

Chairs Report December 2019

I am back with more answers to some queries that arose from the Village Questionnaire!

There were numerous comments about Rayne keeping its identity as a village. Most people do not want housing developments extending beyond the village envelope and that villagers do not wish to be surrounded by new developments or developments that will 'join' Rayne to Braintree. There were also a couple of negative comments about the Council's 'constant objection' to these type of planning applications. It has always been the Council's decision to protect the Village from unwanted and unplanned growth. This is why the Parish Council over the past few years have committed to try and stop these speculative developments that will take away our village identity. We appreciate the need for additional housing, but usually the proposed developments fall outside the village envelope as in the proposed School Road development or will merge Rayne with Braintree as with the Brook Green application, or swamp us as in the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community. The Village Design Statement states *Development should be confined to within the 'Defined settlement boundary' unless there is a benefit to the whole community.*

Unfortunately we do not have a Neighbourhood Plan which will direct where we find development acceptable. This is something that the Council is looking into creating. It will require villagers from all backgrounds to assist the Parish Council in this project. Residents that ticked the box that they would like to help with a village Neighbourhood Plan are urged to email the clerk at rpc@rayne-essex.gov.uk.

We also had several comments about cleaning the road signs on the entry into the village. These signs are the property of ECC Highways who are responsible for their upkeep. Not sure who has cleaned them but they are all now sparkly clean, so much so that the Queenborough Lane sign is quite dazzling now!

Another subject that was raised was the amount of yellow developer signs popping up in the village. We had already requested Cllr Butland to ask ECC about this and had the following response....

Thank you for your enquiry regarding housing development signage.

ECC gives permission for housing development signs on a six monthly basis.

The Highway Authority is empowered to remove unauthorised signs from the highway, and ultimately to consider enforcement action. However any enforcement action would be considered in line with our Highways Enforcement Policy, which advocates a liaison approach over formal action, with cases prioritised for enforcement that either pose a risk to the users of the highway or constitute a significant interference with the highway.

Therefore, if there are particular signs which are a cause for concern we would encourage residents to report these to us using our online Report it Tool.

I hope this information is useful.

We will keep a watching brief on this.

Best wishes and a Happy New Year to all residents.

Ann Hooks

Chair, Rayne Parish Council