmouth on its west bank and the village of Kingswear on the east side. It is navigable for nine miles to the market town of Totnes. The character of Dartmouth, the attractions offered by the river and the beaches along Start Bay make the area attractive to tourists.

All of the village of Stoke Fleming and the southern part of the larger parish lie within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The central part of the village is a Conservation Area.

Dartmouth is the nearest town, between two and three miles from the village. In the other direction the coast road runs down to Blackpool Sands before climbing again to the neighbouring village of Strete, after which it descends to sea level again at Slapton Sands

and Slapton Ley, the latter a freshwater lake and National Nature Reserve, separated from the sea by a shingle beach along which the road runs to Torcross at its southern end.

From there the road turns inland and passes through a series of villages to Kingsbridge, a market town at the head of the Salcombe Estuary. Both Totnes and Kingsbridge are 12 miles from Stoke Fleming by road, and the triangle Dartmouth – Totnes – Kingsbridge forms the wider area in which the parish is placed.

Apart from the two A-class roads and the secondary B-class road that runs along the western boundary with Strete, there are a number of lanes that serve as important routes within the parish, the main ones being:

From the A379 to the A3122 along Venn Lane

From the A379 to the A3122 via Blackpool Valle, Embridge, Bowden, Ash and Bugford

From the A379 to Embridge via Venn Cross

From the A379 to Little Dartmouth via Redlap Road

In addition the South West Coast Path runs through the parish from Warren Point to Blackpool Sands.

Stoke Fleming Parish

The first records of Stoke Fleming appear in the Domesday Book of 1086 under its Saxon name of Stoc. At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066 it was held by Ansgar, but later passed to Walter of Douai as a spoil of war. In 1192 the manor passed to Richard the Fleming, from whom the village gained its present name.

In 1404 a French force attempted the invasion and destruction of Dartmouth, then the second most important port in the country. Local forces including many women, intercepted the French as they marched along the coast towards the town, and in the Battle of Blackpool Sands defeated the raiders, taking a number of prisoners and killing the French commander, William du Chastel.

The populations (2011 census) is 1,019, of which 861 lived in the village of Stoke Fleming and 158 in the surrounding rural areas. At the time of the census there were 577 households. That compares with a population of 673 in 211 households sixty years earlier in 1951, an increase of 50% in population and almost 75% in households, with the number of people per household having declined from 3.2 to 1.75.

The older part of the village lies close to the main road, and around the church and the Green Dragon public house. Over the past sixty years extensive development has taken place between the A379 and Venn Lane to the west, to the east of the A379 at Bidders and more recently along School Road to the west of the church.

In addition to St Peter's parish church and the public house there is a village shop and post office, a restaurant, Village and Parish Halls and garage/petrol station. There is an extensive playing field, between the Village Hall and Venn Lane, bowling green and cricket ground. There is a garden centre on the edge of the parish at Wadstray.

The natural beauty of the area, the beaches along Start Bay, the South West Coastal Path, the activities available on the River Dart and at sea, together with varied attractions offered by the neighbouring towns make tourism a major economic factor. The population can more than double during the summer months.

There is one hotel in the village, two guest houses and a number of bed and breakfast establishments, with a wide number of self-catering cottages, caravan and camping sites and a holiday park. The premier beach in the area is Blackpool Sands, a Blue Flag beach that is consistently voted one of the best in Britain. It has excellent facilities and lies a minute's drive or a few minutes' walk from the village. It has an excellent beach café and shop.

The village is in two halves, with much of the newer development having taken place north and west of the Village Hall and playing field and the core of the older settlement being to the south, close to the church and pub.

The A379 runs a narrow and winding course through the village, causing congestion to motor traffic and due to a lack of pavements making pedestrian passage difficult and even

hazardous. The only other link between the two halves in the Bird Walk, a pedestrian path that is part of the South West Coast Path. It is narrow, gloomy, poorly surfaced and many people are unwilling to use it, particularly at night and in winter.

There are three main centres of rural population, at Bugford/Hillfield in the northwest, Ash in the centre of the western part and Bowden/Embridge close to the northern entrance to Blackpool Valley. There are smaller concentrations at Venn, Redlap and Combe.

The parish has a thriving range of clubs and societies, including the Horticultural and Sports Society, the Operatic and Dramatic Society, Craft Club, Bowling Club, Cricket Club, Petanque, Medau, Short Mat Bowls, Table Tennis, Football, Royal British Legion, Mothers' Union, Probus Club, Wednesday Ladies and the Friends of St Peter's.

There has been a building on the **Green Dragon** site since the 12th century. Unlike most pubs opposite churches, it has never been owned by the Church but by the Lords of the Manor who leased it out to innkeepers. The pub is very traditional with a stone floor, a splendid fireplace, wooden beams, a tunnel somewhere underneath the floor which went down to the nearby beach and, some say, a ghost. Rumour has it there was once an old "cuddy" on the premises which was made use of by H.M King George VI when he was Duke of York, and also the late King George V. But time and history have left the old building unscathed by drama or scandal and it is very much the heart of the community.

