

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [East Anglia ONE North; East Anglia Two](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Written Representation on behalf of the Aldeburgh Society  
**Date:** 02 November 2020 12:03:27  
**Attachments:** [Windfarms - AS Memorandum 1 Nov 20.docx](#)  
[Windfarms - Cumulative energy projects SEAS Oct 20.pdf](#)  
[Aldeburgh Town Plan \(Final\).pdf](#)

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Dear Rynd Smith and Colleagues

In accordance with the procedures under your Rule 8 Letter, we attach a Written Representation on behalf of the Aldeburgh Society.

With thanks for your attention and kind regards

Katherine Mackie, Chair

Paul Bongers de Rath, Secretary

**PLANNING INSPECTORATE EXAMINATION OF DCO APPLICATIONS BY  
SCOTTISH POWER RENEWABLES RE EAST ANGLIA ONE NORTH AND EAST  
ANGLIA TWO OFFSHORE WINDFARMS**

**WRITTEN REPRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE ALDEBURGH SOCIETY**

**1 November 2020**

As the civic society for the historic coastal town and cultural centre of Aldeburgh, with concern for the built and natural environment in the area, we are strongly opposed to these applications and urge that they be rejected by the Secretary of State. We fully support the Government's net zero target and the moves towards renewable energy, and we believe that offshore windfarms have a particularly important role to play in this context. We cannot however support these two projects as they stand, since we believe their onshore infrastructure plans would do irreparable damage to the environment and the economy of the Suffolk coast.

SPR's proposal to bring the power from the two windfarms ashore at Thorpeness Cliffs, and to route it via underground cables to major industrial buildings next to Friston village for the purpose of connection to the National Grid, would constitute an unjustifiable assault upon the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and adjoining areas of high landscape quality. Moreover, the cliffs are unstable and have suffered major erosion in recent years. The grassed area, woodland and heathland behind them are of major wildlife and amenity value to local people and visitors and would be massively damaged by the cable corridor with its haul road.

The scale of the buildings proposed by SPR for the Friston site would completely dominate this charming traditional small village. In addition, if, as we understand, National Grid and others have in mind that six further energy projects might also require additional buildings at the Friston site, the level of industrialisation in this fragile area would be totally intolerable. It is shocking to us that no local consultations have taken place about these additional projects, nor any DCO applications made for what clearly would constitute 'infrastructure of national importance'.

In the light of the Government's announcement that it proposes to go ahead with the Sizewell C nuclear power station, it is all the more critical that the cumulative effects of these energy projects will be taken into account. The seismic trauma that would be caused to Aldeburgh, surrounding villages, the coast and the AONB by the combination of construction traffic, noise and pollution if both projects were to be allowed to proceed is undisputed and simply unacceptable in a civilised society. It is one thing to allow the environment and the environs of a peaceful coast to be blighted in the national interest: to allow it twice would verge on the criminal. In this context, we welcome assurances given during the Open Floor Hearings that the cumulative effects of other energy projects will be taken into account where information about these is publicly available. (*Appendix 1 prepared by SEAS lists the projects known to be in preparation*).

The impact of SPR's proposals upon the town of Aldeburgh would be extremely damaging. Both the prospective industrialisation of the area to the north of Aldeburgh and the process of construction of these facilities risk damaging the whole economy and social fabric of the town. Aldeburgh relies heavily upon visitors for the vitality of its High Street. A recent study estimated there to have been over four million trips per year to the area, creating a spend in excess of £160 million (*Source: The Energy Coast report of September 2019: The-Energy-Coast-BVA-BDRC-Final Report-2019.pdf*). Visitors come not only for the attractions of the beach, they include numerous bird watchers and walkers, not only in the summer peak but at all times of year. Two yacht clubs and a notable golf course also attract many visitors. The (recently upgraded) Moot Hall Museum and the Red House (long-term home and archive of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears) are also important destinations for visitors.

In research for the preparation of the Aldeburgh Town Plan 2015 (*see Appendix 2*), visitors cited the beach and sea, the town's special atmosphere, the character of the High Street, and the quality of the surrounding countryside as the major reasons for their visits. The value of peace and quiet, and a desire for minimal change, featured highly in responses.

Aldeburgh hosts a significant number of special events during the year. These include:

January/February – Chamber music series of weekly concerts in the Jubilee Hall;

March – The Aldeburgh Literary Festival, staged by the bookshop;

June – The world famous Aldeburgh Festival, founded by Benjamin Britten and now in its 73rd year, based at Snape Maltings but with many concerts in Aldeburgh;

August – The Snape Proms, a month-long series of highly diverse concerts;

August – The Aldeburgh Regatta and Carnival, started in 1927 and attracting large crowds from the surrounding area;

September – The High Tide Festival of innovative theatre;

November – The Aldeburgh Documentary Festival, hosted by the Cinema;

November – The Aldeburgh Poetry Festival;

December – The Boxing Day swim.

In addition the Jubilee Hall hosts numerous theatre and musical events throughout the year. Many of the above events involve significant numbers of predominantly young professional artists and performers, as well as diverse audiences drawn from all parts of the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Aldeburgh and the surrounding area provide accommodation through three large hotels, numerous B&Bs and letting properties, and a large caravan park. Several quality restaurants and pubs, two renowned fish and chip shops, various cafes and teashops, and three supermarkets as well as a clutch of specialist food outlets keep them fed and watered.

If SPR's proposals for directing construction traffic from the A12 down the A1094 to the roundabout in the centre of Aldeburgh and up the Leiston Road were to be realised, much of this activity would be threatened. The roads concerned are not of sufficient width to allow two HGVs or farm vehicles to pass without difficulty in a number of places. The consequent

manoeuvring would quickly cause long tailbacks, delays and frustration. The roundabout has five exits (a hazard in itself), and an adjacent much used pedestrian crossing, serving parents and children walking to and from the primary school as well as shoppers at the Co-op and Tesco, adds to the dangers. These problems would inevitably impact upon prospective visitors, who would cease to see Aldeburgh as a desirable destination. This HGV traffic would also bring noise, vibration and air pollution to Aldeburgh – the very things which many visitors come here to escape from.

While the construction process, also for the much larger one of Sizewell C, although protracted, would be time-limited, the loss of visitor interest which both it and the industrialisation of the coast would engender would endure much longer, with some businesses and cultural/social events being likely to fold or move elsewhere. This damage to our quality of life would be too hard to bear, when alternative methods of bringing offshore power into the National Grid are available. We have welcomed the BEIS Offshore Transmission Network review launched in July 2020 and have urged that these two windfarms be included in its scope. The Society deplors the fact that the onshore connections of the various windfarms off the East Anglia coast have so far been handled piecemeal, and it strongly supports the concept of an undersea grid, such as already exists on the other side of the North Sea, that would enable these connections to be combined and brought ashore in a single location, preferably on a brownfield site closer to major population centres.

It is argued by SPR that the worst effects of their onshore plans can be mitigated by tree-planting and other environmental measures and by the funding of projects of community value. The Aldeburgh Society does not believe that any such mitigation could compensate for the long-term damage and destruction which the projects in their current form would wreak. The whole concept of bringing green power ashore by means of trashing part of an AONB is misconceived. This approach, also being followed in other ways in other parts of East Anglia, is totally unacceptable for an industry claiming to be committed to safeguarding the environment and combating climate change.

The Aldeburgh Society calls for a coherent national approach to be devised for the planning and management of large energy projects. In the meantime, if the Examination of these applications cannot be paused as we have urged, they should be looked at with full awareness of all other energy projects affecting Suffolk including of course Sizewell C. Such an approach would make it abundantly clear that these projects would place too heavy a burden upon a fragile coastal area of great environmental, economic and social importance.

*Annex 1: SEAS List of Future Planned Energy Projects connecting to the National Grid in the Sizewell/Friston Area of Suffolk*

*Annex 2: Aldeburgh Town Plan 2015*

# Appendix One

## **Future planned energy projects connecting to the National Grid in the Sizewell/Friston area of Suffolk**

Eight Offshore Wind Energy Projects are widely believed to be planned to connect to the National Grid at Friston. (This does not include future windfarm projects as a result of the seabed leases awarded by the Crown Estate in relation to the Round 4 process). Cumulative impact means eight substations and interconnectors constructed sequentially or consecutively. Plus, the addition of a nuclear power station, one of the largest in the world. This will be the largest complex of energy infrastructure in the U.K. situated in one of the most fragile ecosystems in the U.K. These are judged to be ill-conceived plans where the process of choosing the site for the mega infrastructure hub is shown to be flawed. There are a number of better alternative brownfield sites for this designated vast complex.

### **1. East Anglia One North Offshore Windfarm - ScottishPower Renewables - Projected to be completed in 2028**

An offshore wind farm which could consist of up to 67 turbines, generators and associated infrastructure, with an installed capacity of up to 800MW, located 36km from Lowestoft and 42km from Southwold. From landfall the cables will be routed underground to an onshore substation at **Friston**, which will in turn connect into the national electricity grid via a National Grid substation and cable sealing end compounds, the latter to be owned and operated by National Grid. <sup>1 2</sup>

### **2. East Anglia Two Offshore Windfarm - ScottishPower Renewables - Projected to be completed in 2028**

An offshore wind farm which could consist of up to 75 turbines, generators and associated infrastructure, with an installed capacity of up to 900MW, located 37km from Lowestoft and 32km from Southwold. From landfall, the cables will be routed underground to an onshore substation at **Friston** which will in turn connect into the national electricity grid via a National

1 <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/east-anglia-one-north-offshore-windfarm/>

2 [https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/east\\_anglia\\_one\\_north.aspx](https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/east_anglia_one_north.aspx)

Grid substation and cable sealing end compounds, the latter to be owned and operated by National Grid<sup>3 4</sup>

### **3. Nautilus - National Grid Ventures - Construction 2025-2028**

The Nautilus Interconnector is a proposed second Interconnector between East Suffolk and Belgium. It would create a new 1.4 gigawatts (GW) high voltage direct current (HVDC) electricity link. The project would involve the construction of a converter station in each country and the installation of offshore and onshore underground direct current cables (HVDC) between each converter station and underground alternating current cables (HVAC) between the converter station and substation in each country. In the UK, the offer from National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) allows for a connection at a new 400kV substation located close to the Sizewell 400kV network, provisionally referred to as 'Leiston 400kV'. The current NGET substation location being promoted is less than ten kilometres from the coast, i.e. **Friston**.<sup>5 6</sup>

