

Castor & Ailsworth Joint Community Action Plan Two Parishes - One Community

Introduction

December 2017 saw the formal adoption by Peterborough City Council (PCC) of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for each of Castor & Ailsworth parishes following detailed consultation by the Parish Councils with residents and statutory consultees. The NPs complement and support each other, recognising the parishes' shared heritage and the maxim 'two parishes - one community' which became very apparent during the course of consultations with residents. The two NPs cover matters relating to land use in the parishes. Other matters important to residents also emerged during the course of consultations and this **Joint Community Action Plan (JCAP)** outlines priorities jointly agreed by the Parish Councils, which will be supported and/or taken forward by the Parish Councils on behalf of the community.

The JCAP is a living document and will be updated periodically and as new initiatives arise.

1. A vital place to Live

Item ref.	Activity/Project	Current Position
JCAP 1.1	Ensure planning proposals meet NP provisions and represent any concerns to PCC Planning Officers. (Supports all NP policies, in particular CH1/CH2 & AH1/AH2.)	Ongoing evaluation of all planning applications by PCs against the relevant NP requirements. The PCs challenge Peterborough City Council (PCC) on planning applications which have not fully considered the Castor and Ailsworth NPs. CPC is a member of the PCC Parish Liaison Working Group and, through meetings with other parish councils, has agreed a Parish Conference dedicated to the issue of planning.
JCAP 1.2	Ensure that planning proposals which exceed anticipated growth levels in the NPs are supported by evidence of clear community support through appropriate pre-application consultation. (Supports NP policies CH2/AH2.)	Ongoing evaluation of planning proposals by PCs against the NP CH2/AH2 requirements.
JCAP 1.3	Woodlands - consult with site owners to ensure acceptable re-development of the existing Woodlands buildings and related land; also, to retain a continued community sports facility with appropriate facilities (see also JCAP 4.3). (Supports NP policy CRV1.)	Meetings in 2021 & 2022 heard residents' views on development proposals; there has also been continued contact with Nene Park Trust (NPT) & the Care Home. Clarification of Castor NP Policy CRV1 is delayed awaiting consideration by PCC Planning. Residents' views had been sought re-a proposed new build to replace the old Woodlands building; this was opposed by CPC and the planning application was subsequently withdrawn. A further public meeting was held regarding the scale of new proposals for sporting facilities to hear residents' views and the application was opposed.

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JCAP 1.4	Explore the feasibility of establishing a village housing trust (akin the existing almshouses in Castor).	The potential implications have been discussed with the administrators of the existing almshouses and this will be revisited in due course in light of the Care Home and eldercare provisions currently envisaged at Woodlands.
JCAP 1.5	The Castor & Ailsworth Climate Action Group (CAG) has been formed to develop ideas on how people in the parishes might help to mitigate the effects of climate change; how the villages might become carbon neutral and the impact both individuals and families might have.	Representatives of CAG meet with PC members informally and attend formal PC meetings as necessary; both PCs have provided support. CAG worked with the two PCs to develop a succinct draft climate action statement which APC and CPC have both adopted and will take forward with CAG and others as appropriate. A year on, the PCs were reviewing their policies and CAG would comment as necessary.

2. An ancient & fragile landscape

Item ref.	Activity/Project	Current Position
JCAP 2.1	Support initiatives for preservation, restoration and interpretation of historical features in and around the parishes.	Funding and restoration of the Robin Hood and Little John standing stones arranged and completed by CPC. CPC were arranging clearance of shrubbery to make the stones more visible and an appropriate information board. CPC also arranged reinstatement of the milestone on Love's Hill following a traffic accident. The PCs have jointly commissioned and installed a replacement village sign. Some limited funding for community needs was available and the PCs would make bids as necessary.
JCAP 2.2	The St Kyneburgha Building Preservation Trust will continue walks, talks and guides to interpret the building and its situation.	The Church guide has been republished. A number of events were arranged to mark the 900 th anniversary of the dedication of St Kyneburgha church.
JCAP 2.3	Seek opportunities to enhance and protect the natural environment within Castor & Ailsworth parishes. For example through engagement with: 1) The Langdyke Countryside Trust and key partner organisations and support them in developing and achieving their John Clare Countryside Vision. 2) Local village groups in nature recovery and in 'rewilding' areas in the villages.	The PCs continue to develop nature recovery plans and a phased approach continues. The Coppice in Castor now has a wildlife pond, some seating and an observation hut. Further trees have been planted and work has commenced to improve Splash Lane Paddock. Rewilding of a third of the Ailsworth recreation ground includes a story telling circle of tree stumps and wild flower seeds and trees have been planted, including some apple trees to be dedicated as the 'King's Orchard'. Plans are in hand in each parish to develop water harvesting. Both PCs had made arrangements for a tree nursery with PECT.

