

Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2030

Annual Report as of July 2024

1. Making and revising the Plan

The Queen Camel Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) was 'made' on 3rd June 2021. Under section 1.8 of the Plan a commitment is given to providing an annual monitor to review how effective the plan has been over the previous year. This is the annual report for 2024.

The Plan was made in 2021 when the government guidance indicated that Plans had to be reviewed and revised where necessary after two years if the local planning authority did not have an adequate land supply. In the summer of 2023 government issued proposals to extend the period before a review and revision was needed to 5 years. QC has taken advantage of this change and deferred any full review of its Plan.

2. Review of policies

2.3 Housing Policy

- **Policy 1- Housing**
- **Policy 2 - Infill development**
- **Policy 3 - Land to north side of West Camel Road**

No new houses have been given planning permission or built in Queen Camel since the Plan was made. This is due to the issue of phosphate contamination.

2.6 Policy 4 - Design of Buildings

The Plan has been continued to be referred to in planning applications for building alterations and it is clear that applicants, the PC and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) have found the guidance in this policy useful.

2.7 Policy 5 - Business and Employment

There has been no loss of commercial premises in Queen Camel during this period, but the Old School (OS) building has lost business largely due to the damage done by the flood on 9 May 2023; this has had a serious impact on its operations from which it has taken some time to recover.

The Day Centre has left the OS and moved to Gillingham partly due to flood damage but largely because of a lack of footfall that was attributed to the recession and location of the OS. The status of business ventures in the OS are set out at Paragraph 4.4.

2.8 Policy 6 - Community Facilities

There has been no loss of community facilities during the period.

The Playing Field and pavilion have been kept in adequate order this year. A lottery grant application for new play equipment has been approved and a large selection of new equipment will soon be installed starting in July 2024; the use of the SC owned land has been agreed with a 7 year licence.

2.9 Policy 7 - Road infrastructure Improvements

The PC was successful in getting the Highways Experimental Traffic Order, closing Gason Lane and Blackwell Road to non-residents, made permanent and the village has benefited from the consequential reduction in traffic as a result.

The A303 dualling construction works have continued to impact on Queen Camel and the parish council has held meetings with contractors to mitigate specific problems.

A grant of £10,000 has been secured by the parish council from National Highways towards the new play equipment in recognition of the disruption caused by the road works to the village.

2.10 Policy 8 - Improving public footpaths and creating cycle paths / bridleways

The matters identified in the plan have not significantly progressed during this year although some attention has been paid to stiles and gates and maintaining footpaths. The PC with volunteers has been undertaking a review of the footpaths with issues reported to Somerset Council (SC). The latter runs schemes that Queen Camel residents can participate in that would result in further improvements and these are being promoted to residents. A QC parish councillor has been appointed to focus on this area and to take the lead in liaising with SC.

2.11 Policy 9 - Parking

There has been no significant progress on resolving the parking issues. Residents in Hill View have been asked to co-operate with not parking on the main road after an accident in earlier years.

2.12 Policy 10 – Streetscape

There has been no deterioration in the streetscape issue, but no progress has yet been made on this policy.

2.13 Policy 11 - Green Spaces

Green Spaces have continued to be managed in a manner compatible with their designation with no major issues arising during this period.

The parish council cannot yet obtain freehold ownership of one acre of land at the north end of the playing field from SC for technical legal reasons. However, a 7 year licence has been granted to enable the new play equipment to be installed. SC have said they are willing to consider a transfer after 2026 when the restrictions applying to the land in respect of it being a former school playing field expire.

2.14 Policy 12 - The Rural Setting of the village and Key Views

There have been no losses during the period of this Plan.

2.15 Policy 13 - Conserving and enhancing local heritage assets

There has been no deterioration of the heritage assets in QC. An initial survey has been undertaken on the assets with some concern expressed regarding the condition of Sheep Bridge (LM12) and the Old Cottage (LM13).

The South West Heritage Trust Local Heritage List remains the vehicle for recording and parish council led groups are particularly welcomed by them. The Packhorse Bridge on Dark Lane suffered damage in the 9 May 2023 flood and needs a proper restoration plan as it is a low priority for SC.

