

## **Planning Matters**

It's not often that you can say that Dawlish is leading the way for the rest of the country, but in relation to planning matters it certainly is. The Government has recently awarded Dawlish "Front Runner" status, only one of 17 places nationally to receive financial and other support to help formulate a local neighbourhood plan that will shape the future of the area over the next 20 years.

By way of background, the neighbourhood planning approach forms part of wider proposals by the Government for reforming the planning system and giving local people more say in the decisions affecting the future of the places where they live. Under the Localism Bill going through Parliament, the Government is seeking to do away with the previous top down approach to planning, scrapping targets on issues such as the number of new homes that need to be built. So for Dawlish and the surrounding area, which will include Holcombe, a plan will be produced describing what the area will look and feel like in the future, covering issues such as the number of new homes and jobs required, new community facilities and those areas that should be protected and enhanced. This neighbourhood plan will inform the overall Teignbridge local development plan.

As a first step, a booklet about Dawlish and the surrounding area has been produced. This has been prepared using the wealth of material that is already available, for example from previous consultations on the regeneration of the town. It contains facts and figures and describes the issues facing our local area over the coming years that we need to plan for e.g. an ageing population, low household incomes and the need for more and better paid jobs, the need for affordable and other houses, together with the strengths of the area e.g. good tourism opportunities in an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Throughout this summer there will be a series of opportunities for people to get involved and have their say in shaping ideas and potential proposals for Dawlish and the surrounding area. Further details will be published by the District Council. This will inform the proposals of the neighbourhood plan, which will have its own independent examination. Local people will have an opportunity to vote on whether to accept the neighbourhood plan through a referendum that will take place in the winter 2011/12.

The key to the success of this whole process is community involvement and consultation. A Steering Group has been established to lead the public engagement and help prepare the Dawlish plan, and the Residents Association has joined this group. There will be a workshop for interested parties and public drop in events are planned. And anyone will be able to comment on the documents that will be published in the lead up to the final plan and referendum. I would urge people to engage actively in the process.

I will endeavour to keep you informed of issues as they arise, either through this newsletter or at the Residents Association meetings. I suspect housing development, transport (road, rail and bus) and environmental issues (including the coastal preservation area) will be of most interest to residents. We should see the plan as a real opportunity to help shape the future of the area we all love to live in, both by seeking to improve some aspects of the local environment and economy, but also seeking to protect the things we cherish.

The booklet about Dawlish and further information about the preparation of the neighbourhood plan can be found on Teignbridge District Council's website ([www.teignbridge.gov.uk/places](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/places)).

And finally, just a reminder that the next Residents Association General Meeting will take place on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June** when there will be a talk and demonstration by a representative from "Shelterbox". The meeting is in the Village Hall starting at 7.15pm.