St. Peter is church is an edifice of stone, in the Early English style, consisting of chancel, nave, aisles, north porch and a lofty embattled western tower containing a clock and 6 bells. The origin of the church is probably pre-Conquest but the current building was erected on the present site in c.1270, then remodelled and enlarged in the early c. 1400, altered in 15th century and restored again in 1871-2 by J.P. St. Aubyn.

Stoke Fleming Community Primary School dates back to 1843. It has 150 pupils with a staff of 26. The school now has Academy status and is linked with Blackawton, Kingswear and East Allington schools, collectively called "Our School Federation." This multi-Academy Trust links the primary schools to both Dartmouth Academy and Kingsbridge Community College where they share resources and training.

The school originally had premises in Sunnyside, Chapel Lane and at times in Britannia Cottage. It moved to its present site in 1875. Over the years a School Board was appointed, calico was donated for a sewing class, a school Attendance Officer 'drilled' the boys once a week, boots were promised to any boy attending 400 times during the year (maximum possible 446) and in 1917 a school allotment was started where 2,372 pounds of potatoes were grown for the war effort. In 1891 the school had 142 pupils; today it has slightly more than that number.

Stoke Fleming Magazine was originally started in 1871 as a 'Church' Magazine, but at some point thereafter it lapsed! More than 100 years later in 1990 it was re-started as a purely secular magazine of eight pages, run off in the vestry of Blackawton Church, hand-collated and stapled together. Now, thanks to computer technology, it comes out as a publication of up to 36 pages, including photographs, produced by a dedicated team of three. Approximately 560 copies are distributed every month by a small group of volunteers.

It is funded by advertisements, grants from local organisations and annual voluntary contributions from parishioners. An independent publication, it has just reached its quarter century in its present form. Twice in recent years the Magazine has been entered for the National Parish Magazine Awards and each time has come in the top 10%, an achievement of which the team are justly proud.

In 2002 a new **Village Hall** was erected replacing a 1920s corrugated iron building. The Parish Council initiated the project to look at the possibility of constructing this new hall on the playing field owned by the Parish Council.

A committee was set up, with work starting in 2001 and the hall being completed in 2002. At that time lottery funding was available for new village halls but the village itself raised over £30,000 towards the cost of the new hall, the rest coming from grants.

Today the Hall is one of the key focal points of the village and is used for social functions and events such as badminton, amateur dramatics, table tennis, bowls and various group meetings. It also houses the library.

The **economic activity** of the area is mainly based around tourism and farming. There is a range of small businesses operating in other sectors and a variety of home-based businesses.

Tourist visits typically range from a day to a week, with an increasingly significant number of visitors coming from Europe and even further afield. The season is typical - a concentration of families in the school holidays, and others of all ages throughout the year. Tourism supports a variety of local businesses and provides vibrancy to the area for many months of the year.

Employment opportunities in the parish are relatively limited. About two-thirds of the tourism-related posts are part-time or seasonal. Modern agriculture does not provide much employment. The Primary School is a major employer. The parish adjoins Dartmouth which offers a wider variety of trades and employment opportunities. About 50 % of the population of the parish is of working age and of those four out of five are employed or self-employed. A significant number commute to work outside the parish. About 20% of the population is of school age or students. (2011 census)

The Planning Context

Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan (Development Plan) of the Local Planning Authority.

The primary Local Planning Authority (LPA) within which the Stoke Fleming Neighbourhood Plan Area is located is South Hams District, which currently relies on:

- ❖ **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**
- ❖ **South Hams Local Development Core Strategy**, especially policies CS1 (Location of Development) CS7 (Design), CS9 (Landscape and Historical Environment)
- ❖ **South Hams Development Policy Document**, especially policies DP1 (High Quality Design, DP2 (Landscape Character, DP3 (Residential Amenity), DP6 (Historic Environment), DP7 (Transport Access and Parking), DP8 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation), DP15 (Development in the Countryside)

The Plan must also be in conformity with EU legislation on strategic environmental assessment and habitat regulations, and with national policy. It takes into account the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF defines the status of Neighbourhood Plans as follows:

“Once a Neighbourhood Plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict.” Para.185 NPPF 2012.

The Plan Process

Stoke Fleming Parish Council decided to implement a Neighbourhood Plan, covering the whole of the parish area, in October 2013. Terms of Reference were submitted to South Hams District Council in January 2014 and the six week consultation period began in April.

The intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan was communicated to residents through door-to-door delivery of a newsletter in April and a public meeting was held in the Village Hall on 21st May. As part of that consultation residents were asked for the views and suggestions on what they would, and would not, like to see change over the next two decades.

That was followed by two “Village Check” days, when small groups criss-crossed the village by varying routes, discussing and noting various positive and negative features.

