

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW 2026

Executive Summary

A small working group appointed by the Parish Council reviewed the Neighbourhood Plan over several months in 2026. The group confirmed that the Plan's policies do not conflict with national or district policies and there is nothing to suggest a need for their revision.

The Plan's Community Actions were considered and achievements highlighted, and some suggestions were made about adding value to the Plan.

The working group further recommended that the Plan's Community Actions needed to be implemented more vigorously – noting that some actions could be achieved with modest cost and resources.

SECTION 2.2 LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

Landscape and heritage are well described in the text and no amendments or alterations are required. The policies LH1 – LH4 still reflect current circumstances both within the village of New Buckenham and in the surrounding areas.

CA LH1 Community projects are needed to assess, make recommendations and carry out enhancements of the Town Ditch, the Orlit post on the common and the telephone box.

Restoration work on the telephone box has been completed and work is ongoing to protect the Town, including the removal of debris from the Ditch in St Martin's Gardens. The obsolete Royal Observer Corps Orlit post on the Common has not been investigated but does not appear to have listed status.

CA LH2 Opportunities should be taken to liaise with utility companies about minimising the visual impact of street furniture and services on the historic character of the settlement, and preserving key views both inside and outside the settlement boundary.

The recent work undertaken by County Broadband highlighted the difficulty of influencing the location of new cables in the village, utility companies having priority over village preferences, though attempts were made. Nevertheless, concerns remain about the visual impact of street furniture and services and **CA LH2** will remain an ongoing action.

CA LH3 Publicity should be given to the need to report all heritage-related findings to Norfolk County Council and the way this can be done.

The requirement to report heritage-related findings to Norfolk County Council has not been undertaken. See Norfolk County Council website/archaeology and history environment for information and advice.

SECTION 2.3 COUNTRYSIDE AND ENVIRONMENT

Policy CE 2: requirement for a Green living plan. The Review Group could not find evidence that this had been implemented by the Parish Council or by Breckland regarding developments that had taken place since the Plan was made. **ACTION:** review.

CA CE 1 Further green and blue spaces and corridors that benefit local wildlife, landscape and recreation should be identified and mapped to inform future planning proposals.	Parish Council should appoint a work group to map out possibilities
CA CE 2 A community project should assess and make recommendations for managing the Town Ditch remnants in conjunction with respective landowners.	Parish Council should appoint a work group to do this.
CA CE 3 The pond and surroundings on the north-east of the cricket ground should be assessed and light-touch restoration carried out in conjunction with any owners that can be identified.	Completed during writing of the Neighbourhood Plan
CA CE 4 Footpaths should be assessed for accessibility and a formal system be in place and publicised for reporting to the County Council when problems occur.	Done informally at present; needs a simple procedure and publicise it
CA CE 5 Sources of funding and a budget should be identified to offer grants to landowners for tree planting and hedgerow improvement in appropriate places, possibly in association with grant giving bodies.	Incorporate this into CA CE 1 action.
CA CE 6 Grassed public areas should be assessed for delayed cutting, such as has been done in the closed churchyard and village hall site.	Action plan to be drawn up after consultation with interested parties. To include churchyard, Market Place, Village Hall, verges. The possibility of appropriate replanting or reseeding should be considered.
CA CE 7 Publicity on village websites should highlight information and advice for enhancing diversity of wildlife in gardens and other land within private control.	Such information needs collating first then laid out in an informative way on Parish Council website, online-accessible leaflets and Facebook
CA CE 8 Publicity should be given as to the need to report wildlife observations to Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service and how this is best done	Include in CA CE 7 action after researching how such information can best be received by official biodiversity information services.

SECTION 2.4 DARK SKIES AND LIGHT POLLUTION

CA DS 1 Publicity should be made available about the appropriate use of external lighting so as not to affect public and private space	Shields have been installed on individual lamp posts and the timing of street lighting within the village has been reduced overall. Private lighting
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adversely. Such lighting should usually be switched off after midnight. Movement-sensitive triggers should be regulated to reduce illumination periods to a minimum.	continues to be a problem and can be intrusive and unwelcome to residents. Dealing with inappropriate lighting already in place is difficult especially when property owners have already incurred expense. ACTION: the Parish Council could do more to act as a source of information and guidance on its website.
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SECTION 2.5 HOUSING AND BUILDING

