

St Goran Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

First Phase Consultation Report

October 2020

1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of feedback from the NDP first consultation phase of early 2020, including two public drop in consultation sessions, written comments, and a consultation session with Lions Class (Years 5 and 6) at Gorran School. Details of the community members who participated in these events are presented in the annex. The consultation process was cut short by the lockdown restrictions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The relatively small number of participants in this first round of consultations means that the views reported here are not necessarily representative of the community as a whole. Given the limited feedback from younger members of the community, particular effort will be made to engage with younger age groups in the second phase of the consultation process.

The consultation questions used in the first phase were: (1) What do you like about living / working in the local area? Why? (2) What should we seek to preserve? How? (3) In your view, what are the issues that affect the local area and/or the community (now or in the future) that we should seek to address? (4) What changes/developments would you like to see in the next 20 or 25 years? (5) What additional questions should we be asking? This report is structured according to the themes that emerged from the consultations.

Figure 1. Feedback from adults



2. Size matters! A small, inclusive and vibrant community with a 'big family' feel

Overwhelmingly, the two aspects that people appreciate most about living in the Parish are the beauty of the natural environment and the strong sense of community. Many of those involved in the consultations had chosen to live in St Goran Parish for its small, safe, quiet community in a beautiful rural, coastal setting. As a neighbourhood, it is friendly, caring and helpful, and newcomers are made to feel welcome. The friendly, helpful, close-knit nature of the community is recognized as typical of a rural farming community; many of the farming families have been here for generations and have strong ties and deep local knowledge.

There is also a sense that the small size of the community contributes to its friendly, supportive nature, and people want it to remain as such. It's a very inclusive, vibrant community, with lots going on for different age groups, e.g. community groups, sports clubs and community events. Primary school children, in particular, appreciate the community events, e.g. Gala Day, the Gig Club regatta and party. People feel that St Goran Parish is a good place to raise a family. Many of those consulted are aware of the need to have enough young children to fill the local primary school. This requires both housing that is accessible to families with young children as well as employment for the parents. In addition to housing and employment, other topics that were frequently mentioned during the initial consultations were local assets and services (including transport), the natural environment, and the local historical heritage, as detailed in the sections below.

In terms of development, many people commented that some of the larger buildings were 'out of keeping' or incompatible with a small village. Others said that they didn't want too much change in the future. There was a divergence of views as to where any potential new developments should be located: some feel that there is a need to maintain Gorran and Gorran Haven as two separate villages, both to preserve the separate identities of these settlements and to avoid them merging into a small town; others feel that the most obvious area for future development – particularly for any potential new facilities - is near the school or Menagwins, where people from both Gorran and Gorran Have would have easy access.

3. Housing

3.1 The need for affordable homes. Local people cannot afford to buy homes because local wages tend to be low and local house prices are high, largely due to the demand for second homes. One example was cited of a local family for which two generations (son and grandchildren) could not afford to buy a house locally. In another example, farm labourers from the parish have had to move away due to a lack of affordable housing. There is a need to maintain the population of the village so that local businesses can thrive throughout the year. More affordable houses would attract young families into the community, especially those with local ties. The sale of existing social housing onto the open market was a point of concern (e.g. Coastguard Cottages).

The key points raised in relation to affordable homes included: who affordable homes should be for, how homes should be financed, and where they should be located, as detailed below.

Affordable homes are needed for local young people, especially those with young families who meet certain criteria, such as being from the local area and having limited income levels. Those not from the local area who are able to make a contribution to the community should also be considered. Retired people from the local area were also mentioned; there used to be low-cost homes with a warden for the elderly. Affordable housing should not be used by the Council to house those who have committed crimes. More information is needed to determine what types of housing and how many of each are needed (whether rented, part-owned, fully-owned, etc).

It was generally felt that commercial developers cannot be relied on to meet the need for affordable homes; a small proportion of affordable homes within a larger commercial development will not be enough, and these so-called affordable homes aren't actually affordable at all. Affordable housing that relies on big developers offers very little choice. Affordable homes should be funded as a standalone development. Sources of funding exist for social housing, and the Cornwall Rural Housing Association can also offer support, as in St Ewe¹. The social housing at the Old School Rooms, developed by the St Goran Community Land Trust, is considered to be a big success and similar developments / management arrangements should be encouraged. Various options should also be considered. The potential re-sale of affordable housing should be passed on to others who meet the criteria.

In terms of the location and number of units, more information is needed regarding the status of planned developments (i.e. Meadowside and Menagwins) and the potential for social housing within these. Currently mooted affordable housing schemes seem to have stalled. There is a need to preserve the beauty of the local area by having small-scale developments of affordable local homes, possibly by extending the boundaries of current settlements. How can we convert existing homes into local affordable homes?