The Terms of Reference allowed for a Steering Group comprised of the nine parish councillors plus six other residents, and nominations were invited in response to the initial newsletter, and at the public meeting. The first Steering Group meeting was held on 11th July, four working parties were formed and additional members were recruited to those.

Residents were kept advised of progress through monthly reports in the Stoke Fleming parish magazine, by e-newsletter and online through a completely redesigned parish website. The website also served as an information centre for residents and visitors to the area.

In April 2015 a major consultation exercise was initiated and a 12-page full colour booklet entitled Choices for Change was distributed to every household in the parish. It set out a range of 55 issues identified by individual residents as being of importance and asked for feedback from the whole population. Included with the booklet was a response form and household survey, enabling the Evidence Base working party to collect up-to-date demographic information. Responses were collected door-to-door or could be delivered to the village shop, library or pub. The response rate was 45%.

Those responses drove the content of the next stage.

In August the Steering Group adopted a set of general policies; guidelines to direct the shape of the planning aspects of the work. Also adopted were a set of interim specific policies covering 40 of the 55 issues covered during the consultation.

In September a number of sites considered potentially suitable for housing development were assessed using the site assessment system currently used by South Hams District Council. All were confirmed as being suitable, with sites that had previously been developed being preferred to greenfield sites. At the same time policies relating to Roads and Transport, Open Spaces, the Environment and Community issues were adopted.

A further public consultation took place on 23rd November in the Village Hall.

Executive Summary

The Stoke Fleming Neighbourhood Plan gives the community a strong voice in shaping the development of the parish over the next two decades. It reflects the wishes of the people of the parish as expressed through extensive and inclusive consultation and confirmed by referendum.

It has statutory weight as part of the South Hams Area Plan and its planning policies must be taken into account when planning applications are considered.

The Plan also sets out a range of policies relating to roads and transport, open spaces, the environment, community issues, business and the local economy. In some cases funding that comes from the development of new housing will meet all of the cost of delivering these; in others funding from other sources, or community initiatives, will be required.

The community identified the issues that it wished to see addressed. The Steering Group charged with development of the Plan had the task of resolving conflicting views, separating the practical from the impractical, identifying priorities and forming an overall framework that would not only result in a series of individual policies but link some of them together in a way that would enhance the parish as well as preserve the best of it, for the benefit of this and future generations.

Stoke Fleming has undergone considerable change in recent decades, yet has managed to absorb that change and still retain its original character. The number of households more than doubled between 1961 and 2011. At the present time large-scale development in the northern part of the parish, to meet the needs of Dartmouth, will add a further fifth to the number of households.

The clearly expressed wish of the local population is for development in the village and its environs over the next 20 years to be at a gradual pace, and the Plan reflects this. No more than 60 new homes will be built: 30 each decade - an average of three a year.

In order to improve communication and connectivity between the different parts of the village, and to deal with growth in pedestrian and vehicular traffic, the Neighbourhood Plan envisages a careful programme of new and improved roads and footpaths.

To enhance appearances and provide for relaxation and recreation new open spaces will be created. There are measures to protect the natural and built environments, improve community assets and support enterprise that will assist the local economy and provide employment opportunities.

Bringing all of that to fruition and delivering the vision enshrined in the Plan depends on a number of things – the actions of the parish council, support from South Hams District Council and Devon County Council, cooperation from landowners and other stakeholders, and the efforts and commitment shown by the people of the parish.

Vision for the Future

The core aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to maintain and enhance the character and vitality of the village and the surrounding rural areas of the parish.

In furtherance of that the Plan aims to:

Housing

- ❖ Provide existing and future residents with the opportunity to live in a home that meets their individual needs and circumstances.
- ❖ Allow for a limited amount of new housing to meet local need and natural growth.
- ❖ Ensure that development is sensitively planned, appropriately located and designed to reflect local distinctiveness.
- ❖ Limit the scale of individual developments.
- ❖ Utilise previously developed land whenever possible.
- ❖ Take into account the importance of affordability.
- ❖ Give preference to providing housing for those with strong local connections and those engaged in work that benefits the community.
- ❖ Allow for the needs of the elderly, single people, couples and young families.
- ❖ Prevent any future extension to the current West Dart scheme involving further encroachment on Stoke Fleming parish land.

Roads and Transport

- ❖ Provide new and improved connections in and around the village.
- ❖ Integrate existing, new and improved roads, paths and car parking in a manner that mitigates existing problems and encourages cohesion in parish life.
- ❖ Create initiatives that provide a safer environment for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.
- ❖ Eradicate the causes of flooding in rural lanes and the village centre.

Environment

- ❖ Preserve the beauty of the natural environment, both coastal and rural.
- ❖ Protect existing views of the landscape.
- ❖ Avoid commercial solar and wind turbine developments.
- ❖ Value the existing built environment.
- ❖ Respect the AONB and the village Conservation Area.
- ❖ Improve existing open spaces and create new ones.