### **4. Eurolink - National Grid Ventures - Construction by 2030**

EuroLink is a proposal to build a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission cable between Suffolk and the Netherlands. The capacity of the link will be 1400MW. The proposals are to follow the same path as Nautilus (see above), i.e. **Friston**<sup>7 8 9</sup>

### **5. Greater Gabbard Windfarm Extension (North Falls Offshore Wind Farm) - SSE Renewables and RWE Renewables - Construction 2025 - 2030**

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3 <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/east-anglia-two-offshore-windfarm/>

4 [https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/east\\_anglia\\_two.aspx](https://www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/pages/east_anglia_two.aspx)

5 <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/about-us/what-we-do/national-grid-ventures/interconnectors-connecting-cleaner-future/nautilus>

6 <http://sases.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/National-Grid-Briefing-Note-Interconenctors-Sizewell.pdf>

7 <https://www.nationalgrid.com/our-businesses/national-grid-ventures/interconnectors-connecting-cleaner-future>

8 <https://www.peacockandsmith.co.uk/project/nautilus-eurolink-interconnector-projects/>

9 <http://sases.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/National-Grid-Briefing-Note-Interconenctors-Sizewell.pdf>

The North Falls Offshore Wind Farm will comprise a number of wind turbines on fixed foundations, plus dedicated offshore and onshore electrical infrastructure. The newly-signed lease agreement is for an additional capacity of 504MW, the same as the existing Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm. "it will comprise wind turbines and their associated foundations, array cables which will connect the turbines to an offshore substation, export cables which will transmit the power from the offshore substation to shore, onshore cables and an onshore substation. National Grid has not completed its technical and environmental studies so no conclusion has been made about the location of the onshore grid connection at this stage. National Grid has not completed its technical and environmental studies so no conclusion has been made about the location of the onshore grid connection at this stage". It is widely believed that National Grid will seek to use the **Friston site**.<sup>10</sup>

## **6. Galloper Windfarm Extension (Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm) - RWE Renewables - Construction by 2030**

Five Estuaries is an offshore wind farm to generate in excess of 300MW. The project consists of (but is not limited to): an offshore wind farm, including wind turbine generators and associated foundations and array cables; transmission infrastructure, including offshore substations and associated foundations, offshore and onshore export cables (underground), including associated transition bays and jointing bays, an onshore substation, and connection infrastructure into the National Grid. It is widely believed that National Grid will seek to use the **Friston site**.<sup>11</sup>

## **7. SCD1 - National Grid ESO - Construction by 2028**

SCD1 consists of constructing a 2GW offshore HVDC link and associated substation works between Suffolk and Kent. This project appears to have been sanctioned without it going through the DCO process. "Preliminary work to identify the optimal connection substations at both ends is ongoing". It is widely believed that National Grid ESO will seek to use the **Friston site**.<sup>12 13 14</sup>

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10 <https://www.northfallsoffshore.com/>

11 <https://fiveestuaries.co.uk/about/>

12 <https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/electricity-transmission/document/134036/download>

13 <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/162356/download>

14 <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/national-grid-proposed-1bn-suffolk-to-kent-transmission-route-1-6526632>

## 8. SCD2 - National Grid ESO - Construction by 2029

SCD2 consists of a second 2GW offshore HVDC link with associated substation works connecting Suffolk and Kent. This project is currently on 'hold' which means that it is considered optimal but delivery of this option should be delayed by at least one year. Again, it is widely believed that once sanctioned, National Grid ESO will seek to use the **Friston site**.<sup>15 16 17</sup>

## In addition, there is Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station - EDF - Construction 2022 - 2034

A New Nuclear Power Station on a 33 ha. site near Sizewell. Two EPR reactors will generate 3.34 GW of electricity with 4 on-site pylons connecting cables to a National Grid Substation.<sup>18 19</sup>

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15 <https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/electricity-transmission/document/134036/download>

16 <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/162356/download>

17 <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/national-grid-proposed-1bn-suffolk-to-kent-transmission -route-1-6526632>

18 <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/the-sizewell-c-project/>

19 <https://www.edfenergy.com/energy/nuclear-new-build-projects/sizewell-c>



# Aldeburgh Town Plan 2015

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## Foreword

To quote one of our visitors, Aldeburgh is a much loved ‘town by the sea rather than a seaside town’. It is an historic Town located on the Suffolk Heritage Coast, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Despite its relatively small size, Aldeburgh has achieved considerable worldwide fame. It is a unique international arts hub among devotees of music and literature. The Town has consistently attracted creative people of many persuasions, from the eighteenth Century to the twenty-first, among them painters, poets, musicians, and writers. The centenary of Benjamin Britten in 2013 showed the power and importance of the legacy to the Town of one of our most famous residents. In 2017, the centenary of her death, we will celebrate the life of the first woman mayor of an English Borough and the first woman to qualify as a doctor in England – Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. Aldeburgh is today still home to many famous and illustrious people.

The Town is thriving, enjoys the benefits of a largely independent High Street, and has a cherished environment featuring both natural and man-made elements, with a wide range of sporting and cultural activities and a community of enormous talent and goodwill.

This Town Plan records the views both of those who live and work in the Town and of those who visit it. It sets out a vision of how our community wishes to develop and lists the actions that are needed to achieve this, based upon a detailed and lengthy consultation process (see Appendix 1).

## Introduction

The Town of Aldeburgh has a distinctive combination of features. Its location by the sea, our beach, our Suffolk hinterland and accessibility to London, in addition to an outstanding natural environment all provide for a wide range of sporting and recreational activities; we have a built environment often described as 'quaint' and which reflects a rich heritage of architecture and a very strong cultural life. All of these elements have featured strongly in the public meetings, the questionnaire responses, individual conversations and meetings with stakeholders undertaken in aid of this Plan since April 2013.

A major change resulting from the Localism Act 2011 is that Councils now have a 'power of general competence' to do and build things for the benefit of their local communities. As our work progressed it became clear that people expect our findings to lead to more informed decision making, which, when combined with a clear view of how we collectively see the future, will also provide funding bodies with evidence of the ambitions of the Town.

Challenges exist; not least that of how to keep the best of our Town alive and growing whilst balancing the needs of essential visitors with those of the resident population. The economic picture is complex, with many changes in government funding and the devolution of services. Successive town councils have steered the Town through challenging times whilst seeking to maintain the unique character and 'feel' of the place, so attractive to residents and visitors alike.

It is clear from our consultations and the questionnaire responses that we in Aldeburgh want to help our local businesses to flourish and provide employment. We want the natural beauty of our Town to be enhanced through careful conservation of our public spaces. We would like to see safer roads where pedestrians and cyclists are not at the mercy of overly fast-moving traffic. We would like facilities for our young people that meet their needs. We especially want to make sure that with an ageing population our residents are well cared for and that everyone, young and old, can benefit from living in a community that is healthy and well protected.

### **A Vision of the Future Aldeburgh**

A prosperous, properly protected coastal town that is well organised and proud of its past as well as being confident in its future.

A welcoming place where visitors arrive expectant and leave uplifted.

A united town with a definition of community that is broad and inclusive.

These themes are reflected in the following pages that set out proposals in response to the issues raised by the community of Aldeburgh. This Plan is a working document reflecting the strength of opinion in the Town. It is intended to be reviewed annually and should not gather dust on a shelf. Many of the issues raised are already being dealt with by the local council and other organisations, while some actions will require more discussion and possibly ambitious fundraising.

The result of all the consultation is a Plan that proposes action aimed at protecting and enhancing the features that are the basis of the Town's appeal; a Town where we care for each other and to which we welcome the visitors who help sustain us, whilst ensuring future development is well managed and any changes only enhance our community.

### **The Aldeburgh Town Plan Steering Committee**

Lynne Walker – Chair

Robin Boyd – Secretary

Ian Henderson – Treasurer

Graeme Bloomfield – Aldeburgh Business Association

Tony Bone – Aldeburgh Society, LoF Aldeburgh Hospital, History Society

Paul Bongers de Rath – local resident

Clive Fox – Aldeburgh Library Foundation

Inga Grimsey – Aldeburgh Society

Peter Hill – local businessman and former Town Planner (until November 2014)

Robert Lane – second home owner involved in many local organisations

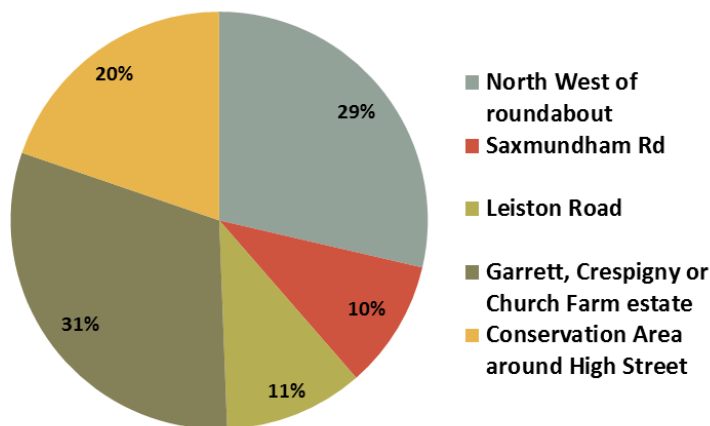
Richard Marson – Councillor and Mayor of Aldeburgh 2014-15

Gillian Benjamin – Advisor to the ATPSG from Community Action Suffolk

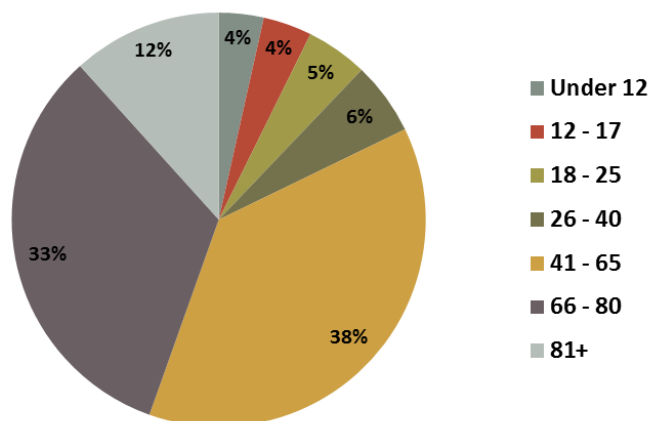
## Summary of Resident Survey Responses

We received 879 household or individual responses to our Residents survey during September and October, about 30% of which were submitted online. This represents around 1,600 people or 60 % of the population of around 2,700 (2011 census). For comparison, 1,910 people are on the electoral roll in Aldeburgh and form a total of 1,142 households.