The working group looked in detail at the policies HB1 – HB7 . There are no Community Actions in this section. The Review concluded that the recommendations remain appropriate and timely though not all have yet been tested or implemented.	
Policy HB 1 Housing types New housing development should respond positively to local needs and demographic changes and to the demand for smaller, more affordable homes.	There is limited evidence that planners or developers take note of the Neighbourhood Plan. A concern is that when the move to the Unitary Authority takes place, planning decisions will become even more distant.
Policy HB 2 Housing design Both traditional and contemporary development should be well-designed and use good quality materials appropriate to their uses. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should demonstrate how they respond to their settings taking account of the local heritage assets and respond positively to the contents of Local Design Guide A. Improvements to the public areas in and around the village will be supported. Where it is practicable to do so, new development should contribute to enhancement work by the provision of trees, improved shop fronts, high quality surface materials, provision of cycle parking and a well-designed public realm.	The Parish council is not always notified of the materials, and requests to Planning have been ignored.
Policy HB 3 Housing and local mobility The provision of off-street parking will be supported where it complies with the broader approach of the Plan in general, and preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the New Buckenham Conservation Area in particular.	This takes place to some extent.

Policy HB 4 Low impact access routes As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate how they relate to existing pedestrian and cycle routes. Development proposals should respond positively to the needs of pedestrians and the use of electric cars, electrically assisted power cycles and scooters.	The Parish Council supports improvements to public areas.
Policy HB 5 Boundaries As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should include green rather than hard boundaries. The use of mixed species native hedging will be particularly supported. Where hard boundaries are essential, they should consist of good quality materials (such as brick and flint) and provide gaps to allow movement of small wildlife.	This has not taken place.

SECTION 2.6 TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The difficulties and problems relating to traffic and parking are comprehensively covered in this section and no amendments or alterations are required. Policy TP1 is timely and current and should remain unchanged.	
CA TP 1 Investigate the Parish Council's car park near the play area for the possibility of enlarging it and adding electric charging points	The Parish Council discussed the possibility of enlarging the car park at the play area at its meeting in February 2026 and decided not to pursue the proposal. Electric charging points have been installed at the Village Hall.
CA TP 2 Maps published by the Parish Council or local businesses should show clearly where parking is available.	A guide to parking areas within the village for visitors and businesses has not been produced. ACTION: review.
CA TP 3 Publicity should be given to the avoidance of indiscriminate parking that leads to the obstruction of the highway.	Indiscriminate and dangerous parking is a constant cause for concern and has been much discussed within the Council and with residents, and advice sought from Highways. In the last 12 months fliers have been produced that can be left on car windscreens advising owners that their vehicle is dangerously or illegally parked.
CA TP 4 Pavements and footpaths in the village and surrounding areas will be monitored to	Regularly reviewed.

ensure safe access for all and publicity given to the avoidance of clutter on pavements where this causes an obstruction to passers-by.	
CA TP 5 & TP 6 Investigate the need and effectiveness of an extra flashing speed sign, probably in Castle Hill Road facing traffic approaching or leaving King Street. Village boundary gateways are to be installed at either end of the village.	A village boundary gateway has been installed on the B1113 on the eastern approach to the village, together with a flashing sign, a SAM3. This sign will have advanced recording methods enabling anonymous data to be collected on speeding traffic offenders.
CA TP 7 The Parish Council will continue to work towards improving highway safety and take opportunities to minimise or slow down traffic.	A community-led speed watch group collected data for many months and recorded repeated speeding offences, both from passing traffic and from residents. See Parish Council minutes of September 2023. The Council will continue to monitor traffic flow through the village and liaise as necessary with Highways.

SECTION 2.7 BUSINESSES AND TOURISM

CA BT 1 The Parish Council will actively lobby for the provision of an effective mobile phone reception, useable by different telecom service providers. If a mast is situated in New Buckenham it should be in a place where it does no harm to the natural, historic or visual environment.	The mobile phone mast sited in Old Buckenham operated by O2 has improved mobile reception for O2 mobile phone users, and even this is patchy on account of distance, trees, buildings and even housing materials. Other commercial suppliers could link to this mast but there is no evidence currently that this is happening. The installation of new masts is inhibited by planning regulations, landowners' consent, and the ability/permission to carry out street work. Progress is therefore slow and frustrating but the Council and residents continue to lobby for an improved service. Mobile phone coverage in Norfolk is poor. It is ranked 39th out of 48 areas in England.
CA BT 2 The Parish Council will support initiatives to promote New Buckenham's 'visitor assets' by supporting advertising and other media including leaflets, maps, articles and books. An effective mobile signal would enable newer technology to be used to support this. CA BT 3 Premises that can be seen as having potential benefit to the village and its businesses should be considered by the Parish Council for designation as a <i>Community Asset</i>.	The village notice board on the village green which includes a village map for tourists has been updated. The village is still served by a pub, café and shop. The play area, cricket pitch and adjoining car park are well used and maintained by the Parish Council. To date no such opportunities have arisen but this remains an important action.