Various suggestions relating to design were put forward: e.g. newbuilds of small terraced cottages (like St Ewe, like Mevaggissey); well designed homes with adequate gardens and space for families to grow; flexibly-designed live/work units.

3.2 Limit second homes and holiday homes. The crisis in affordable housing is linked to the demand for second homes, which is driving house prices up to the point that many locals cannot afford to buy a house in the Parish. People feel that there are already enough second homes / holiday homes and they do not want more. Many second homes are used by holiday-makers in the summer and are empty in the winter and this does not contribute to the sense of community.

3.3 Planning decisions and enforcement. There is a general lack of confidence in both the planning process and its enforcement, in which it would seem that "anything goes". There is a feeling that the Parish Council has no decision-making powers, and that the County Council is responsible for some very poor decisions. There was incredulity that planning for some houses was approved, and notable examples of "bad planning" were cited (e.g. along Cliff Road), both in terms of their visual appearance and overall size. Smaller (or at least reasonably-sized) houses are preferable and more in-keeping with the village atmosphere. For similar reasons, some people feel that the use of local building materials should be encouraged.

The number of sub-divided plots with new houses being built in existing gardens was also criticized. Cramming houses into small plots alongside existing homes is creating too much of a built-up, urban feel and it is not "in-keeping" with village life (especially when these houses are purchased as holiday homes). Although there is a need for new homes, these should be located on the edge of existing settlements rather than through sub-dividing existing plots within villages.

There is a sense that developers can do what they like, even when planning regulations and restrictions are in place. Rules exist but they are not being applied properly; there needs to be

¹ In St Ewe, the housing was proposed by a locally formed Community Land Trust who sought advice and support from Cornwall Rural Housing Association during the planning and build stages. A number of the houses were purchased by local people at affordable price levels, and some were paid for and taken over by Cornwall Rural Housing Association and are now let by the Association at affordable rental levels to local people. CRHA is an independent non profit Housing Association who provide affordable rental housing, Community Land Trusts are separately established local community led organisations (usually with charitable status) that can offer a range of housing options including affordable homes either by way of full purchase (at affordable rates), part rent/part buy or fully rental proprietorship.

greater enforcement. Designated Conservation Areas have specific features that can be preserved, but any style and type of houses are allowed in other areas. Even a designated site of Outstanding Natural Beauty does not necessarily restrict development. There is a concern that the clifftops are prime for development; coastal developments need to be limited (e.g. Cliff Road).

3.4 Infrastructure and environmental impact associated with increased housing. More houses are inevitable (whether as social housing or private developments). There is a concern that more services and facilities will be needed with more homes. Can the present infrastructure support any further new housing development? Are the utilities (water, sewerage etc) adequate for additional development? Water pressure is already poor in Churchtown. What about flooding risks due to increased run-off?

4. Assets, transport infrastructure and services

4.1 Community assets. There are many community assets, and efforts should be made to protect these in order to maintain the sense of community and social cohesion. Assets include the village halls, churches, Old School Rooms, Gorran School, Gorran Community Bus, the Surgery, beaches, harbour, shops, post offices, pubs and pub car parks, Gorran Haven car park, the Playing Fields, Cricket Club, Gig Club, Snooker Club, Film Club, Scout Club, as well as allotments, green spaces, and footpaths. The beach and the park at the Playing Fields were particularly appreciated by the children (Figure 2). Gorran Churchtown provides an important service centre for the rural hamlets and farming communities. It is recognized that many people from all age groups put considerable time and effort into managing and running these assets – this is appreciated and should be encouraged to continue. There is a concern about those assets that are privately owned and how to protect them; in some cases, it might be possible to register them.

Effective communication is also considered among the assets, including the notice boards, parish magazine, website and Facebook pages. A free local magazine for all residents was suggested, to be paid for by advertising

4.2 Transport. Many people want to encourage people to walk and cycle more within the Parish. Not only is this more environmentally friendly, but there is more social interaction when walking rather than driving. There are currently few pavements, and cars often go too fast, especially on Bell Hill and Rice Lane, where there is a need to reduce and enforce the speed limit. There are generally too many cars and too much traffic. The suggestion of a parking ban at Cakebreads was proposed, and/or to have this as a pedestrianized area with access only. Car sharing was suggested, especially for electric cars which are expensive to buy. Adequate charge points will be needed.

Transport infrastructure is essential for students of all ages. The school footpath needs lighting so that people, especially school children, feel safe using it throughout the winter when it gets dark earlier. Bus shelters are needed at the school bus stops for when it rains. A bus link to Truro for college students has recently been discontinued, but should be maintained.