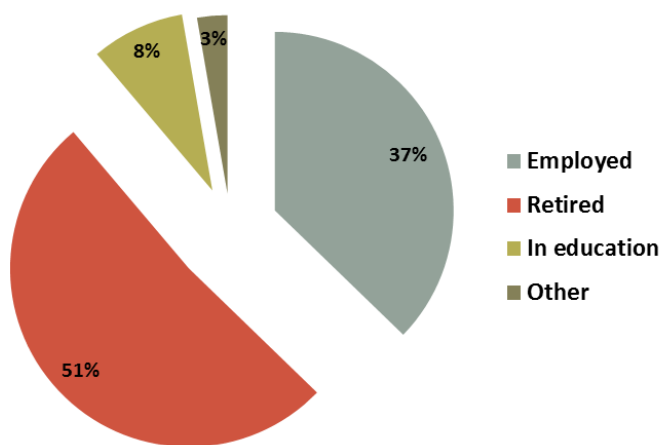
The chart shows the distribution of the 1,600 resident respondents by area of the Town.



The respondents' ages are divided as follows.



The residents' employment status was broken down as follows.



(NB rounding may cause totals shown throughout not to equal 100%)

## Section 1 - The Environment in Which We Live

In our interviews and public meetings we heard that Aldeburgh's interesting past is a significant part of the unique character of the Town and is a factor that draws people to visit and live here. Much of the Town's heritage is seen in its buildings and beach – Crag Path, the fishermen's huts and boats and the Moot Hall. Aldeburgh's heritage includes its role as a port and then a Victorian seaside resort with a beach. It also includes its hinterland on the Alde estuary as well as the Anglo-Saxon and Early Christian sites close by. Its strategic location on the North Sea also gave it notable roles in wars.

Yet, it is more than that. While recognising that the Town's heritage should illuminate the present, the Town Plan consultation process has sought to identify the aspects of our environment that need to be managed for the future. We are told that Aldeburgh's natural and built environment is well liked and seen as crucial to residents, visitors and to businesses. Our beautiful surroundings are part of the Town's unique character and should not be taken for granted. For everyone, strong priorities in the Plan are the beach and coastal defences as well as protection of the river and marshes from flooding and over-commercialisation.

As with all seaside towns, Aldeburgh's area is limited; by its proximity to the sea to the East, by the River to the South, and by the very low lying land to the North, which is unsuitable for expansion. As a result, the size of our Town is now reaching its limits and this makes it all the more important that we use the space we have to best effect.

The Town's residents do care about the built environment and 85% of respondents said they want to see the Aldeburgh Town Council (ATC) exert more influence on Planning. 88% support a Neighbourhood Plan.

Both residents and visitors have said the Town's largely independent High Street, buildings and perspectives should remain, full of interest and character, to preserve a quiet, cultured and sometimes old fashioned atmosphere.

A very common response in comments, from residents and visitors alike, was 'please do not change much, if anything'.

### **The top 10 features that are important to our surroundings**

Aldeburgh Beach	93%
High Street character with independent shops	88%
Marshes and riverscape	87%
Walks around the Town, railway line and river	85%
Fishermen's huts and boats on the beach	84%
Architecture in the town	81%
Moot Hall & Museum	80%
North Warren and the Haven reserves	76%
Boating pond and area	75%
Church and churchyard	75%

### **The top 10 suggestions for improving our surroundings**

Beach kept clear of new buildings	67%
Dedicated bicycle path to Thorpeness & Leiston	60%
Dedicated bicycle path to Snape	56%
Reduction of street signs and clutter	49%
Small Community Creative arts space	48%
Improvements to Fort Green area	47%
Extension of footpath to Thorpeness	46%
New Museum building	39%
Wider conservation area	32%
Measures to improve Sea bathing, such as a raft	23%

The table above includes a wide mix of ideas. The idea of having a new museum building shows 41% in favour versus 30% not in favour, but with 29% saying 'don't know yet'. The conclusion is that the proposal needs some public consultation. In discussions, we heard comments in favour of the quality of Aldeburgh's gardens, allotments, open spaces and wild plants on the beach.

There is a significant but minority interest in better swimming facilities, such as a sea water lido (around 23% residents and visitors) or a restored raft off the beach (24% residents). Similarly there was interest in a café (particularly one that catered for families) near the beach (34% Visitors and 26% Residents).

There was, as expected, strongly felt dissatisfaction surrounding the Town's public toilets, bins and litter near the beach. A few people also wrote complaining about 'A' boards, cars on Crag Path, dog fouling and seagulls.

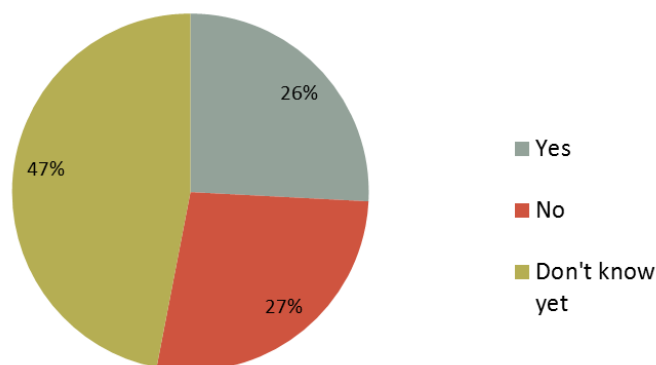
### **Proposed Actions**

- 1** Achieve an agreed approach and plan for the Fort Green area, perhaps tied into solutions for parking, with an interesting pedestrian approach to the Town centre and beyond.
- 2** Look to extend foot and bicycle paths to Thorpeness, Leiston and explore the potential for creation of a cycle path to Snape.
- 3** Encourage use of the beach for everyone, especially addressing access for those less physically able.
- 4** Develop specific proposals and then undertake a consultation with the town on the Museum and new conservation area topics.
- 5** Improve interpretation of the different aspects and periods of the Town's Heritage (and environment) so that they are better understood, enjoyed and appreciated.
- 6** Consider a plan for the town as a whole to maintain and improve vistas while removing unnecessary street signage and clutter.
- 7** Upgrade the Public Toilets.

## Flood Defence

More than 90% of the 876 respondents in the Residents' Survey agreed that flood defence is the top priority for Aldeburgh's future. However, survey responses also included a very large number of comments. Some felt that central government, through the Environment Agency, has prime responsibility. It was noted by many that flooding is more likely to come from the river, and access roads may be affected as well as properties. The impact of a breach in the shingle spit on the course of the river and its use for sailing and leisure was referred to and could be most detrimental for river users and, in turn, their economic contribution to the Town.

We also asked whether residents would be prepared to contribute financially to local solutions. While many agreed, others took the view that flood defences should be funded nationally. Many also declared lack of knowledge and/or would want to know the scale of what might be proposed for Aldeburgh before committing themselves.



Many of the issues are already being dealt with by the local council and other organisations, notably the Alde & Ore Estuary Partnership. Greater discussion with the community would now be appropriate.

## Emergency Plan

41% are not aware of the Emergency Plan, and 62% did not need assistance during last winter's storm surge. Of those who did need help, a clear majority were satisfied with the public authorities' response.

### Proposed Actions

- 8** Adopt an information and engagement strategy for our whole community, to ensure people are well-briefed about the Flood Defence and Coastal Management options.
- 9** Draft, issue and publicise the Emergency Plan more widely.



## Section 2 - Living and Working in Aldeburgh

### Business and the Economy

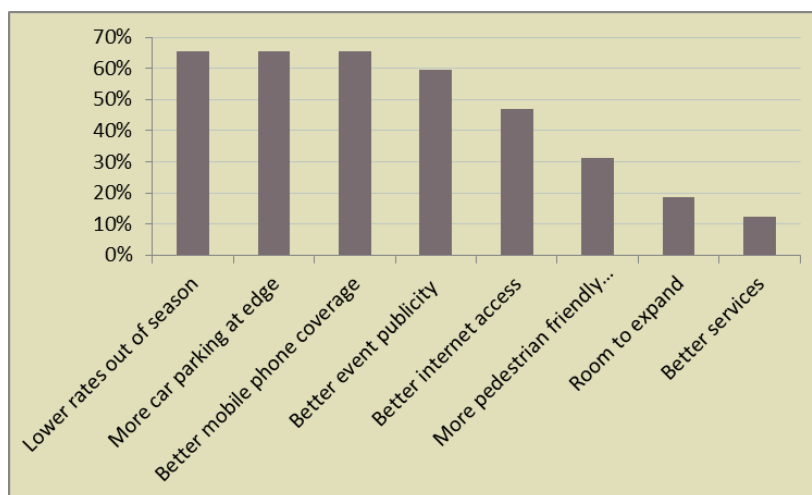
83% of residents who responded regularly use the High Street for shopping, with the Post Office and newsagent the most common destinations. The hardware store, supermarket, bookshop, delicatessen, butcher and fishermen's huts all have a loyal following. A full greengrocers shop is most often quoted as missing with a haberdashery coming second. 70% of us regularly visit a local restaurant and 58% enjoy takeaways, especially fish and chips.

Those who don't use the High Street regularly (17%) shop elsewhere, often quoting cost and difficulty in parking as reasons for staying away.

The Business survey was circulated to 107 businesses as well as being made available online for two months. 73 people responded, of whom 32 were business owners or managers. Most businesses (73%) are well established in the Town, having been trading for four years or more, and most are very local, with premises in Aldeburgh and the locality accounting for 88%. 12% are national chains. In their comments, a number of businesses made the very important point that not all Aldeburgh businesses are located in the High Street.

