

ORWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Report of progress, May 2026

Mark Collins, Steering Group Chairman.

Progress this last year or so has been slow as we are bringing together feedback and evidence in support of all the important objectives identified for Orwell's Neighbourhood Plan. Consequently, we have not been in touch with the community to update you as much as we would have liked.

The environment for producing the plan has changed with this Government, as they have withdrawn the funding we have been relying on to pay for expert work from professional consultants. This work is essential to ensure that all the relevant aspects of the plan have been addressed in order to ensure adoption by the council. The Parish Council has been in support of the development of Orwell's Neighbourhood Plan from the outset and, fortunately, have now stepped in and provided some of the funds we will require, so we should be able to commission the necessary work to progress to the next stage in the plan's development.

We are now near to finishing the first complete draft of the plan which we will ask our very helpful consultant, Natalie Blaken, to evaluate and comment on. She will be able to help us to prepare the Plan for submission to Greater Cambridge shared planning (GCSP) for their input. Once we have completed the draft for submission to GCSP we will present it to the village for comment also.

We anticipate one further iteration of the Plan before we finally submit it for a 6-week public consultation, after which the plan goes to an independent examiner for its final review. Once through this stage, a village referendum will be organised by South Cambs District Council to verify that the Plan is supported by village residents before it is adopted. We will rely on your support at this time, hopefully later this year.

Despite the fact that the Government has withdrawn the funding, we believe that the Neighbourhood Plan will continue to have the same legal standing and relevance in planning decisions and is therefore remaining important to our community when contemplating planning issues.

I would like to extend my special thanks to all my colleagues on the Steering Group who have worked very hard on what is a challenging project.

Maggie Gould, Steven Thain, Emma Tabor, Mark Ridler, Nigel Blackburn, Philip Hodgson.

Mark Collins