3. A thriving community

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Item ref.	Activity/Project	Current Position
JCAP 3.1	Support the development of a suitable surgery/other primary health facility within or immediately adjacent to the villages to overcome existing traffic and parking difficulties in Main Street. (Supports NP policies CSE4/ASE3.)	Longer term objective is to encourage existing surgery to relocate to a new site within these parameters.
JCAP 3.2	Support proposals which will ensure continued development of the school and provision of a permanent location for the pre-school. (Supports NP policy CSE3.)	See item 1.3 re-the pre-school. Donations made by each PC to the Friends of Castor School to support the school shop/bank initiative. CPC has agreed to the school's temporary class base remaining for another three years on the condition that this should be the final time that planning permission is sought for a temporary building and a more permanent building should be erected longer term. The PC has also requested that a new, robust travel plan be completed as part of the planning permission.
JCAP 3.3	Explore how to overcome difficulties with speeding traffic through the villages, notably in the Peterborough and Helpston Roads, such as 20 mph limits, 'gates' at village entrances.	The new 20 mph speed monitoring camera has been installed in Castor, with the old one relocated to the 30 mph zone at the top of Love's Hill. The 20 mph zone has also been extended to the top of Love's Hill although roundels have not yet been added to the road surface. A new 20 mph speed monitoring camera has also been installed in Helpston Road. The intention to start Speedwatch was not taken forward due to insufficient volunteers.
JCAP 3.4	Support and encourage improvements to maintain and develop the village shop and a positive environment for village business amenities.	Both PCs will continue to support the shop where feasible to ensure its continued presence within the community and APC are in the process of declaring it a Community Asset. Time limited temporary change of use of the house next door to the shop has been granted and building work commenced. The PCs will continue to liaise jointly with the shop owner.
JCAP 3.5	Support and promote Good Neighbours - Rural Peterborough (which developed from the scheme launched by St Kyneburgha Parochial Church Council with APC & CPC support).	The scheme was launched on 3 November 2020 and publicised to parish residents with a flyer distributed to all households. It has charitable status and provides support to residents in need, becoming the Mayor's Charity for 2022. Trustees have been appointed and additional funding has enabled further staff to be recruited to work with the scheme co-ordinator. Helpston had joined the scheme and all Peterborough parishes North of the Nene were now involved.

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4. A space for Peterborough to breathe

Item ref.	Activity/Project	Current Position
JCAP 4.1	Encourage the initiative to improve cycleway facilities to the West of the parishes. (Supports NP policies CRV1 and ARV1.) This leisure route is seen as complementary to any cycleway proposals which may emerge in dualling the A47 to Wansford.	Led by the Cycle West Project and both PCs provided funding in support of the scheme. Planning for the proposals lodged by Cycle West was initially rejected by PCC but successfully appealed by Cycle West. Planning has now been granted by Huntingdonshire DC for the part of the project West of the footbridge. Planning is therefore in place for the whole of the proposed route and the task of fund raising to finance the project is being pursued.
JCAP 4.2	Encourage visitor information regarding historical links and ecological interests in the parishes. (Supports NP policies CRV3/ARV3.)	Route guides published by residents' visitor group providing visitor information for 'John Clare's footsteps through Castor Hanglands' and 'Roman Castor - Normangate Field'. Further publications are proposed.
JCAP 4.3	Woodlands - consult with site owners to ensure acceptable re-development of the Woodlands site to retain a continued community sports facility with appropriate facilities. (See also JCAP 1.3) (Supports NP policy CRV1.)	Sports facilities are back in use and continue to develop, with temporary accommodation as changing facilities. As outlined in JCAP 1.3 formal proposals for developing the sports facilities have come forward and consultation to gauge residents' views arranged.
JCAP 4.4	Monitor existing network of footpaths and bridleways to ensure they are adequately maintained. Continue to seek improvements to promote access and safety. (Supports NP policies CRV2/ARV2.)	The Nene Park Trust 'Walking back in time' project will include a heritage trail and improved riverside walking routes. Arrangements agreed with PCC to replace two stiles with kissing gates to improve access. The two PCs will seek to involve residents in monitoring and enhancing the existing network of footpaths and bridleways within the parishes. Residents and visitors will be invited to join councillors on their parish land walks.
JCAP 4.5	Organise periodic community 'litter pick' exercises to enhance the public areas in the parishes.	Litter pick events were paused due to the impact of Covid on PCC capacity to collect the waste and would recommence as capacity comes available. CPC had taken up the need for litter picking along the Ferrybridge access road with PCC and they successfully prosecuted a fly tipper following use of a covert CCTV camera. APC would liaise with the Scouts as necessary to co-ordinate litter picking activity. A village litter pick would be arranged.
JCAP 4.6	Landscape and environmental improvement initiatives as outlined against JCAP 2.3 to achieve the John Clare Countryside Vision and enhance the countryside on the doorstep of Peterborough as a whole.	See JCAP 2.3.

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FOOTNOTE: From time to time the PCs are made aware of potential funding opportunities for community projects. For sources of information on such opportunities contact either Ailsworth or Castor Parish Clerk.