Economy

- ❖ Nurture existing local businesses and community assets.
- ❖ Promote improvements in infrastructure that will support existing enterprises and encourage the development of new ones.
- ❖ Provide living and working space that will increase employment.
- ❖ Afford people the opportunity of making a living in the community in which they live.
- ❖ Encourage the development of tourism and recreational activities as being vital to the wellbeing of parish life.

Community

- ❖ Support and maintain existing centres of social activity.
- ❖ Encourage the continued vitality and diversity of social organisations within the parish.
- ❖ Ensure that the Stoke Fleming Community Primary School has a secure future.

Through implementation of the policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan the parish in 2035 will be substantially as it is today – a thriving and robust community, coastal and rural in character, set in an area of outstanding natural beauty – and enhanced by the positive measures taken to introduce improvements and ensure that development has taken place in a carefully planned and appropriate manner.

It will also be a community where:

- ❖ People can move easily and pleasantly throughout the area.
- ❖ There is plenty of green space for recreation and an attractive natural environment.
- ❖ the built environment sits well in the landscape and is sympathetic to local vernacular architecture. Heritage buildings and features will be retained and enhanced where possible.
- ❖ young people have opportunity and are encouraged to get involved in community activities, becoming good citizens and parishioners.
- ❖ There are facilities for a variety of activities, indoor and out, to provide for a wide range of interests, and enable interest groups to be formed and flourish.

The Principle of Sustainability

Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The introduction to the Government's National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) interprets that, in relation to UK planning, in the following words:

“Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves does not mean worse lives for future generations.

“Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate.”

The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Sustainable development is intended to be not only about our built environment but about the natural environment, our historic environment, economic development and social progress.

When considering development proposals within the Stoke Fleming Neighbourhood Development Plan area, the Local Planning Authority (South Hams District Council) will adopt an approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Plan (and with policies elsewhere within the South Hams development plan) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning applications that run counter to the policies in this Plan should not be approved, again unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In the context of Stoke Fleming sustainability is particularly relevant with regard to:

- A place within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that has character and identity, with connections to the past and a vision for the future.
- A range of homes that respond to people's needs, both now and in the future.
- A range of infrastructure and community facilities designed to offer something for everyone, from young to old, with appropriate capacities.
- The creation of jobs available locally, so people can choose to work in their neighbourhood as well as live there.
- Interesting and imaginative buildings and spaces that reflect the evolutionary development of the built environment and the social activity of the community.

General Policies

- ❖ The Plan will have effect from 2016 until 2035, and be subject to review every fifth year.
- ❖ The establishment of better connectivity between the different parts of the village through the creation of new or improved roads and path is a priority and must be allowed for in any proposed development.
- ❖ There will be a presumption in favour of development on previously developed (“brownfield”) sites.
- ❖ Any substantial new development, primarily to meet the needs of Dartmouth and other parts of South Hama, will be sited in the Cotton (West Dart) area of the parish. Any funding resulting from such development should be applied to the benefit of the parish as a whole, through the Parish Council.
- ❖ Only limited new development will be permitted elsewhere within the parish, primarily to meet local need and provide for a measure of organic growth.
- ❖ Development site selection will be based on criteria compatible with those currently used by SHDC, but bearing in mind the 20-year life of the Neighbourhood Plan will take into account suitability rather than immediate availability.
- ❖ Inclusion of a site in the Neighbourhood Plan does not imply that landowners must accept development on their land; it only leaves them free to do so.
- ❖ The Plan establishes an overall permitted level of residential development. Development may be on any of the selected sites but will not be allowed to exceed the overall limit, unless the limit is adjusted as a result of the quinquennial reviews.
- ❖ Affordable housing to meet local need is a priority and any development on brownfield or greenfield sites will have to demonstrate that at least part of it will meet established local need.
- ❖ Small-scale development in rural areas, particularly on existing sites, may be permitted.
- ❖ All planning applications will still be subject to the normal procedures and permissions.
- ❖ The Neighbourhood Plan vision is for gradual development over the period of the Plan, matching growth to local need.

Housing and Development Policies

The Plan covers a period of 20 years. During that time development within the environs of the village (excluding any infill and small-scale development) should not exceed XX dwellings in total, an average of X per year.

In deciding on the overall limit to be placed on future development the Plan takes into account the pattern of past development in Stoke Fleming. In the past ten years XX new homes have been built or are under construction. In the past 50 years XXX have been built. This compares with the planned numbers (give analysis). Almost all of the housing that has been built since 1960 is occupied by full-time residents; they are not used as second homes.

The sites listed below are capable of accommodating housing greatly in excess of the overall target figure. The number of sites on which development will be permitted, and the number of dwellings on individual sites, will be restricted to ensure that new housing does not exceed the target figure.