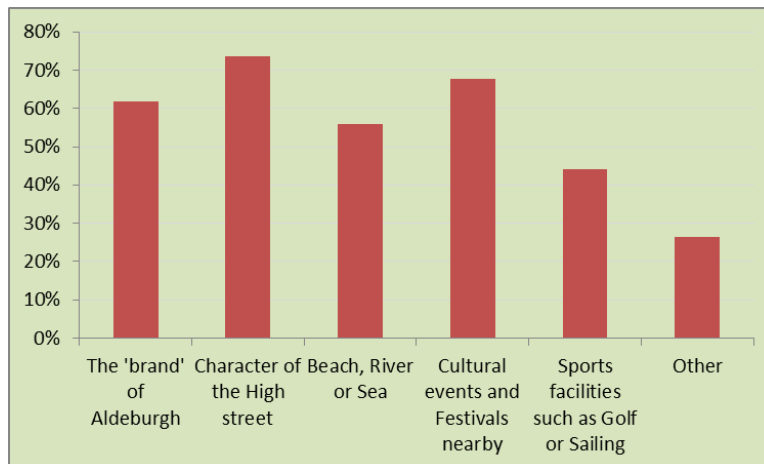
The vast majority of business owners (82%) regard the economic outlook for the coming year as being at least the same, if not more positive than this year. 63% of respondents think Aldeburgh could be better promoted as a destination with 76% of trade closely tied to the holiday season.

There are a number of changes that business owners regard as important to helping their businesses and these are highlighted in the table. In the 'other column' the most frequently called for change is that of providing more amenities for those families with young children.



In the additional comments boxes from business staff, the most frequently mentioned issues included: availability of affordable clothes shops, more cash machines, parking schemes for employees, a drapers and shoe repair shop.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the very things that residents and visitors quote as being important also rank highly with those who own and/or work in our businesses, many of whom live here too. The location, combination of man-made and natural environment, the chance to eat lunch on the beach, the independent businesses, using the loyalty card, and the variety of people and activities are all mentioned in the comment boxes.



The challenges are also very similar for all of us: parking; the volume of cars in the summer; mobile and broadband capacity; seasonal overcrowding and associated abruptness to staff.

When asked how the Town Council might help businesses, several answered that the Council is already very helpful. Among the ideas for further help are: a monthly newsletter of events and important dates, opportunities for 'pop ups' on the seafront in the summer; a promotional online portal to draw together all information currently produced by different groups. Ideas as to how SCDC could help businesses included: an improved location for the Tourist Information Centre; lower business rates; and better collection of trade waste.

The table below indicates how individual services and facilities were rated for improvement.

Within the Town, the public toilets and parking for staff raised the most concerns.



## **Community Engagement and Volunteering**

50% of resident respondents are members of a local society or friends group, an indicator of our notably thriving community. Our challenge is to utilize the expertise and experience of all those currently involved and extend the engagement process to include others.

## **Health and Community Services**

Broadly speaking, the survey shows that people are aware of the health options available to them both locally and nationally. Virtually everyone is aware of the GP service and the chemist and the services offered by them. There is an understanding of the Out of Hours service (60%), the '111' service (57%), the dental service (57%) and local clinics (65%). There is less awareness of the services offered by the Parish Nurse (29%), the Community or District Nurse services (38%) and psychiatric services (14%). This could be because most people have not had the need to use them.

In response to the question about the usefulness of a health and care service 'how to' guide, over 78% of the respondents said such a guide would be useful. There was a level of satisfaction with the local provision of health services, for example the GP Service is rated 'good' or 'excellent' by 81% of users. Services which were rated 'good' or 'excellent' by 75% of responses or lower were the out of hours' service, the '111' service and the dental service (46%, 57% and 61%). These were, however, only rated poor by 25%, 18% and 15% of user respondents respectively.

There is a good deal of support for the doctors' surgery being open at weekends, with 65% of respondents saying they want to see this service made available. There is also some support for timed telephone appointments (39%), improved prescription renewal procedures (19%) and improved transport to clinics and hospital appointments (20%).

From the comment boxes, there was some interest in a minor injuries unit/A&E at the hospital, particularly bearing in mind the influx of population in the summer season. When this type of service was available in the past there was insufficient demand to justify it. However, whilst a minor injuries unit in Aldeburgh might not be viable, the community could press for one serving the wider local area.

We also learned that there is an ever-increasing demand for transport to hospital appointments (particularly at Ipswich Hospital) which cannot be fulfilled by organisations such as Coastal Accessible Transport (CATS).

Other points raised by quite a number of people included the lack of an NHS dentist in Aldeburgh, the long waiting times at the GP surgery and the low number and availability of GPs.

There was overwhelming support (98%) for the local initiatives that offer community assistance, for example the Aldeburgh Good Neighbours' Scheme, United Charities and the First Responders.

## **Proposed Actions**

- 10** Raise awareness of the services of the Parish Nurse.
- 11** Increase the number of drivers for transporting patients to and from Ipswich and other specialist hospitals.
- 12** Advertise community health services including those that support mental health.
- 13** Request and encourage East Suffolk and Ipswich Clinical Commissioning Group to produce a directory of available health services and a “how to” guide
- 14** Investigate the feasibility of introducing GP weekend and telephone appointments.
- 15** Explore the scope for a minor injuries unit in the locality.

## **Housing Supply and Demand**

The strongest influence on the pattern of town growth has been the Chesterton report, written in 1976, emphasising the importance of maintaining the existing roof lines and vistas and being sensitive to these aspects when considering developments in the Town. Thus the focus of the Council Local Plans has been kept on the shape and organic growth of the Town. Our interviews and meetings established that there are two frequently raised housing concerns for the Town – lack of affordable housing and the impact of commercial holiday homes.

### **Affordable Housing**

82% of respondents agree or agree strongly that affordable housing should be a priority for the Town. As to solutions there are possibilities but space is one limitation that dominates as a result of our location.

A variety of suggestions have been made in the course of discussions during the Town Plan process, including:

- The formation of a Town Charitable Trust (TCT), to enable and control housing built on gifted land or with houses acquired.
- The formation of an Aldeburgh Building Society to support the trust (TCT) and enable local people to have shared equity in the trust.
- Better use made of the existing social housing stock – with a rolling programme of upgrading, subdivision and increase of density.
- Encouragement of affordable open market housing through better siting and design.
- Greater provision of sheltered housing or a modern version of almshouses, in the context of the existing care home provision and new housing builds.

## Commercial Holiday Homes

In our interviews and from comments in the Questionnaire, it has been made clear that commercial holiday homes, which we believe total some 300 now, are resented by some residents of the Town and are seen as an intrusion into the fabric of the community. The perception is that buying houses for investment often prices out potential residents, leaving parts of the Town empty out of season. In defence of the owners and operators of holiday homes, holiday rental visitors bring wealth to the Town, creating significant employment in housekeeping, building renovation and maintenance as well as in our retail, sports and entertainment establishments. There is a balance to be struck and measures to support the community with affordable and ongoing residence should be one aim of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## Second Homes

The coming of the railway to Aldeburgh in 1860 led to the building of many residences intended for use as second homes, and to the development of recreation facilities such as the Golf Club, which was founded in 1884. Many Aldeburgh residents expressed the view that they would prefer to see these second homes now used as permanent homes but recognise the historic fact that much wealth and employment has been brought to the Town as a result of the presence of second home owners, who often become active in the community. It is a feature that we share with many coastal towns and one we need to take account of when planning for the future. Approaching 30% of residences in Aldeburgh are second homes. It is worth noting that in other surveys of the area typically 40% of second home owners go on to become full time residents in the area.

### Proposed Actions

**16** The production of a Neighbourhood Plan for Aldeburgh in 2015 including the preparation of a series of options to address the provision for affordable housing, sheltered housing, starter homes, and the encouragement of permanent residence.

## Leisure and Sport

In our interviews we heard that our sporting facilities are truly impressive for a small town, with a Bowls Club, Tennis Club, Golf Club, a Yacht Club and a Sailing Club on the River Alde, and further sporting developments are planned. The survey showed that the community is very supportive of the sporting initiatives being undertaken by the Town Council, with approval of the Sports Plan recorded at 94%.

On the question of additional facilities, a comfortable majority (60%) would prefer to have a multi-purpose indoor facility rather than an outdoor floodlit games area (25%), should funds be available.

A large majority of people (73%) want to see a family café as the key improvement to the Community Centre area.

In the comments boxes, mention was made of interest in a Cricket Pitch, there was some criticism of the orientation of the Community Centre entrance, some criticism of the cleanliness of the toilets and the need for improved kitchen facilities.

There was considerable support for Rambling, Table Tennis, Croquet, Cycling, Yoga and Pilates classes.

Sports week for the local children (and adults in 2014) is a highlight in the diaries of many and continues to grow in popularity.

### Proposed Actions

**17** Encourage the development of more facilities, i.e. a café at the Community Centre, and encourage wider use of the Centre.

**18** Continue to support the Sports Plan for Aldeburgh and its proposals for future developments, including:

- Plans to encourage football, improve the drainage of Kings Field and build new changing rooms
- Examine potential for expand Yoga, Pilates and Zumba classes as well as Cricket
- Encourage and retain the Sports Week for children
- Encourage wider use by residents of the existing Sailing and Golfing facilities

## Cycling

Despite the suitability of the local topography and the importance of tourism to the Aldeburgh economy, the current specific provision for cycle use is minimal.

Recreational cycling would benefit greatly from the provision of dedicated cycle routes to Thorpeness, Leiston and Snape and the results of the cycling question showed that there was considerable support for safe routes to Thorpeness (66%) and Snape (62%).

### Proposed Actions

- 19** Develop a cycling strategy in consultation with the Sandlings Cycling Campaign and Cycle Suffolk, to include:
- Cycle lanes on the main access roads
  - Additional cycle parking racks
  - Dedicated cycle routes to Thorpeness and Snape
  - Targeted information for cyclists, including recognition of the 'shared space' nature of most routes used by cyclists
- 20** Every encouragement be given to cycle hire and maintenance in town, supported by 31% of visitors

## Lifelong Learning

Through hard work we are blessed with an Ofsted ranked 'good' Primary School that is thriving and, with growing numbers, has a future in the heart of our community. The recently announced partnership with Orford CEVA School offers exciting possibilities for the future.

Regarding secondary school provision, 77% said it wasn't relevant to them – unsurprising to an extent given our average population age. However, if our community is to grow and thrive and maintain its population we all share a common interest in high quality education and training provision. These must feature as building blocks of the future and 17% of respondents said they want to see improvements in local secondary schooling.

Those who answered the question about further education and training opportunities were evenly split as to whether or not the right courses were available. However, those who attended courses say they are useful and accessible. Those unable to find the right course locally or access one at a distance say that the main reason is the lack of availability of transport (54%). 81% of those from the business community who answered the question about training in the area said it was adequate. Those wishing for improved training opportunities cited local evening classes as a priority and, in particular, computer classes.