3. Projects

Progress on delivering the Projects (see Annex A) has started with the formation of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG) and its subsequent prioritisation of projects in accordance with the prospects of deliverability.

This will enable the NPWG to maintain a live working document of ongoing projects that can be updated to continue to reflect the requirements of the village and be managed by the PC.

4. Key Data and information

Key data to be reported annually is identified at section 1.8 of the Plan.

4.1 Progress on the Local Plan Review

The old SSDC Local Plan review has been put on hold with the local government reorganisation in Somerset and the new SC unitary authority Plan is unlikely to be made before 2028.

4.2 The capacity of the Countess Gytha Primary School and projected need for its expansion

This has not yet been investigated and will be reviewed during the coming year.

4.3 New dwellings created within the parish (net)

No new dwellings have been created and none are thought to have been lost. The baseline number of dwellings needs to be identified in order to measure this in future years in terms of meeting targets within the Plan.

The number of people on the electoral roll in Queen Camel in November 2019 was 692; in May 2021, at the time of making this Plan, it was 687; and, in November 2022 was 710. In November 2023, the number of people on the electoral role was 709.

4.4 New employment space created within the parish (net)

The aftermath of the flood in May 2023 has left some vacant workspace for small business start-ups or short-term storage available in the OS Hall. The Health & Wellbeing business has consolidated in the last year and now has 4 therapists, a beautician and a hairdresser. The old Day Centre space is being reconfigured to accommodate changing places/facilities for people of limited mobility.

4.5 Road traffic accident data within the parish

It is possible to view road accident data via a map at <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/>.

This shows the severity of accidents and their location; no accidents are shown for 2022, which is the latest date the accident statistics are available on that website and it was not possible to obtain road traffic accident statistics from the local police for the parish area in 2023/24.

4.6 Summary of any other data considered relevant to the Plan.

The data to be reviewed needs to be identified before it can be reported on. This may include commenting under headings such as the below:

- Impact of local infrastructure changes: the No1 bus service has been preserved with a modified timetable;
- national policy changes: ongoing;
- local government reorganisation impacts: ongoing;
- planning decisions in surrounding villages that will affect Queen Camel: major planning applications in Sparkford and West Camel that have been submitted recently are to be monitored closely in the coming year;
- Changes to the way people live or work. For example how the shift to working from home is affecting Queen Camel: no comment.

Annex A- Project List

Projects	Description and Project Lead	Progress
3.3 Community Services and Facilities Policies		
Development of the Playing Field -QC3 & 6	Project 1 – short term (within 12 months of this Plan): upgrade of play area, provision of shelter and equipment for youth, feasibility study on expanding area adjacent to the Bowls Club for additional car parking is being progressed. Project Lead: PC and Playing Field Working Group (PFWG)	Fundraising has been achieved and ownership of the SC land has been secured. As the play area replacement goes ahead, the need for a youth shelter should be reconsidered.

	<p>Project 2 – longer term (within the period of Plan): provision of a new pavilion, additional car parking and a trim trail and outdoor gym. Project Lead: PC working with the PFWG.</p>	<p>Not yet due, but an outdoor gym could be considered once the play area project has been delivered to provide extra interest in the playing field.</p>
3.4 Getting About		
<p>3.4.1 Road Safety - Traffic Calming Measures</p> <p>Policy QC7</p>	<p>Project – short term (within 12 months of this Plan): Extension of 20 mph limit throughout the High Street and along the West Camel Road, with consideration of flashing speed signs. Project Lead: The PC and NPWG working with SC.</p>	<p>Speed indicator devices have been researched and the Parish Council has deferred any acquisition as it does not have the evidence to support SIDs. This is being progressed and, as a first step, a group of volunteers is being formed to undertake a traffic census through the village (speed/volume/HGVs).</p> <p>The 20 mph limit has not been delivered as this is a Somerset Highways matter and they expect the parish to bear the cost.</p>
<p>3.4.2 Footways, Public Footpaths, and Bridleways:</p> <p>Policy QC8</p>	<p>Project 1 – short term (within 12 months of this Plan): Replacement of gates and stiles within the Parish boundary that are not easily used by people with mobility limitations.</p> <p>A phased programme is to be prepared by the NPWG /Footpath Warden in conjunction with SC’s designated Officer. Project Lead: The PC and NPWG working with SC and respective landowners.</p>	<p>A parish councillor has been appointed as the PC ‘Footpath Warden’ to lead on this policy area and be the point of contact for liaison with SC. Some stiles and gates have been delivered, but a review is ongoing on whether all sites are applicable. See also comments above under Policy 8.</p>
	<p>Project 2 – medium term (by 2025): Provision of low level lighting on the pedestrian route between the Glebe and England’s Lane (WN23/4). Project Lead: The PC and NPWG working with SC.</p>	<p>Not yet due</p>
	<p>Project 3 – longer term (within the period of Plan): Provision of lighting on the lane and link between England’s Lane and the Playing Field/Tennis Courts. Project Lead: The PC and NPWG working with SC.</p>	<p>Not yet due</p>