As explained in the section on **General Policies**, there is a preference for new housing to be built on previously developed sites. These have not necessarily been offered by the owners. There are also “greenfield” sites, some of which have been offered by their owners, but not all. The Plan must demonstrate that it can deliver the level of new housing required under the South Hams Area Plan, and it can be shown that the required level could be accommodated on the sites that have been offered by their owners. However, if the owners of the non-greenfield sites enter into agreement with developers they could receive preferential treatment.

As also explained under **General Policies** it is entirely a matter for land and property owners to decide whether or not they wish to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by inclusion in the Plan to offer to sell for development. Any planning application will be subject to all the normal planning procedures.

H1 Deer Park

The site lies at the northern approach to the village, to the west of the A379 and is currently in use as a caravan park and camping ground with 90 “pitches”. It is partially visible from the main road at a distance but is screened from view at close range. The caravan pitches are situated well back from the road and unobtrusive; the frontage along the main road is laid to grass. The entrance/exit is on a blind bend and has long been considered hazardous, particularly in respect of vehicles exiting the site. The entrance is also the access to the 45 dwellings that form Deer Park Village, and to the former Deer Park Inn.

Development would not involve encroachment onto agricultural land and would be consistent with the policy of a presumption in favour of previously developed land. The

intention would be to allow limited development on a portion of the site, while retaining its current capacity for caravans and camping, as an important tourism asset. Development should involve the creation of a new exit some 80 metres north of the present entrance, with greatly improved visibility, and with a one-way system operating within the site.

New housing should be located towards the rear of the site and restricted to two storeys in height to minimise visual impact.

H2 Premier Garage

Premier Garage is situated on the west side of the A379 at the northern approach to the village. It occupies a prominent and elevated position commanding good views over agricultural land to the sea. The current buildings, consisting of the garage itself and an adjoining bungalow, sit well back from the road.

Development would be on a small scale and not involve encroachment onto agricultural land, so would be consistent with the policy of favouring previously developed sites. Because of the prominent location new buildings would have to be carefully designed and be situated towards the rear of the site, with green space along the frontage.

H3 Leonard's Cove

From the village centre, the A.379 runs southwards to the entrance to Overseas before bending round to the south-west, towards Blackpool Sands and Strete. Leonard's Cove camping and holiday site lies to the east of the A.379, 200 yards or so south east of the Post Office, on ground sloping down from the road towards the cliffs and Leonard's Cove itself. The higher part, adjacent to the road, is currently grassed over and used for camping. Further down, there are chalets and static caravans which are out of view from the road at this point, but an eyesore from the sea and other viewpoints such as Shady Lane and the coast path.

It is this lower part of the site, with impressive views over the sea and towards the mouth of the river, that is considered a possible site for development. The site is adjacent to Darkhole Farm, one of the oldest ranges of buildings in the village and listed.

Development would not involve encroachment onto agricultural land and would be consistent with the policy of a presumption in favour of previously developed land. Care would be needed in respect of the positioning and design of any development.

H4 Between Old Road and Mill Lane

This site is under consideration as a car parking area, with consequent elimination of on-street parking in the narrow lower part of Church Road, with the possible exception of two ten-minute spaces close to the Post Office. This would eliminate congestion problems, which include the risk of emergency vehicles not being able to reach properties in the School Road and Rectory Lane areas. Problems with access for large vehicles also caused the withdrawal of the recycling facilities previously located on the present car parking area, adjacent to the public toilets.

The site lies south of Church Road, with views to Strete and Start Point. It is screened from the road, would be limited in extent, and as no buildings would be constructed would have minimal visual impact, even viewed from the outskirts of Strete. It is located close to the church, pub and bowling green and is within walking distance of the Post Office and Radius 7. Access would be from Mill Lane.

H5 Land West of School Road

The site lies on the western side of the village to the west of School Road and is currently agricultural "greenfield" land, bounded by stone walls and hedgerows. It runs northwest to southeast, slopes gently to the west and is visible from both directions on School Road. It is opposite recent housing developments. Development would involve encroachment onto agricultural land. However, the land has been offered for development in response to a call for building sites by South Hams District Council and has been assessed as suitable by them.

Development could exacerbate existing traffic problems in the area. Although there is new housing development opposite this site, there is still a semi-rural feel to this part of the village and any development would further urbanise this area. Any housing should contain some significant open space to counter this, a common green with houses in a semi-circle facing on to it.

Any houses should be no more than two storeys high to minimise visual impact and use materials sympathetic to the area and surrounding dwellings

H6 Land Opposite the School

This site is comprised of two fields, currently under agricultural use and separately owned. Field A, bordering School Road and once used as the cricket ground, has been offered for development by the owner and assessed as suitable by South Hams District Council. The second, adjacent, Field B, was offered for development but subsequently was withdrawn. It had been assessed as suitable for development.

Development on Field B would be dependent on access via Field A, and the two have therefore been considered together, for two reasons. First, development on both might make possible the creation of a link road from Venn Lane to School Road, easing traffic problems in the centre of the village and up Church Road. Second, development on Field A alone without a new access road would further exacerbate existing traffic problems.

