

# THURSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN NEEDS YOU!

## **BACKGROUND**

Changes to the planning system set out in the Localism Act have given us new rights to shape the future of our village. Neighbourhood planning allows our community to come together to say where they think new houses and businesses should go, what they should look like, and what needs protecting. However a neighbourhood plan cannot be used to prevent development.

## **WHY THURSTON?**

Thurston is a village with excellent facilities and services which lends itself to sustaining additional development. Some of this development is a result of a housing shortage at the national level due to the rise in single occupancy households, longer life expectancy, the take up of second homes, immigration and investment properties in the buy to let market. The consequence of a housing market that hasn't reacted to these issues has led to rapidly increasing housing prices, insufficient affordable housing for people who cannot afford the 7.1 average house price to average annual salary ratio, increased skills shortages as potential employees move away, over-crowded houses as young people live with their parents for longer, homes that do not meet people's needs, and greater social inequality and exclusion leading to demographically and socially less well balanced and unsustainable communities. In addition the population of Suffolk is ageing and by 2030 31% of Mid Suffolk's residents will be aged over 65. This older population will have different housing needs to a younger population and preparations need to meet this expected demand. Thurston Parish Council believes that it is in the interest of the community as a whole to recognise this fact and whilst adopting a formal Neighbourhood Plan, which needs involvement from parishioners, there will be considerable benefits from doing so.

## **POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

Thurston's Neighbourhood Plan once adopted will be recognised as part of the planning framework and will be used by Mid Suffolk District Council when deciding future planning applications. It therefore cannot be ignored by prospective developers or landowners when considering planning applications for new development. It is important that every effort is made in planning for the right amount of development that this area needs. In doing a neighbourhood plan we will be playing our part and making Thurston a sustainable community in the short and long term. We will be influencing what development we want, rather than have it done to us.

## **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

We need to understand what our community needs are over the next 15 years. We also need to have regard to the pressures on the local infrastructure and our valued facilities and services so that they can meet future growth. Some of you have already helped by completing a survey and attending the Village Forum and in a few months' time we will be sending out a more detailed questionnaire. We desperately need these forms completed and returned as without your help developers will argue where houses will be built, how many and what type.

Importantly, it also isn't just about housing, we want to know what Thurston lacks and what is important to you. For instance leisure provision, suitable transport arrangements, protection of important views and green spaces, young people's needs such as skate parks, need for small business units, footpath connectivity both in the village and circular walks etc, parking issues...

If you have any questions please contact the Thurston Neighbourhood Planning Team, via e-mail: [thurstonnpsg@hotmail.com](mailto:thurstonnpsg@hotmail.com), at the Parish Council Offices or visit the neighbourhood plan webpage via the Village Website:

<http://thurston.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/neighbourhood-plan/>