The local public bus provides a limited service and hardly anyone uses it, but there is a need to maintain it, especially for kids / teenagers to be able to get in and out of the village. An evening / weekend bus service is needed by young people. The current bus times are such that it cannot be used by people who commute to St Austell for work. The Gorran Community Bus is highly appreciated, and provides a good service for older adults for shopping trips and outings.

4.3 Health services. At the time of the consultation (early 2020), Mevagissey Surgery was not coping with local needs, and Treliske Hospital was also seen to be facing various challenges. The Parish has

an ageing population that requires better medical services. Gorran Haven needs better local surgery services; there are lots of elderly people who don't drive, so not everyone can get in to Meva. The Gorran Haven GP surgery should move from the Lime Kiln to a more central location (e.g. near Menagwins or the school) with adequate on-site parking and easy access for the disabled. Having a Parish Nurse is good, but this is a different service.

What are the County Council's plans regarding care of for the elderly, and how might this have an impact on the NDP? Should we be thinking about sheltered accommodation, and / or how to attract private investment to provide care for older people? We need to shape what might happen in the future, and learn from the past, e.g. Ismeer (formerly a residential home for the elderly).

4.4 Other services. Although local groups and organisations provide a wide range of sports, activities and events that cater for almost every age-group, there are limited options for local teenagers. There is no youth club that isn't religious. Someone needs to volunteer their time to establish a youth club. At present, the quay is the youth club! The need for a children's nursery for working parents was also suggested. Children from Years 5 and 6 mentioned the need for improvements to the Playground Park, including more swings, a skate park, and a pump track (for jump bicycles)

The public toilets in Gorran Haven are a big benefit to the community and enable visitors to visit. There was a question of why we have to fund them ourselves. They are a necessary service but costly to run; the money could go to something else if the Council took responsibility.

The challenge of poor broadband services needs to be addressed.

Shops have come and gone over the years and may or may not be profitable. In Gorran Haven, Cakebreads, the Fish & Chip shop and the Hairdressers have the greatest longevity. The local community need to support local businesses so that they don't disappear. Children appreciated the shops and cafés. Several people commented on the local pubs; people appreciate the Barley but feel that the Llawanroc should be less of a boutique hotel and more of a local pub for the local community.

5. Employment

People need jobs, but there are limited employment opportunities in or near the Parish. Both fishing and farming are limited; the former county farms (e.g. Carvinnick) appear to be being sold off, and a larger, safer harbour wall would be needed to support a fishing fleet (which is not viable). The public sector provides employment for many (e.g. teachers, medical workers and associated administrative staff). Nearby private employers include St Austell Breweries, Heligan, Imrys, among others. Many people rely on the tourism sector, self-employment and working from home.

How can local employment be supported? A suggestion was made for the creation of "live/work" units with workshop/studio facilities for small businesses, e.g. carpentry, plumbing, craftwork, etc. The example of the old squash court (a former chapel) at St Agnes was cited.

6. The Environment

The natural environment – including flora and fauna, landscapes and coastal areas - should be protected against potentially harmful development. Much of the coast is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Local residents appreciate the beauty of the local area, the diversity of the local natural environment, its rurality, as well as the clean air and low level of light pollution. Many commented on the unspoilt countryside, the beach, the unspoilt coastal views, coastal walks,

swimming, sailing and fishing. More support should be given to local environmental/green/wildlife groups, and the development of areas for biodiversity and the protection of nature. Tree planting should be encouraged, and it was proposed that the school could be involved in tree planting.

There is felt to be a good balance between farming and environment, and the Cornwall Agricultural Policy has a strong environmental focus. Cornish hedges should be protected; not only are they part of the Cornish identity but they are also a rich source of wildlife. Farmers should be encouraged to maintain wild meadows and discouraged from too much use of pesticides and pollution of the waterways.

In view of the climate emergency, new buildings should all be built with the best insulation, non fossil fuel energy sources e.g heat pumps and solar panels and provision for the utilisation of grey water. Offshore wind turbines were mentioned, though the broader context of this comment was not clear. There is a concern that flooding will be an issue with more development in the Parish.

7. Historical heritage

The older, historic buildings in the village need to be listed among the community assets, along with other historic locations and landmarks throughout the Parish. We need to preserve the fabric of the old and historic buildings and not allow new buildings to be built that are “out of keeping”. Natural and local materials should be used where possible. Local history is important to newcomers. We cannot dismiss the generations of history that have built the community; this must be recognized in the NDP. Historic buildings and features help to provide the character of the area, including narrow/winding lanes and the fabric of buildings and walls.

Figure 2. Feedback from children aged 10-11



Annex: Participants who attended the public meetings in the first consultation phase

Men				Women			
10-17 yrs	18-29 yrs	30-64 yrs	65+	10-17 yrs	18-29 yrs	30-64 yrs	65+
	1	9	9	1	2	9	11

Total Men: 19

Total Women: 23

Total

(All): 42