The combined site would permit the possibility of development on an excessive scale, especially if development also took place on other sites. The preference therefore would be for development only to take place to the south of the proposed line of a link road, thus limiting the scale of development and minimising encroachment onto agricultural land.

H7 Land West of Venn Lane

The site runs along the western side of Venn Lane north of the existing housing rising up the hill possibly as far as the cricket ground. This site is considered suitable for limited development as it will have limited detrimental effect upon the historic character of the village and does have good access to existing services. It would however, change the character of Venn Lane which has very limited development on its west side at present, and lose existing agricultural land. It will also increase traffic using Ravensbourne Lane and will increase pressure to widen this lane to allow two cars to pass along its full length.

Development of this site would include an access road (or roads) from Venn Lane to avoid multiple property accesses onto the lane itself

H8 Infill Development

Small-scale development between existing properties would be allowed, if in a suitable location and appropriately designed.

H9 Self-Build

Self-build development, on a small scale, would be permitted if suitably located and appropriately designed.

H10 Conversion of Existing Buildings

Conversion of existing disused buildings to residential or commercial use would be considered under normal planning procedures.

H11 Development in Rural Areas

Any development in rural areas would be a sensitive issue and subject to careful scrutiny in terms of location, visual impact, design and effect on agricultural land.

H12 Small commercial units and live-work units

The creation of small commercial units or live-work units would be considered if on an appropriate site and in respect of appropriate activities.

H13 Quality of Design and Construction

(Under consideration)

H14 Affordable Housing

South Hams District Council (SHDC) as the Planning Authority will set the targets for the levels of affordable housing required within new housing developments. As of September 2008 the target level for rural areas, which includes smaller parishes such as Stoke Fleming, is 60%.

The actual level achieved for recent developments in the village are:

| | | |
|---------------------|---------|-------|
| School Road Phase 1 | 9 of 24 | 37.5% |
| School Road Phase 2 | 9 of 24 | 37.5% |

The Neighbourhood Plan is based on the policy adopted by SHDC from time to time.

On 1st July 2015 the Parish Council adopted new sequential selection criteria for social housing within the parish. In order to qualify an applicant must fulfil at least one of the following, with 1 being the highest priority and 6 the lowest.

1. A person who has immediately prior to nomination had his or her main residence within the parish.
2. A person who has had permanent employment in the parish for the last year.
3. A person who is or was a serving member of the Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (i.e. emergency volunteers).
4. A person judged to be a key worker, depending on the person's circumstances.

5. A person who had moved away but has had his or her main residence within the parish for three out of the last five years or seven out of the last twenty years.
6. A person who has strong local connections with Stoke Fleming by reason of birth or family ties in that they have parents or grandparents, siblings or non-dependent children 16 who have lived in the parish for the last 10 years.

Roads and Transport Policies

The parish is well served by a network of rural lanes. The A379 that runs through the village provides links to Dartmouth in the north (and other towns and villages east of the River Dart) and to a chain of coastal and rural communities to the south and west, as far as Kingsbridge. The A3122, along which runs the northern boundary of the parish, provides the main route to Totnes and thence to the A38, Plymouth, Exeter and the M5.

There is little scope for improving main roads, apart from the question of creating virtual footpaths at places on the A379, and eliminating flooding in the centre of the village. The plan however envisages changes in respect of new and improved roads and footpaths within the village that should enhance access between the various parts of it.

R1 Improvements to the Bird Walk

The Bird Walk is the main pedestrian link between the two halves of the village, running from the major residential areas around Venn Lane and Dartmouth Road to Rectory Lane and the older parts of the village around the church. The Bird Walk is part of the land registry title of Farwell House but has in the past been maintained by Devon County Council. It also forms part of the South West Coast Path.

At present the footpath is in a poor condition. It is not regularly maintained or cleaned and in parts has a very uneven surface which is partly due to tree roots from trees growing close to the footpath on adjoining private land. Some of the trees are leaning and damaging the fencing either side of the footpath.

The Bird Walk would be greatly enhanced by the removal of trees either side, replacement of the existing fencing and resurfacing. This will require negotiation with the adjoining landowners and could be assisted with finance from Section 106 funding from recent new developments within the village.

R2 Proposed footpath from Rectory Lane to School Road

It is proposed to have a new footpath to run from the Rectory lane end of the Bird Walk across land owned by Farwell House and the Diocese land by the Rectory, to give a better pedestrian link between the school and new residential development off School Road, with the playing field, village hall and the Venn Lane and Dartmouth Road residential areas. Favourable discussions have recently been held with the Diocese and these will continue together with negotiations with other landowners and Devon County Council.

R3 Link road from Venn Lane to School Road

New development along School Road had inevitably led to an increase in traffic through the narrow parts of the main road and Church Road, though the greatest problems occur during the morning and evening “school runs”. New housing at West Dart could aggravate the problem, both in terms of through traffic and parents dropping children off to the school and collecting them at the end of the day.