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SECTION 2.8 RECREATION, HEALTH AND CULTURE

Community life in New Buckenham continues to flourish with new or enhanced activities for young and old alike. Village and Vestry which was established in 2018 to support St Martin's Church has organised music/social events; regular church coffee mornings raise funds for local charities. On a practical level, the Parish Council has installed a defibrillator.

CA RHC 1 Seek to provide facilities for young people's activities e.g. youth club, parent and toddler groups. (The availability of volunteers to organise such activities is a prerequisite).

The Football Club goes from strength to strength and now has 100 members aged 16 and under. The Cricket Club also has a Junior membership. Both provide coaching and player opportunities. 'The Players' dramatic society produces an annual pantomime in which many children and young people participate. Recently 'The Players' has held a series of workshops for children.

CA RHC 2 Protect green open spaces and ensure that footpaths are maintained for use by villagers and visitors as they are essential for recreation and health. Consider extra provision of litter and dog waste bins.

Green open spaces continue to be protected. Footpaths are now an agenda item on every Parish Council meeting so are subject to a monthly review. There are regular reports made to the relevant authorities to ensure that the footpaths are maintained for use by villagers and visitors. Dog fouling continues to cause distress and annoyance to the village and is the subject of regular reminders in 'Parish News'.

CA RHC 3 Promote outdoor activities, using open spaces such as the Village Hall field, Market Place and churchyard.

The Village Hall field continues to be used for regular events such as the annual village summer fete and the November bonfire night but also for parties (sometimes by local church groups from outside the village) weddings and one-off events such as the Junior Football Club Presentation Day. A children's garden has been established at the Village Hall with the aid of a grant from the Hypercharged Foundation and a donation from New Buckenham Gardening Group. This is maintained by regular working parties in which children are encouraged to take part.

The Churchyard is promoted as a space for family activities such as picnics with places for quiet times and reflection. The monthly Coffeemates! event and the flourishing Church library bring more visitors to the Church and the Churchyard.

Snowdrops have been planted in the Market Place, grass cutting has been reduced to allow wild flowers to propagate, and there are several benches in public areas.

CA RHC 4 Improve communication through better use of social media, village website and notice board, and use local businesses to promote events. Encourage links between village organisations for publicity and promotion.	New Buckenham has a Facebook page which is used to pass on information, promote events and discuss issues which arise in the village. There is a new website – newbucknews.co.uk. The village Notice Board is regularly updated for everyone to view on the Village Green. Posters are regularly displayed in the King`s Head Public House and the Castle Café. Parish News, the village monthly newsletter, is still distributed to all households and is available on-line. The Parish Council could do more to act as a resource for information via its website acting as a repository of leaflets, guidance and explanation. Publicity for Community Actions could appear in Parish News and the village Facebook page.
CA RHC 5 Protect and promote the Community Car Scheme and encourage new drivers.	The scheme continues to be promoted via Facebook and Parish News. Numbers of drivers vary when some retire but adverts in Parish News are generally successful and we currently have enough drivers to cover all journey requests.
CA RHC 6 Consider providing electric car charging points in publicly accessible spaces other than the car park as a community service and source of income.	Two electric charging points have been installed in publicly accessible spaces at the Village Hall, which provide a source of income for the Hall.

Conclusions

The Review exercise was undertaken to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan, completed in July 2022, was up to date and in step with local and national planning policy. The working group was satisfied that no material revisions of its policies were required.

The group examined the effectiveness of the Community Actions and recorded outcomes, which are highlighted in the report above, and recommended that a more rigorous approach be taken with regard to implementation.

Action Plan

The working group concluded that more should be done to promote the work and function of the Parish Council. This should include increased presence on social media linking particularly with the village's Facebook page.

The Parish Council should commission a redesign of its website to make it more attractive and easier to use. It should have links to social media and be an information resource about village activities:

Community Car Scheme, Community Project Fund, Clubs and recreational activities, information about village walks and footpaths, car parking, and many other aspects of village life.

Working Group Members

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Mary Dowson – Councillor

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September 2026

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