In the past three years, Aldeburgh has recognised the potential for the Library to play a much wider role in promoting lifelong learning and contributing to the community's long term well-being. The introduction of Adult Learning Courses has been a remarkable success story. The wide range and good quality of courses on offer has attracted consistent high demand, with many adult students choosing to attend several courses. The overall numbers participating represent a significantly large percentage of Aldeburgh's permanently resident population. So far, there is no sign that demand may be exhausted. 59% of respondents said they would consider enrolling on a course.

This success story suggests that Aldeburgh could apply similar principles to other aspects of public services and 74% of people agree. We will need to undertake further work to determine what kinds of public community services could be considered in this way.

### Proposed Actions

- 21** Identify which, if any, public community services might be developed along the lines of the Aldeburgh Library Foundation.
- 22** Representation made to Suffolk County Council regarding the quality of local secondary education.

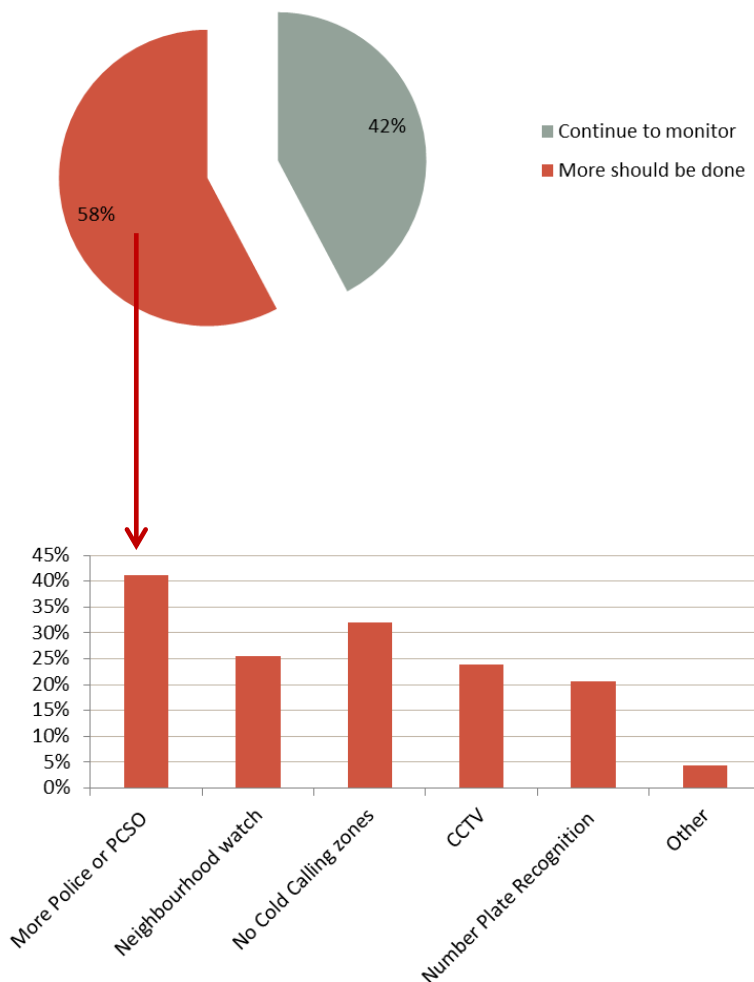


## Policing and Community Safety

Aldeburgh is generally regarded as a low crime area and a safe place to live or visit.

In answer to the question 'What do you think of current levels of safety?' 58% said more should be done. Of these, most would welcome more police or PCSO presence. Others would support an extension of the 'No Cold Calling Zone' operated by Suffolk County Council Trading Standards and this seems to be an effective approach in protection of residents and of legitimate traders. This was most strongly supported by residents North & West of the roundabout.

CCTV and Number plate recognition cameras were less widely supported. Some felt in interviews that visible cameras were not in the spirit of a safe Aldeburgh. In interviews it was felt Neighbourhood Watch should be encouraged by recruiting more co-ordinators.



### Proposed Actions

- 23** A consultation to be undertaken with residents regarding the extension of the No Cold Calling Zone.
- 24** A campaign to recruit more coordinators for Neighbourhood Watch.
- 25** Representation to be made to the Suffolk Constabulary regarding provision of Police and PCSO time and, in particular, consideration for funding more hours.

### Section 3 - A Town for People

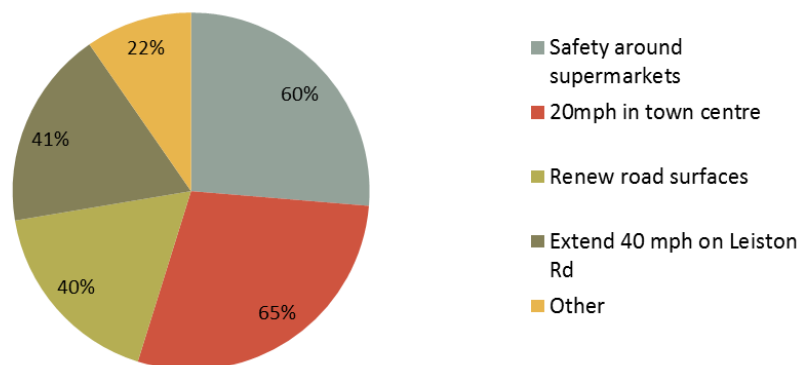
In the course of the various stakeholder discussions and the public meetings, a total of 41 suggestions were made on topics relating to the road system, parking, public transport, cycling and walking in Aldeburgh. All of these suggestions, ranging from small-scale niggles to long-term improvements, have been reviewed by members of the Steering Committee with officers of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council, with the knowledge of our local councillors, and some points have been discussed with other interested parties. From those original suggestions, we included a range of issues in the questionnaire and subsequently this Plan.

The main issues affecting residents and visitors are traffic speeds at certain times of day, particularly at weekends and peak holiday periods, and parking.

#### Traffic and Roads

Road safety is an important factor in people’s enjoyment of our Town. We are a community with significant numbers of less-agile and elderly residents and with many very young people visiting during holiday periods. We have a section of the Coastal Path in the area for walkers but that is also attracting increasing numbers of cyclists.

The opening of a Tesco store near the roundabout has also raised safety concerns. In the short term, the issue of traffic speeds is being addressed by the introduction in early 2015 of a moveable vehicle-activated speed sign, and examination of a speed limit along the whole length of the Leiston Road – supported by 41%.



65% of respondents support the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit for all the roads to the East of the roundabout that fall within the existing 30 mph speed limit area.

In the course of the Town Plan discussions and public meetings, a range of alternatives have emerged for addressing traffic calming including; speed controls, giving priority to pedestrians, supporting users of mobility scooters and aiding cyclists, in ways that respect everyone's needs and help us to share the Town space safely.

There has been much debate about the possible reconfiguration of the High Street itself. Survey results showed a strong desire among all sectors to retain its essential character, and pedestrianising is not supported (58% said no). However, there is scope for making aesthetic improvements to the High Street.

### **Proposed Actions**

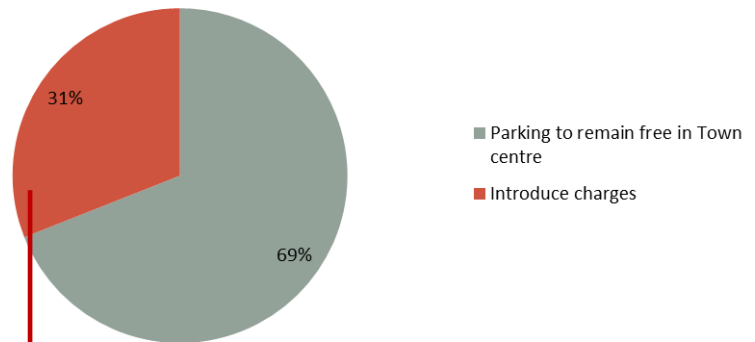
- 26** Look at road safety, including the feasibility of introducing a school crossing patrol at the zebra crossing on Saxmundham Road.
- 27** Develop a plan for the enhancement of the High Street environment, in conjunction with relevant councils and stakeholders, for further public consultation.
- 28** Review potential for changes to speed limits on Leiston Road and the Town area to the East of the roundabout, conveying the wishes of the Town to the relevant authority.

## Parking

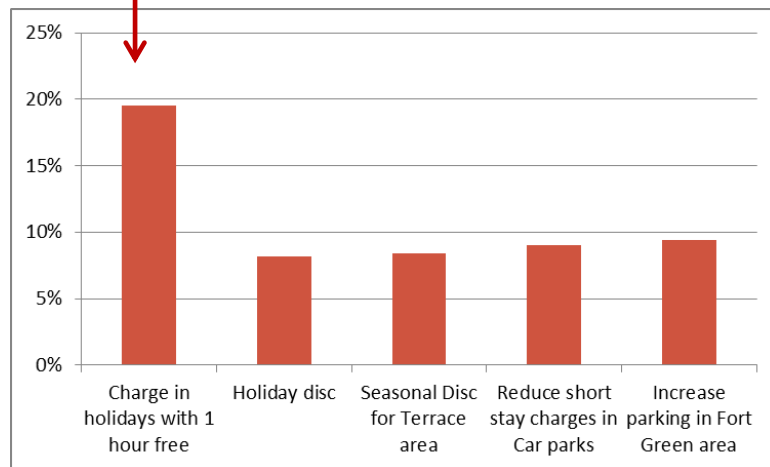
Car parking in the High Street area is a source of concern for residents, especially at busy weekends and in the high summer season.

The vitality of the High Street is dependent upon residents' and visitors' ready access to the shops they need, visitors' facility for browsing at will, and business staff members' ability to park within convenient reach of their workplace. Interestingly, of the visitors who came by car, only 22% found parking difficult in the summer season, with some comments requesting more dedicated parking for holiday cottages and increased space around the Town edges.

The consensus is that it is essential to retain free parking for on-street parking in the High Street area. 69% of residents support this policy, as do 88% of businesses.



However, 70% supported the idea that if charging were to be introduced, it should be limited to the period between May and September and provide up to, as a suggestion, 1 hour free of charge.



The inherent policy problems are aggravated to some degree by the division of responsibility between the SCC (on-street parking), SCDC (off-street car parks), and the police (enforcement of traffic regulations). Currently (since the police retain responsibility for on-street parking in Suffolk) the area is patrolled twice a day by the PCSO, which ensures a limited degree of enforcement.