A new road from Venn Lane to School Road would provide an alternative route and considerably reduce the current problems. Some traffic would come from the A379 via Ravensbourne Lane (see R4), some down Venn Lane from Cotton (see R6).

The road could only be created if development takes place on site H7 and it would be funded as part of that development.

R4 Widening of Ravensbourne Lane

All the development that has taken place in the village over the past 60 years has been based on cul-de-sacs. No new through roads have been created. In the northern parts Ravensbourne Lane remains the only route between the A379 and the Venn Lane area, apart from the very narrow Cinders Lane. (See also policy R6.)

Ravensbourne Lane is not wide enough to support two-way traffic. Vehicles that meet in it have to use the entrances to the two properties in order to pass each other, or have to reverse out into Venn Lane or the A379. Traffic surveys carried out as part of the evidence base gathering for the Neighbourhood Plan revealed just how often the last of these courses of action, potentially very dangerous, happen.

The lane is bordered on one side by the properties referred to in the previous paragraph, and on the other side by the Playing Field, which is owned by the parish council. The high bank along the side of the field gives the lane a semi-rural feel. Only limited widening would be intended, in order to allow two-way traffic but minimise encroachment onto the playing field, and the bank would remain to preserve the rural feel.

R5 Deer Park Exit

The location of the entrance to the Deer Park complex (village, and caravan/camping park) on a blind bend on the A379 at the northern entrance to the village has long been of concern because of the danger to the occupants of vehicles attempting to exit the park and those of passing vehicles. The policy H1 allows for the creation of a new exit at a safer position and the formation of a one-way system within the park.

R6 Traffic in Venn Lane

There is a 20 mph speed limit on Venn Lane from the village boundary onwards, that is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The advent of GPS navigation in cars has led to Venn Lane becoming a suggested route from the A3122 on the outskirts of Dartmouth to the coast road and the beaches and holiday accommodation along the length of Start Bay. The proposed new West Dart development is likely to increase the amount of traffic through Venn Lane. All that traffic has to exit onto the A379 through either Cinders Lane or Ravensbourne Lane.

Discussions will take place with Devon County Council on the introduction of traffic calming measures on Venn Lane within the village, and on the question of signage at the Cotton end of the lane aimed at encouraging drivers to continue on the A3122 until the junction with the A379.

R7 Car Parking

A site for a new additional car park has been identified, backing onto the existing one opposite the bowling green. As well as simply providing additional spaces for residents and visitors it will allow parking in Church Road to be prohibited, ensuring better access and avoiding the possibility of emergency vehicles not being able to access properties in the area (see H5).

R8 Virtual Pavements

Virtual pavements, painted white lines on a road defining an area where pedestrians have right of way, are designated for two stretches of the A379:

- ❖ Between Ravensbourne Lane and the foot of Church Road
- ❖ Between Radius 7 and the top of Blackpool Hill

These will be subject of negotiation with Devon County Council.

R9 Verge Footpath towards Swannaton

To enable people, both residents and visitors, to walk from the village to Dartmouth without having to walk on the A379 the intention is to seek the creation of a verge footpath by the side of the road from Deer Park and connecting with the existing right of way to Swannaton from near the Toll House.

R10 Flood Prevention

Two initiatives are intended:

- ❖ Measures to eliminate flooding in the centre of the village, by the Post Office.
- ❖ Measures to remedy regular flooding at various places in rural areas, particularly at Venn, Embridge, Bowden, Ash and Bugford.

R11 Street Lighting

New lighting between the top of Church Road and the lower part of School Road.

R12 South West Coast Path

Natural England will begin a consultation on the stretch of Coast Path that includes Stoke Fleming. Completing the Path between Warren Point and the village will be dependent on the outcome of that consultation.

Open Space Policies

These policies relate to publicly-owned land that is a community amenity, and to open space that may be privately owned but brought into being by developments that take place under the Neighbourhood Plan.

S1 Existing Open Spaces

Existing open spaces will be protected and where possible enhanced. This would also apply to the privately-owned open spaces along the frontages of Deer Park (site H1) and Leonard's Cove (site H3).

S2 The Playing Field

The Playing Field is an important community asset, constantly used for a variety of activities. The Village Hall stands at its northeast corner, where there are also changing rooms and toilets. The football pitch is used for local league games, five-a-side and informal games. There is a children's play area and a petanque pitch. The South West Coast Path runs down one side of the field, and the area is used by man dog walkers. It is the venue for the annual Horticultural and Sports Day.

The southwest part of the field is not set aside for specific activities and is less well used. It could be enhanced by a measure of landscaping, the planting of suitable trees and other measures that might encourage greater use, and which in any case would improve its appearance.

S3 New Open Space at Site H6

Development at this site would provide an opportunity to create a new and significant open space in the southern heart of the village, close to its old centre and the more recent developments in School Road. With new housing positioned along the rear and sides of the site, a substantial "village green" fronting onto School Road could be introduced, in a part of the village that has seen a significant and possibly continuing growth in population.

