

Halam - Parish Working Group

Village Design Statements

A Village Design Statement is a document which describes the distinctive character of a village and the countryside around it. It is drawn up by people within the village, who identify features of the village which are important to them, and which they wish to see conserved.

There is no legal or planning requirement to draw up a Village Design Statement; it is an entirely voluntary process, but one which hundreds of villages across England have decided to go through. Farnsfield has recently completed its own Village Design Statement.

Village Design Statements are not about whether development should take place; that is the role of the Local Plan and the Local Development Framework (LDF), which for us is primarily managed by Newark and Sherwood District Council. Instead, a Village Design Statement influences how a development takes place. Most importantly, it seeks to ensure that any new development is sympathetic to the character of the village.

Once a Village Design Statement has been created, and agreed by the majority of residents in the village as well as the Parish Council and the District Council, it can become Supplementary Planning Guidance. This means that, for any planning applications, both the applicants and the District Council will have to refer to the Village Design Statement. For an application to receive consent the applicants will have to show that they have followed the guidance in the Statement.

So what information does a Village Design Statement contain? As much, or as little as each community chooses, there are no inflexible rules. However, if the most value is to be obtained from the document it is advisable to include information about the following:

- What is the landscape setting of the village?
- What is the distinctive character of the village?
- Which elements make this distinctive character?
- What is the nature of the buildings within the village?

From these, it should be possible to draw up some simple design principles. The entire statement should include photographs and/or sketches, and most are from 10 to 40 pages long.

Above all, the Village Design Statement is an opportunity for local people to say what they value in their environment, and to provide a clear way of safeguarding those valuable characteristics. The statement will only contain that which the community wishes to see within it.

Without a Village Design Statement, the only design guidance for developers is that provided by the District Council and Nottinghamshire. Neither of these recognises the particular character of Halam.

The Chairman of the Parish Council believes that it has played a positive role in planning issues in the past. A Village Design Statement would be of value to guide the Parish Council in the future.

A Village Design Statement should involve as many groups and individuals in the community as possible to have its greatest impact. If you would like to let the PWG know your views about a design statement please contact Nevil Croston on 813578, Shirley Grayson on 813044 or Jeremy Smith on 819094 or e-mail to linda@littleoakhalam.fsnet.co.uk