A particular problem affects the narrow streets of The Terrace area, where High Street staff (45% of staff who drive into Aldeburgh say they park on The Terrace area) compete with residents and holiday home occupiers for unrestricted parking space. If an enforceable Residents' Parking Scheme were introduced there, we would also need to provide nearby places for staff. Parking problems also concern a good proportion of residents in the Church Farm area, where the road often acts as a substitute public car park in the holiday season.

### **Proposed Actions**

**29** Enter negotiations with SCDC regarding the feasibility of taking over responsibility for operating the off-street car parks, for determining all parking charges, and for enforcement of parking controls.

**30** Prepare a series of proposals for the development of parking schemes in line with the outcomes of the public consultation meetings and questionnaires, to include:

- Provision of free disabled parking bays outside the Chemist
- Changes to the charges in the large car parks to provide free or very cheap parking for up to 2 hours and scaled charges for longer periods
- Reservation of spaces at Fort Green for free or very cheap all-day parking for duly accredited High Street staff, to be administered in conjunction with the Aldeburgh Business Association
- Further consideration of the practicalities of introducing a Residents' Parking Scheme in the Terrace/Lee Road area

### **Public Transport**

Bus services between Aldeburgh, Leiston, Snape, Saxmundham, and destinations to Ipswich are operated on a commercial basis, the role of SCC being limited to developing partnership agreements and publicising services. Some subsidy is provided for the 521 bus service to Halesworth, and 'dial a ride' services are provided to those who cannot access conventional bus services. Suffolk Link services offer transport from rural areas into Aldeburgh but are not permitted to provide journeys within the Town area where they would compete with commercial operators. The bus services are relatively expensive, lightly used at the Aldeburgh end and they do not run in the evenings or on Sundays.

87% of those who answered the question about transport other than buses use local taxis, while over 70% say they wouldn't use a bus even if the service was better.

In discussions, we found there is a keen awareness among ageing residents that journeys which are now made by car may need to be made by other means in due course, and there is a strong desire to keep public transport services available. The bus service is also seen as an important link with rail services to the rest of the country at Saxmundham. Easier cycle use in Town could replace short car journeys and alleviate pressure on car parking. The possibility of a hopper bus circulating around the Town was raised in the questionnaire but supported by only 39% of residents.

#### **Proposed Actions**

**31** Set up a consultation meeting between regular bus users, the operators and SCC, to explore possible improvements to services and schedules and establish a regular dialogue for the future.

### **Walking**

Both residents and visitors have expressed support for better walking conditions in and around Town, in recognition of its highly distinctive townscape and landscape qualities.

#### **Proposed Actions**

**32** Pursue the following lines of action in collaboration with local business interests, SCC, SCDC, the AONB and other partners:

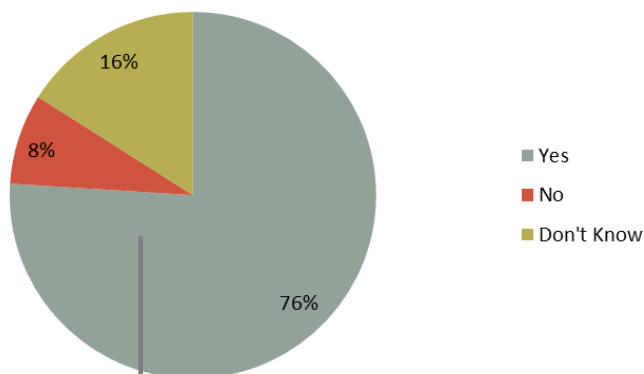
- Review visitors' walking experiences within and around the town, including existing signage and routes from public car parks, especially Fort Green
- Develop signage in the approach to Town, to reveal and celebrate Aldeburgh's features
- Undertake measures to establish the old railway line as a public right of way
- Undertake measures to improve safe access to the start of the Sailors' Path
- Develop a walkers' guide for the Town

## Section 4 - Involving people and how we are governed

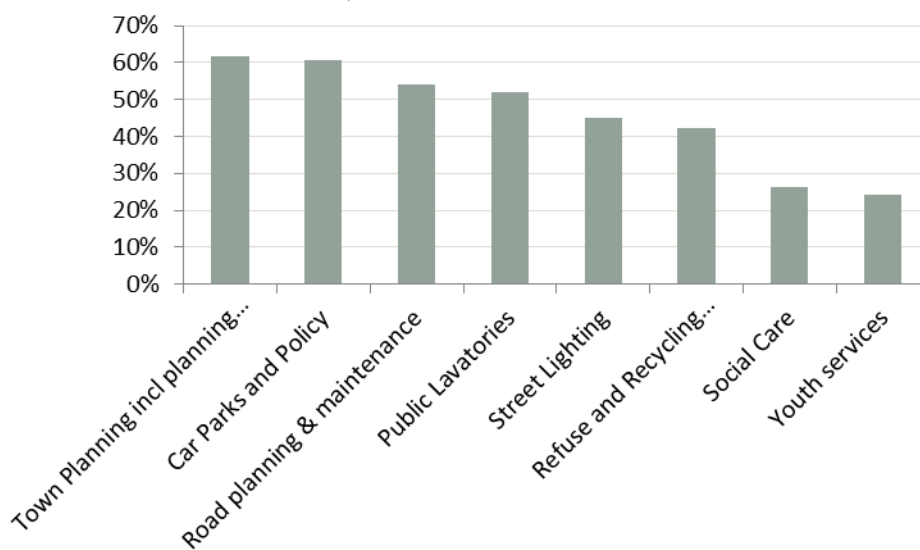
### Influencing Local Services

Under the Localism Act 2011, Suffolk County Council's 'Our Place' programme embodies the vision of 'communities determining and articulating their own local ambitions and being able to rely on a responsive public sector that will support them in a coherent and joined-up way'. SCDC for its part is working up a programme for 'delivering localism - the Council's strategy for supporting local communities', a component of which will be 'community enabling budgets'. While council tax resources will inevitably limit the scope of possible initiatives to be taken under the new powers, the opportunities for innovative approaches to local issues are now much wider. We believe the Library service in Suffolk, including Aldeburgh, is an example of such potential solutions and note that most respondents favour the Aldeburgh Town Council having more influence in a variety of service areas (see table below).

In response to the question of whether Aldeburgh Town Council should seek to exert more influence over local services, 76% felt it should.



From a list of eight services (Town Planning, road planning, street lighting, car parks, public conveniences, refuse collection, social care, and youth services) there was large majority support for all except social care and youth services.



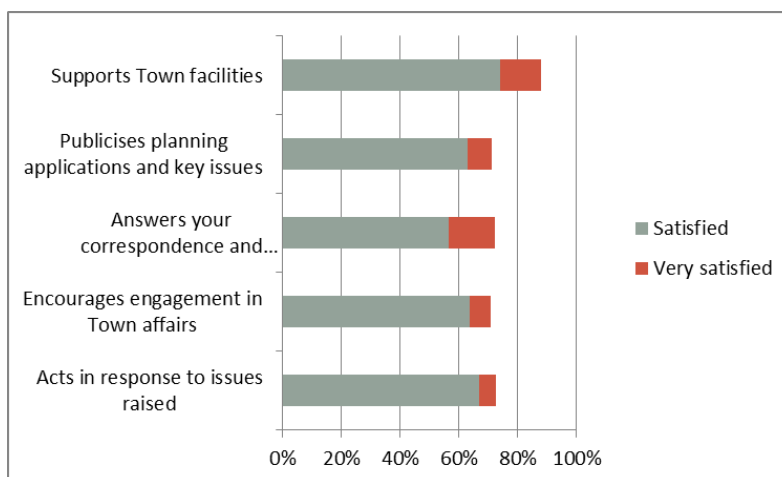
Among services not currently within ATC’s control, many people view the current Development Planning Control system as unacceptable, with the planning authority (District Council) able to ignore or over-rule the considered views of the Town Council (see support for a Neighbourhood Plan below).

Strong criticism is also voiced for some services (management of car parking, overflowing sea-front refuse bins, and the state of public conveniences) which residents feel should be locally-managed and locally accountable.

Refuse and recycling collection and street cleaning standards were appreciated. Litter and path side bins near the beach were a problem. Predictably, mobile phone reception (especially), broadband connectivity and public toilets scored badly in people’s responses, as did the location of the Tourist Information Office. Visitors also endorsed these views. From the individual comments accompanying these headline responses, it has become clear that residents want their own local Council to be ‘responsible’ for local services - either to manage them directly, or to be able to exert genuinely effective influence over those who do.

### Aldeburgh Town Council – Public Perceptions

If the Residents’ Survey is taken as a straw poll of views on the Town Council’s performance, over 70% of respondents with an opinion are satisfied on most counts, and it is important to note there were some strong statements of support – both in the Survey and at the earlier public consultation meeting – from people who appreciate the work the Council are doing and are grateful for Councillors’ voluntary efforts on their behalf.



There were views expressed about the lack of transparency regarding priorities and how decisions are made, a perceived inability to make decisions and the slowness of the process. Some people think local societies have too much influence within the Council, others that grants should not be given to external organisations.

These views clearly point to issues of communication and participation. 90% of respondents feel there should be wider consultation on a range of topics. There are many views about how the Council’s activities and decisions are communicated to the public. While some were appreciative of the Gazette’s and Aldeburgh Times’ recording of the Minutes as their main source of knowing what



was happening, others felt these reports are too procedural and expressed criticisms of inadequate communications with the public generally. The aim of becoming a Quality Council has the support of 51% of respondents.

Views expressed through the Survey comments and discussions also reveal further fundamental lack of knowledge of what the Town Council *does*, what it is *able to do*, what it *cannot do*, and *how it relates* to the other tiers of Local Government – SCDC and SCC. This seems to be at the heart of many of the observations.

Undoubtedly there is a shortage of people willing to stand for the Council, especially among younger age groups where the demands of working or family life make it hard to take on added responsibilities. One approach which could help strengthen the Town Council's handling of issues would be recourse to subject specialists resident in Aldeburgh, who might not wish to take on a continuing role but would be ready to make their expertise available on an *ad hoc* basis. We should also encourage transparent use of expertise within local societies that are often well placed to stimulate debate and participation.

It has been suggested by a number of residents that the issue of the location of the Town Council offices should be re-examined. While the Moot Hall should continue to be used for ceremonial occasions and some full Council meetings, other meetings could be held nearer to the main centre of population and the Town Clerk's office could be moved to e.g. the High Street, the Community Centre or the Library, which would have the dual advantages of facilitating access by more residents and releasing space needed by the Museum.