	<p>Project 4 – medium / longer term: Provision of a cycle path between West Camel and Queen Camel, wherever feasible by upgrading footpaths. A proposal identifying the route, funding and delivery is to be prepared</p> <p>Project Lead: The Parish Council working with the Parish Council of West Camel and respective landowners.</p>	<p>The route will follow the existing footpath along the Leland Trail but, to be viable, the current wooden stiles, many of which are rotten will need to be replaced by metal footpath gates; the NPWG is progressing this project and will speak to landowners who will be affected. The Somerset Council commitment to Active Travel https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/active-travel/ might be a starting point</p>
	<p>Project 5 – in step with the A303 dualling: Provision of a bridleway by repositioning and upgrading the footpath between Traits Lane and Gason Lane during the dualling of the A303.</p> <p>Project Lead: The PC & NPWG previously in conjunction with the MOD and now with National Highways (NH) as this has become entangled with the A303 dualling.</p>	<p>This matter can be added to the occasional liaison with NH and the contractors, but progress looks difficult</p>
	<p>Project 6 – medium / longer term: Provision of a bridleway between Queen Camel and Marston Magna within the timeframe of the Plan. A proposal identifying route, funding and delivery was to be prepared by 2022.</p> <p>Project Lead: The PC working with the Parish Council of Marston Magna, SC Highway's Department and respective landowners.</p>	<p>No progress to date. Project delayed.</p>
3.4.4. De cluttering of street signs.	<p>Project – short term (within 12 months of this Plan): Removal of obsolete street signs and redundant poles.</p> <p>Project Lead: The PC will liaise with the SC.</p>	<p>This project was delayed by Covid but is now being given priority by the NPWG</p>
3.6 Our Heritage		

<p>3.6.1 – Protection of heritage assets and features</p>	<p>Project 1 – short term: A Conservation Area survey ---- to include consideration of listing on the Local Heritage List the heritage assets and features noted in Table 4 to ensure that such heritage items are given suitable protection. Project Lead: The PC & NPWG through a community led group with support from SC.</p>	<p>The survey has been completed except for those assets in private ownership which will be addressed as part of the ongoing project. Remedial action in respect of those assets falling into disrepair will also to be a priority for the NPWG. There is also an old Heritage Fund with some £5000 which might be used to assist.</p>
<p>Preservation, restoration and enhancement of buildings and features of local historic interest. Policy QC13</p>	<p>Project 2 – short term: A proposal with costs and timescales to be prepared for the preservation and restoration, and where appropriate the enhancement, of buildings and features of local historic interest in the public domain as described in Table 4. Project Lead: The PC & NPWG in conjunction with relevant landowners.</p>	<p>This will be developed by the NPWG and contact with private property owners will be explored.</p>
<p>3.6.2 – Archaeology –Roman Villa Policy QC14</p>	<p>Project – longer term (within the period of Plan): The future interpretation of the Roman Villa – development as a community education and tourist attraction. A proposal with a feasibility study to be considered during the period of this Plan. Project Lead: The Parish Council or the Community Land Trust - or another organization with similar objectives</p>	<p>Not yet due. Land not yet transferred to the Parish Council.</p>
<p>4. New Projects</p>	<p>No new projects have been developed but the NPWG has determined a priority list for existing projects based on the prospects for deliverability. This list of projects (Annex A) is a live list and the NPWG can advise the PC to add new projects, such as greening or environmental improvement projects, on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>To be considered by NPWG.</p>