

Calling cyclists and pedestrians in Datchet!



Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan needs your help again, please. We want you to tell us how our footpaths and cycle paths could be improved. This is especially important now that we're using them more due to Covid-19. We'd also like to know what you think about the Borough's ideas for new cycle paths in Datchet. That way, if Government funding for new footpaths and cycle paths comes our way, we'll know what's

important to you. Please visit www.DatchetNeighbourhoodPlan.org and complete our **Getting Around survey**.

Key movement routes

A neighbourhood plan cannot cover highways design directly – it has to focus on planning – but it can identify 'key movement routes' to be protected and enhanced. These are the routes which most of us use to get to key destinations such as schools, railway station, shops and health centre, and this is where the DNP team needs your help.

In our 2019 Clean Air Day survey, you told us some of your ideas for making it easier to walk and cycle around Datchet. We now need to build on that information especially as, due to the pandemic, many of us have been walking and cycling more than ever before. Our Getting Around survey gives you the opportunity to tell us what would make it better for you, where crossings could help pedestrian safety, where pavements need to be widened or traffic calmed, where a dropped kerb would help with prams or wheelchairs, where planting trees and shrubs would help to protect pedestrians from car fumes, where public rights of way, if upgraded, could provide better pedestrian access, and so on.

Improved cycle paths

A neighbourhood plan can also support improvements to the connectivity and safety of cycle paths, recommend the provision of cycle parking, and support the creation of cycle paths, including in new development such as the proposed new housing site on London Road, if it goes ahead. We need your input on this, too, please, and have included specific questions in our survey. If we can make it easier and safer to walk or cycle, especially on short journeys, it will help to reduce car usage and improve air quality.

Progress update

Like everyone else, the DNP team has been finding new ways of working during Covid-19 and we've been holding Steering Group meetings on Zoom. This has allowed us to progress with Datchet's Plan. We'd very much appreciate your input, too, in the coming weeks. There are details of how to join our DNP focus groups at the end of this article.

Here are some of the areas we're also working on:

Housing and the built environment

Housing mix: During the DNP Character Assessments and Drop-in Sessions, you told us that you think the village is losing its stock of smaller houses, and houses on one level suitable for the less-mobile, because existing houses are being extended and bungalows converted to two storeys. You also told us that there are very few properties suitable for downsizing and, if there were more, this might free up some of the larger properties for growing families. We're gathering evidence about how housing in the village has changed, interviewing estate agents and looking at the current provision of, and demand for, affordable housing in the village. This will help us to determine whether the proposed housing mix in the Borough's Local Plan meets Datchet's needs.

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Outdoor space: Another issue you raised during the Character Assessments, which has also been apparent during lockdown, is the lack of usable outdoor space in some housing developments. While space is almost always allocated for parking cars, some developments have little or no space for people to sit outside or safe spaces for children to play. We are investigating how the DNP can support the provision of outdoor amenity space.

Boundary treatments: Changes to boundaries (such as fences, walls, railings, hedges and soft-landscaping) can significantly affect the character of an area and we're investigating what the Neighbourhood Plan can do to encourage developers to follow the predominant pattern. This will also help to retain the green character of Datchet which you've told us is important to you.

Outdoor storage: We're being encouraged to cycle more but you've told us there is very little provision, if any, for cycle storage in new developments and flats. Also, where new development extends to side boundaries, removing access to the rear of a property, dustbins are sometimes left loose on the frontage which can impact negatively on the character of an area. The recently-adopted Borough Wide Design Guide supports the provision of waste and cycle storage integrated into the development scheme to minimise its visual impact. We're investigating how the DNP can best support this policy.

The Environment

Local Green Spaces and Open Spaces: You've told us how much you appreciate Datchet's beautiful green spaces, the village greens, the Rec, the riverside, and surrounding countryside. A lot of Datchet's green spaces are already protected by Green Belt designation but the DNP team is mapping and listing spaces which are important to



the community but which do not have any protection currently. A Neighbourhood Plan can give special designation to important sites if there is evidence to justify this. The proposed sites have to meet various requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and a lot of work is involved in describing their function and importance, and what

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protection or enhancement is sought. We are also investigating ways to protect the quality of the landscape and your favourite views, such as those from the riverside.

Local wildlife: Did you know that there are three Local Wildlife Sites in the village and a great many priority habitats for wildlife? The DNP can seek to ensure that their importance is recognised and that new development is sensitively designed with wildlife-friendly features. We are also working with local group Wild About Datchet to gather evidence to justify the identification of any 'green corridors' through the village to help support wildlife, and looking at the 'blue environment', our waterways, considering how these could be enhanced.

Sustainability and climate change

Many of you have expressed concern about development in the floodplain so we're also starting to look at how Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan can help to ensure that new development is sustainable. There's still time to complete the DNP Climate Change Survey, if you haven't done so already, to tell us how you think new development should be adapting to the challenges of climate change. Please visit www.DatchetNeighbourhoodPlan.org for details.

Join a DNP focus group

Could you spare some time to discuss ideas with the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan team? Perhaps at a Zoom meeting, or by email and online surveys. If you'd like to be involved, please email your contact details to: datchetnp@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk



Please put 'Focus Group' in the subject line. If you don't use the internet, we still want to hear from you, and can send out paper surveys and telephone you for your views. Please send your details to Datchet Neighbourhood Plan, c/o 4 Buccleuch Road, Datchet SL3 9BP.

ENDS

LOGO