### **A Neighbourhood Plan**

When the Residents' Survey raised the question of whether ATC should develop a Neighbourhood Plan, 88% favoured proceeding from a Town plan to one that would be part of the statutory planning system, and therefore carry force in terms of future decision-making on planning issues.

While a Neighbourhood Plan is a different kind of instrument from a Town Plan, it would be able to capitalise on the work done over the past year, both in consulting the public, and especially drawing on the human capital and goodwill built up through this Town Plan process. Moreover, once adopted following due process, it would be incorporated in full, and without the possibility of being altered by others, in the District Local Plan.

## Volunteering - Taking Part

Finally, the Local Government part of the survey asked people if they would be willing to consider standing for election and thereby take an active part in the Town Council's work. 71 people said they would consider it. Moreover, over 150 respondents said they would be prepared to help the Council or charities with projects. Our discussions with residents during the Town Plan process indicate a good deal of support for a joined-up approach to getting the maximum out of existing organisations, structures and resources in the Town.

### Proposed Actions

- 33** Mayor/Town Clerk to hold an informal meeting for all those willing to consider standing for Town Council.
- 34** Undertake an 'education' drive to show and tell people how local government works and what is being achieved.
- 35** Update the ATC website with relevant local news and consultation opportunities.
- 36** Explore and develop the use of email and social media in contacting and consulting residents.
- 37** Plan to hold more consultation meetings in the manner of the Town Plan preparations to gather responses and discuss issues directly.
- 38** Begin the process of seeking Quality Town Council designation.

## Section 5 Aldeburgh Arts, Festivals and Events

Events are important to Aldeburgh. They are one significant part of the Town's brand, attracting tourists, visitors and residents who, in turn, support local businesses and employment.

The Town now hosts its own Literary, Documentary and Theatre Festivals (HighTide in 2015) as well as being closely linked to the Music, Poetry and Food Festivals. Many books have been set in and around Aldeburgh and it was the inspiration for Britten's opera, *Peter Grimes*, which was performed to great acclaim on our beach in 2013. Our Carnival is an institution which celebrated its 72nd anniversary in 2014. There is also a long standing Aldeburgh Yacht Club Regatta.

Clearly, the Aldeburgh Music & Arts Festival at Snape is a world class event but it is also the umbrella under which much happens in the district around the year, and not just in music. In our interviews, survey responses and public meetings we saw great pride that our Town of around 2,700 people has a thriving Cinema, a Theatre, a locally-run Library with education courses, an independent Bookshop, a Museum, Galleries and, almost year round, professional and semi-professional activities that should be broadly defined as 'Cultural' or 'Creative' entertainment. We believe that this position sets a firm base for the Town and its future.

Residents told us that the arts community should work more closely with schools. They also told us in the survey that Aldeburgh must work to maintain a community feel and that events and programming be open to all and that a more structured approach to co-operation and planning between venues and events would help with providing support and funding. We also understood that most in the Town favoured co-operation over an area wider than just Aldeburgh itself.

In our interviews, we were also made aware of proposed or planned new development of venues in Town around the Cinema, Museum, Church and Jubilee Halls as well as developments at the Library and at the Red House.

Over 80% of the resident responses favoured more events taking place in Aldeburgh Town itself and the 60 comments received were broadly in favour, some urging more inclusive events (a policy the majority of the survey respondents accepted). Negative comments focused on the challenge of parking or 'just too much going on'.

Over 75% of resident responses were in favour of an improved 'What's on' website and a regularly updated paper version distributed to visitors. 70% were for a central booking website for all local events, although visitors were less interested in this idea. 64% of residents voted to restart the Town Play or a Pantomime.

One idea that came up at a public meeting was to have a small Community Creative Arts space for painting, pottery and sculpture, as has been achieved in some other towns, a suggestion which received a 60% vote in favour.

## Local Festivals

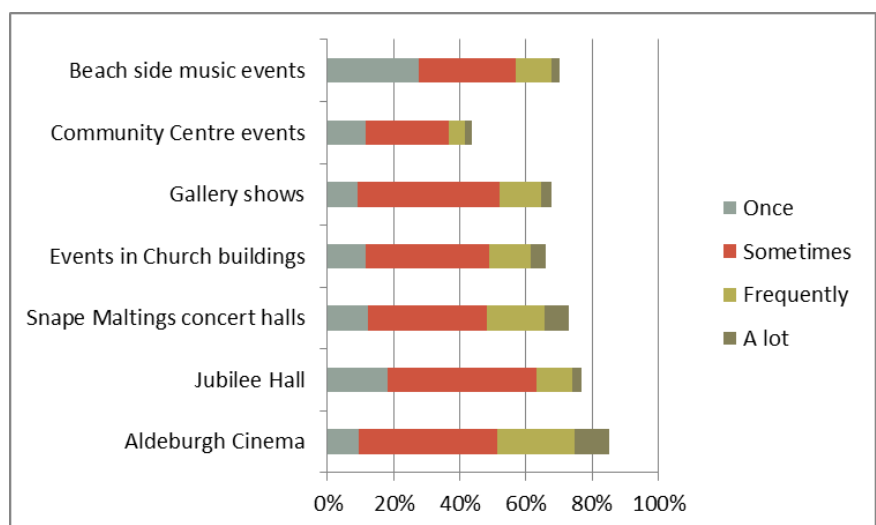
Local Festivals of a variety of types are attended by Town residents as well as visitors and 80% of total surveys indicated at least one was attended by the respondent during the past year.

### The number of survey responses indicating a festival attended

Aldeburgh Music & Arts	424	53.1%
Snape Proms	433	54.3%
Poetry	110	13.8%
Documentary	221	27.7%
Literary	218	27.3%
Food & Drink	307	38.5%
Beach Side Music Events	431	54.0%
FlipSide	53	6.6%
HighTide Theatre Festival	60	7.5%
Country Fair	94	11.8%
None	102	12.8%
Other	68	8.5%

## Major Venues: Attendance

We also asked about going to venues and found that attendance was good for the Cinema (77% residents and 34% of visitors), Jubilee Hall (65%) and Snape (60%). The Community Centre could be used more. Smaller venues often served specialised audiences and attendance was good for the groups served.



## Major Venues: Condition of Facilities.

The Cinema, Pump House and Fairfield Centre facilities scored highly (but with room for improvement), while the condition of facilities at the Jubilee Hall, Church Hall and Community Centre are considered relatively poor. This confirms interview feedback.

Visitor comments on the Jubilee Hall matched those of residents.

97 comments received were helpful in specifying general upgrades or contained helpful suggestions, for instance, handrails at Jubilee Hall or fire evacuation safety, all of which have been forwarded to the relevant groups.

	% satisfied
Aldeburgh Cinema	68%
Jubilee Hall	42%
Church Hall	48%
Community Centre	53%
Aldeburgh Pump House	59%
Fairfield Centre	59%

## Carnival and Fireworks

The Aldeburgh Carnival is a long standing fixture in the Town's calendar and is popular with residents (63%) and visitors alike, due to the quality and variety of the entertainment which it provides for all ages, the diversity of its achievements and the dedication of committee members who work tirelessly to put on a good show. In addition, after only a couple of years, the November 5<sup>th</sup> fireworks are well supported.

## Town Guide

In discussions, we heard that there used to be an official Guide to Aldeburgh and we have volunteers willing to write a new version of this for the use of residents and visitors alike.

### Proposed Actions

**39** Form a partnership group to formulate proposals for:

- What's On website for the Town
- Other shared services such as ticketing.
- 'Greater Aldeburgh' inclusion and co-operation.
- Support of: working with Schools and establishing other outreach; events in the Town; public consultation on refurbishment of venues in the Town; the establishment of a creative arts space.

**40** Write a new Town Guide for visitors

## Section 6 – Visitors

### Survey Responses

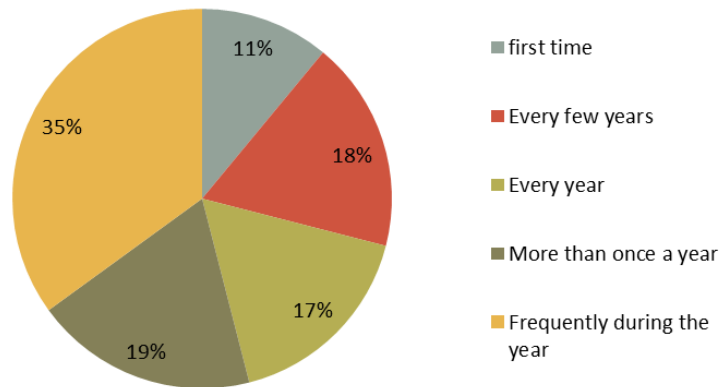
We received responses from 1,100 visitors during August and September and the October half term.

Many visitors come as a group or with their family; over 52% reported having 3 or more people in their party. Typical visitors are aged between 31 and 59 or over 60, often with children. We do not score highly as a destination for the 19-30 age range.

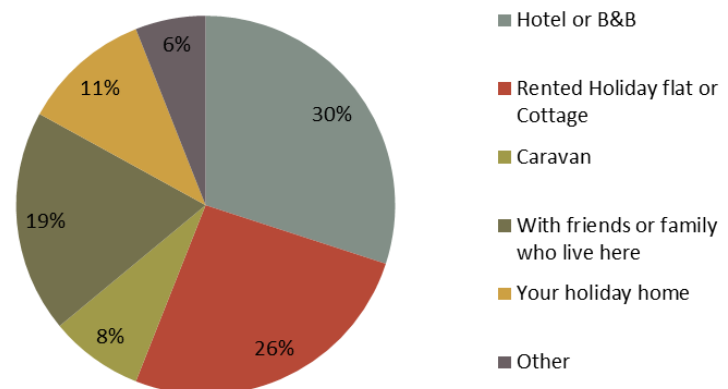
The majority of visitors stay with us for several days to a week but 22% come just for the day.

We have a lot of repeat visitors, with 54% reporting they visit us frequently or more than once during the year.

Only 11% said they were first-time visitors.



Where people stayed was widespread across the Town.



## What was important to visitors.

When asked what was important in making their choice to visit Aldeburgh, it became clear that the things that bring our visitors back to us so regularly are the beach, sea, the character of Aldeburgh, the surrounding countryside, opportunities to walk and participate in outdoor activities and events. 41% quote fish and chips as a big reason for a visit, especially when they come for the day. 36% of visitors mention family and friends who live nearby.

