

Henfield Parish Council and Upper Beeding Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

Small Dole Focus Group

Neighbourhood surveys recently conducted amongst the residents of Henfield and Upper Beeding Parishes – which include Small Dole – have helped to shape and prioritise a vision for the future of the village over the next twenty years. A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) has described what is good about Small Dole, what may be not so good and could be improved, and what opportunities there are to help meet the needs of the future,

The Small Dole Focus Group, together with over 125 years local knowledge, has made the following contributions:

- Small Dole: Where we are now? Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
- Small Dole: A vision for the future

Visitors to the Small Dole stand at recent open days in Henfield provided further useful insights and comments. An open morning is also being held in Small Dole:

- Saturday 22nd March, 9.30am – 12.00noon
- Venue: The Village Hall, Small Dole

You are cordially invited to come and talk to us about your views on the future of Henfield and Upper Beeding, including Small Dole.

Our Vision for the Future of Small Dole (Small Dole Focus Group)

Our Surroundings, our Countryside.

We want Small Dole to retain and enhance its village feel: a small rural community in the heart of the West Sussex countryside, closely associated with and partly within the South Downs National Park. We value the village setting within farmland, ancient woodland, nature reserves, and the historic common. Green spaces, including high quality agricultural land within and on the western side of the village, need to be protected as an amenity for the community.

We want to serve the wider community as an important area for walking the South Downs and surrounding area, and providing wildlife habitats. In the longer term we want the landfill site, now thankfully closed and landscaped, to be opened for community access and pastoral leisure activities.

In the recent Neighbourhood Plan Survey, the top of the list of concerns was the Shoreham Cement Works site. A redevelopment plan for this eyesore is needed that provides benefits for the community as a whole. This redevelopment should be undertaken sympathetically with the natural environment of the South Downs.

Where we can work

Small Dole will continue to have a significant business community providing local employment, with industrial sites at Mackley's (in the centre of the village), Golding Barn, market gardens and in farm outbuildings at Streatham Lane. Sustainable growth for businesses beyond these resources should be located on a redeveloped Shoreham Cement Works site. Small Dole will also develop with many small businesses operating from private houses in the village encouraged by superfast broadband.

Our Housing

Small Dole already has a mixed housing stock. Additional housing growth will be provided by small-scale infill rather than larger developments. Requirements for additional housing beyond this constraint could be accommodated as part of the Shoreham Cement works redevelopment.

Our facilities

Small Dole will continue to rely on the schools, medical centres, and leisure facilities provided in the neighbouring areas.

The Sports Field in the centre of the village will continue to provide the local community with a flat area for local sports activity, and the site for the annual village fete. We want to widen the usage of this field and the community hall in Small Dole village to provide more youth activities. We will continue to benefit from the general grocery shop, post office, and the public house as a village focus.

The Appearance of Our Village

We feel that the village appearance, for example the village green, entrances by road into the village and commercial advertising signage could be improved. There also needs to be improved management of litter.

Transport

The A2037 road is not adequate to serve further development in the area and steps need to be taken to encourage road users to limit their speed through the village. There is a need to improve public transport both in frequency, destinations and hours of operation.

SWOT ANALYSIS FOR SMALL DOLE

STRENGTHS

- A small rural community in the heart of the West Sussex countryside, closely associated with and within the South Downs National Park and entirely visible from it. The village is surrounded by prime agricultural land, ancient woodland, nature reserves, and historic common. It includes Oreham Common and the listed Woods Mill, (Sussex Wildlife Trust) and a Scout campsite; a Site of Special Scientific Interest is also designated within the village Small Dole serves the wider community as an important area for walking the South Downs and surrounding area, and provides habitat for many flora and fauna.
- A mixed housing stock:– social, affordable, terraced, semi- and detached houses, flats and bungalows, small and many larger properties. There is also a designated permanent traveller site with static mobile homes.
- Sports Field in the centre of the village provides the local community with a flat area for local sports activity, and is also the site for the annual village fete.
- Small Dole has a significant business community providing local employment, with industrial sites at Mackley's (in the centre of the village), Golding Barn, and in farm outbuildings at Streatham Lane; also many small businesses operating from private houses and some market gardens.
- A village pub, a shop/post office and a village hall, all provide a focus and a service to the community.

WEAKNESSES

- Agricultural land, ancient woodland, nature reserves, and historic common bordering on and in the village presents the risk of unsuitable building development.
- Village appearance could be improved and made more attractive, consistent with its rural and natural heritage. Litter on roadsides is seen as a problem.
- Public transport provision with buses returning to Henfield too early in the evening and a limited choice of destinations.
- A2037 road is not adequate to serve further development in the area and the traffic speed is too high.
- The Shoreham Cement Works site is an eyesore and although outside the village was top of the list of concerns in the recent survey.
- Lack of activities for teenagers.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Horton Landfill Site (disused) on the southern edge of Small Dole to be opened up - as a long term aim - for community access and pastoral leisure activities for local residents and the surrounding communities. Landscaping of the disused site has already achieved complete harmony with the surrounding profile of the South Downs, and is compatible with the site being brought within the National Park.
- Green spaces, including high quality agricultural land within and on the western side of the village to be protected as an amenity for the community.
- Reinforce and develop Small Dole's association with the South Downs National Park, providing access to an important area for walking the South Downs and surrounding area. Further development of wildlife habitats.
- Village appearance should be made more attractive, such as the village green, vehicle entrances from north and south, commercial advertising signage, and other improvements.
- Encourage usage of sports field and village hall in particular for youth activities.
- A redeveloped Shoreham Cement Works site, landscaped and developed in sympathy with the South Downs, offers the potential for additional space for housing, business and recreational use.

THREATS

- Agricultural land and ancient woodland/nature reserves bordering on the village and the sports field are at risk from unsuitable building and industrial development. The surrounding farmland, which is criss-crossed by public footpaths and bridleways, needs to be a protected space for local residents and visitors.
- Re-opening of the Viridor landfill site.
- Increasing traffic levels on the A2037 / Horn Lane due to development in neighbouring areas to the north (Henfield) or south (Upper Beeding).