S4 Other New Open Space

Development at sites H2 (Premier Garage) should include a small open space fronting onto Dartmouth Road (A379), improving the attractiveness of the approaches to the village.

Community Policies

The community benefits from a diverse and vibrant range of amenities, facilities and social activities.

C1 Section 106 funding and Community Infrastructure Levy

Contributions made by developers shall be used to provide new facilities, and support and enhance existing amenities and activities.

C2 Stoke Fleming Community Primary School

Improvements to facilities at the school are to some extent dependent on the current and projected trends in pupil numbers, but growing populations and a wide catchment area suggest that major improvements will be justified and should be made during the life of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council will support the school's governors in seeking to provide facilities that will enable it to maintain the high standards it currently achieves.

C3 Village Hall and Youth Club

The Village Hall and the Youth Club are important as venues for a wide range of community activities and their management committees will be supported in their efforts to maintain and improve them.

C4 Social clubs and organisations

Stoke Fleming's community life is enhanced by the many social clubs and organisations that exist. Existing ones will be supported and new ones encouraged.

Environment Policies

E1 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Development within the AONB, outside of the designated South Hams Development Plan boundary, should be kept to a minimum and subject to careful constraints in terms of location, design, visual impact and effect on biodiversity.

E2 Public Views

Developments that adversely affect views of the natural environment from public places should not be permitted. This includes skylines, sea views, valleys and woodlands.

E3 Woodlands

The felling of woodland trees, other than as required for proper management, should be avoided, and felled trees replaced. The policy does not apply to commercial conifer plantations.

E4 Solar and Wind Power

Commercial solar and wind power developments should not be allowed anywhere within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Limited development for private, business or agricultural use will be subject to the normal planning policies and procedures.

E5 Recycling

Recycling facilities will be reintroduced on a suitable site.

Business and Employment Policies

B1 Tourism development

The community benefits greatly from tourism. Visitors to the area should enjoy a quality experience. The preservation and improvement of the natural environment and character of the area is an important priority, as will be the retaining and improving the range of facilities and services provided, including public transport, car parking, footpaths and communications infrastructure.

Particular encouragement will be given to tourism enterprises seeking to grow their existing business and develop new markets.

The Stoke Fleming website will market the parish as an ideal base from which to explore and enjoy the many attractions of the wider area, and through reciprocal links will seek to make more people aware of Stoke Fleming and what it has to offer.

B2 Business support

The retention of existing businesses and, where possible, attracting new businesses, is important to provide an increase in employment opportunities and to ensure the vitality and social mix in the area. The development of communications infrastructure – high speed broadband and mobile phone signal quality - will be promoted and delivery monitored, especially with the potential expansion of home working in mind.

The Parish Council will give support to soundly-based planning applications that will assist the growth of the local economy and to initiatives aimed at assisting local businesses to work with community organisations and to increase the use made of their services by the community.

Connecting and Enhancing

All of the policies in the draft Neighbourhood Plan are intended to protect or improve various aspects of parish life, and to ensure that development takes place in a controlled and well-planned way.

Key to the proposals are three things:

- Well-designed and carefully located new housing, limited in scale to reduce visual impact
- Improved roads and footpaths
- New green spaces

The intention is to combine some of these so that the whole exceeds the sum of the parts. For example:

New green frontages on sites at the northern approaches to the village, creating an improved “gateway” to Stoke Fleming from that direction.

From there, improved vehicle access from Dartmouth Road to Venn Lane, retaining the rural character of Ravensbourne Lane, linked to careful landscaping of parts of the Playing Field and measures to control traffic in that road.

And then, an improved Bird Walk, with a new footpath from its southern end to the school and a link road from Venn Lane to School Road, linked to the creation of a new “village green” area and a new car park to solve problems caused by parking in Church Road and School Road.

The result: improved connections between the different parts of the village

Monitoring and Review

Stoke Fleming Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) will continue to align its objectives with the strategic aims and the needs and priorities of the wider local area, as defined in the emerging South Hams District Council (SHDC) Area Plan. To this end, Stoke Fleming Parish Council has and will continue to liaise closely that Authority.

Whilst the Plan is in general conformity with the evolving strategic policies of the Area Plan, the Council recognises that in the event of the Plan being established in advance of the Area Plan it may be necessary to review the Plan to satisfy some requirement of the emerging SHDC Area Plan.

This Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to plan sustainable growth for a period of up to 20 years. A formal review process in consultation with the community and Local Planning Authority will be undertaken every five years, to ensure the Plan is still current and remains a positive planning tool to deliver sustainable growth.

In circumstance whereby the Parish Council, supported by a simple majority vote of those in attendance at the Parish's Annual General Meeting, deem the Plan to be a constraint on bringing forward sustainable growth, for whatever reason, the Plan shall be reviewed in consultation with the local community.