### Reasons cited for visit to Aldeburgh

Beach and sea	86%
Aldeburgh's special atmosphere	85%
Character of High Street	72%
Surrounding countryside	58%
Walking	53%
Quiet	51%
River and Marshes	46%
Culture and Festivals nearby	42%
Fish and Chips	41%
Friends and Family	36%
Accommodation	33%
Good base to explore the area	31%
Shopping	31%
Nature activities such as Bird watching	20%
Activities for family	16%
Golf, Yachting or other amenities	12%

Parking is regarded as a problem by only 22% of visitors, even at the height of summer. They would still like to see more parking available at the edges of the Town (and 76% say they would not use a hopper bus if one ran around Town).

The biggest local attraction is Thorpeness Meare, with our own Boating Pond in second place, followed by the Cinema and Snape Maltings, for the Festival and the Proms. A healthy 35% come for the Food Festival. Shopping on the High Street is a strong attraction and many combine a visit to the shops in Snape Maltings. The restaurants, tearooms and cafes are quoted by hundreds of visitors as the destination when they eat out. These points are supported by other survey findings on tourism in the Alde and Ore estuary area.

222 individual comments from visitors included a wide range of topics, of which the following are a representative sample. Requests for improved facilities include: better mobile phone reception (60%); improved toilet facilities (39%); beach cafe (34%); cycle hire (31%); more benches and better bins on the Crag Path and in the Beach area; and updating of the Jubilee Hall into a better venue.

## **Next Steps – Delivering the Plan**

The Plan summarised the views of residents, visitors and businesses in Aldeburgh in 2014, on the developments they would like to see in our Town over the next 5 years. This Plan is a “live” document, a manifesto, in other words, which offers challenges to the Town Council following the Government’s Localism Act 2011. This seeks to devolve decision making to those most affected by the decisions. The Plan will need to be updated as it progresses, to report on and update priorities. The Plan process has also identified some useful sources of support with people either expressing interest in joining the Council or offering their time and experience to deal with relevant issues. It is important not to lose momentum.

As a Steering Group we have the following recommendations:

- The Town Council as the democratic body closest to the local community is the obvious group to take oversight of and responsibility for the delivery of the Plan.
- A partnership approach offers the best way forward and this should be developed to include the Aldeburgh Town Council, a Town Plan action Committee, local societies and individuals.
- Develop a clear communications strategy to address key policy issues raised by the Plan.
- Develop an engagement strategy to manage the interaction between the public, the many Town societies and individuals, to achieve the actions laid out in this Plan.
- Do all we can to encourage people to step forward and stand for election to the Council, as it is clear that a full complement of Councillors is vital for success.
- Undertake an annual review of the progress of the delivery of the actions from the Town Plan and suggest the annual Town Meeting in March as an ideal opportunity for such a review.
- Involve the community in regular updates and consultation where appropriate.
- Information and ideas emerging from the planning process need to be utilized effectively as the basis for development of our Neighbourhood Plan.
- Where the recommendations fall within the remit of other government bodies there will need to be clear communication about how such issues are carried forward.

Drawing on everything the Aldeburgh community has told us over the past year, our report has proposed practical actions for addressing all the issues and these have appeared as they occur at the end of each section.

Your Steering Committee, together with Town Council, has already started turning these recommended actions into a draft Action Plan, suggesting how the Town Council should co-operate with other players to deliver each action, with possible timescales. The Action plan will be published and updated as necessary.

**Lynne Walker, Chair**

**Aldeburgh Town Plan Steering Committee**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We received invaluable financial support from the Big Lottery, Aldeburgh Town Council, Suffolk County Council Locality budget (via Richard Smith) and the Aldeburgh Society, without which we could not have undertaken, let alone finished, this process.

We received moral and practical support from Town and District councillors, Town Clerk and our County Councillor as well as Community Action Suffolk.

Abi Hassett was a key member of the team; overseeing the general administration of the process and managing the distribution of all questionnaires.

Tony Bone designed and maintained the website which as well as being a useful repository of information also became an important place for many to express their views, concerns and support.

Alison Mudd was a very helpful critical friend in the early stages of the process and also advised on the questionnaire construction.

Over 40 volunteers hand delivered questionnaires and in many cases collected them as well.

Abi Hassett, Caralyn Anderson, Louisa Thorp, Nick Pinnock, Mike Fishlock and Tessa Amos carried out the data entry for all the paper questionnaires in a remarkably short period of time.

Tony Pick generously gave us permission to use one of his photographs for our publicity and the front cover of this report.

David Gillingwater and colleagues at Herringbone Design gave us great design and visual images for cards, posters, presentations and the front cover of the report.

Mike Mayhew at Southwold Press printed everything we needed on time, with helpful advice.

Mike Fishlock gave up a succession of mornings based in the library to answer any queries and to offer help with the resident's questionnaire to anyone who needed it.

Ann and Stephen Griffin gave invaluable advice, particularly in the vital early stages, regarding questionnaire construction.

Emma Close-Brooks proofread the final report and corrected all our mistakes!

The Alde & Ore Estuary Association gave us useful information drawn from the Alde Ore Local Economic Study, published in February 2014.

The Town Plan could not have been written without the enthusiastic contribution of so many residents, businesses and visitors.

**TO ALL, THE STEERING GROUP IS IMMENSELY GRATEFUL**

## **Appendix 1: The Town Plan Process from April 2013 – January 2015**

We have based our report in the following:

(1) Output from three questionnaires – Visitors (1,100), Businesses (73), Residents (1,600)

Issues from conversations/meetings etc. were taken forward to provide the questionnaire contents, the answers to which provide validation of the issues. Therefore we believe we can be confident in the results of the process and in providing a manifesto for the Town.

(2) Stakeholder list of 97 individuals and organizations

From the public meetings we were able to garner opinion and information, which most importantly helped us prioritise the areas that needed questions in each of the questionnaires. The stakeholder list was compiled from individuals who approached us for a conversation from the business and broader community in Aldeburgh; useful contacts with people from nearby towns who had already undertaken Town Plans; Aldeburgh based societies and clubs; suggestions made at public meetings.

(3) Public meetings

The output from seven public meetings (see list in Appendix 2) helped us prioritise key areas needing to be addressed by a Town Plan and in the questionnaires.

(4) Events

Feedback from Fun Day, Carnival, speaking at events and to Aldeburgh based organisations and societies.

(5) Taking care not to repeat reports of other groups nor duplicate existing ongoing work, e.g. the recent report from the Alde & Ore Society.

(6) Steering Group Meetings (16 monthly meetings).

Key topics were drawn from the output of the public meetings in Spring 2013 and each were led by a Steering Group member, who reported back to the Steering Group.

(7) Media

Feedback from the Town Plan website, social media, press updates, Aldeburgh Business Association briefings, radio interviews.

(8) Experience of other groups that have completed Town Plans: documents available online (Framlingham) and meetings with Southwold, Leiston and Saxmundham teams.

(9) Consultation - Programme of Consultation and Activity

DATE	ACTIVITY/EVENT
27 April 2013	Initial Public Consultation
15 May 2013	Public meeting

20 July and 8 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	Volunteers for Steering Group met
24 August 2013	Steering Group established
6 September 2013	Steering Group 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting – met monthly thereafter up to January 2015
3 May 2014	Public consultation
2 June 2014	Youth Club consultation
August	Visitor Questionnaire launched online and paper copies distributed
	ATC, District and County Councillors briefed by Chair of Town Plan
8 September 2014	Public Meeting – Arts & Culture
w/b 8 September 2014	Residents Questionnaire went live online and paper copy distribution began to every house (2500)
	Uploading of Visitor questionnaires began
15 September 2014	Public Meeting – Heritage & Environment
22 September 2014	Public Meeting – Health & Social Care
29 September 2014	Ben Hamilton-Baillie consultation on Shared Space – people and traffic management
2 October 2014	Public Meeting – Traffic, Parking, High Street
21 October 2014	All residents questionnaires were uploaded and analysis began
October/early November	Business questionnaire went live online and paper copies distributed
	Visitor questionnaires analysed
November	Business questionnaires uploaded and analysed
November/December	Town Plan drafted
15 December	Town Plan document signed off by Steering Group and sent to ATC members
6 January 2015	Briefing of ATC by Chair and Secretary of ATPSG
31 January 2015	Public Launch of Plan at Community Centre

## Appendix 2: The Policy Context

*These extracts from the SCDC Local Plan (July 2013) provide the policy context at District level, within which the Town Plan has been undertaken. We believe the outcomes of the Plan – and specifically the Action Plan – are in keeping these wider policies, and indeed make practical contributions to the delivery of those policies.*

### **Strategic Policy SP22 – Aldeburgh**

The strategy for Aldeburgh is set within the context of the acknowledged physical and natural constraints. However, these must not outweigh the retention of a balanced, cohesive and socially inclusive community. New development is anticipated to occur through the development of previously developed land, including infilling. The strategy will aim towards a small Town that:

- (a) Retains and protects its close-knit historic character without suffering the effects of ‘town cramming’;
- (b) Retains and enhances its retail and service offer, serving both Town residents (in an accessible location) and those of its rural hinterland alike;
- (c) Has sufficient services and facilities, particularly health and education, to serve the population profile;
- (d) Has the benefit of new housing (including affordable housing) for local people, created in order to address the age imbalance of the population and enabling local residents to remain within the area;
- (e) Retains the sensitive environment generally, particularly the setting and edges of the Town;
- (f) Has the benefit of traffic management measures in the High Street and elsewhere, providing an improved physical environment within the central areas and restricting potential damage to the sea defences to the south of the Town;
- (g) Retains its role as a tourist centre, offering a range of accommodation and visitor attractions;
- (h) Has its flood risk minimised and defences effectively managed. Development is anticipated to occur within the defined physical limits or in accordance with other policies in the Core Strategy.

### **Strategic Policy SP30 – The Coastal Zone**

For Suffolk Coastal specifically, the objectives to be sought are:

- Control of development of the currently undeveloped coast;
- Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural diversity;
- Protection and enhancement of a dynamic and sustainable coastal economy;
- Beaches are kept clean and coastal waters unpolluted;
- Social exclusion is reduced and cohesion promoted in functioning coastal communities;
- Natural resources are used wisely;
- Threats to coastal zone from climate change are recognised and appropriate and ecologically responsible coast protection is ensured.

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Aldeburgh Town Council



Suffolk County Council



The Aldeburgh Society



THE ALDEBURGH SOCIETY

With help and support from

Community Action Suffolk

