

Business and employment, Draft document

1) What is the policy seeking to achieve?

Stoke Gabriel has a broad variety of businesses located or registered in the parish. They contribute greatly to the sustainability of the community and provide essential services for residents as well as employment opportunities.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that businesses key to the vitality of the Parish continue and that opportunity is provided for new businesses and employment in a way which does not impact on the rural character of the Parish.

2) What is behind the policy

Changing demographics of the 20th and 21st centuries along with the significant number of new homes in the parish have led to growth of small service businesses, often home based in addition to smaller businesses typically employing less than 3 people.

Traditional small scale commercial fishing on the River Dart ceased some time ago while agriculture remains significant in the Parish.

The variety of businesses is broad and they provide essential services to residents as well as to the greater community. They include pubs/ shops/ restaurants/ farms/ cider makers/ education/ caravan parks/ holiday accommodation/ agricultural businesses/ architects/ entertainers/ kennels/ builders/ stonemasons/carpenters/ roofers/ graphic designers/ IT support/ various home services/ engineering/ electricians/ plumbers/ hairdressers/ decorators/ Marine Services/ therapeutic services/ tree surgeons/ garages and vehicle maintenance. – See appendix

The shops pubs and restaurants in the village itself provide employment and valued services as well as opportunities to socialise and interact in the community. As in other communities the number of shops has greatly reduced over the past 3 decades due to the growth and the proximity of local supermarkets. The number of pubs has reduced from 3 to 2 as drinking habits have changed while one establishment was converted to 4 rarely used dwellings.

The 3 popular caravan/camping parks are all located to the immediate north-east of the village (Additionally there is a large site within 200 yards of these in Torbay) and provide pitches for 327 caravans or motor homes (in addition to some static homes) as well as caravan storage associated with two of the sites. These provide

seasonal employment as well as a vital source of visitors to local businesses.

3) What does the community say

In the survey carried out in 2016 pubs and restaurants occupied 3 of the top 4 rankings of importance to the community. The Post Office which was ranked number 1 has since closed and has been incorporated in the remaining village general store. The long term survival of this is seen as extremely important to the sustainability of the community, There were proposals that this and at least one of the Village Pubs should be protected as an 'Asset of Community Value', which is covered by Policy Dev 18 in the JLP.???

The survey also confirmed that effective mobile and broadband and mobile communications were lacking and paramount. These have been addressed by 2 mobile providers and broadband has significantly improved however it remains incomplete on both counts.

54 respondents ran their business from home and said that they would not need new premises during the life of the neighbourhood plan. However 12 said that they might need different premises and nine had a potential need. 70% of these said that it was unlikely that they would find new premises within the Parish citing difficulty in finding suitable space at an affordable price.

A telephone survey of 25 businesses was carried out from September 2018 and generated the following comments:

- *Parking in the village is an issue, and the village shop would welcome positioning of the village bus stop to create more parking spaces. It was recognized that there are very limited options to create more central village parking spaces; use of school field was suggested and /or compulsory purchase of land by the parish council of any appropriate land available in a central village location. Holiday parks mentioned not being able to park in the village as a key frustration with elderly visitors.*
- *A 'test pontoon' (positioned by Dart Harbour at the entrance to the creek to provide accessibility from the river at all states of tide) has been well received bringing business to the village. The possibility of having a pontoon which allows larger ferry boats to call in and*

start connecting Stoke Gabriel with Totnes and Dartmouth was also suggested.

- Public transport was recognized as poor to the village, and access routes in the village as not good. Road widening for caravan access and traffic would be welcomed.*
- Several local business suggested that there should be improved signage with a large attractive sign at the millpond and top of the village outlining what shops/pubs/restaurants are sited in the village and improved signage outside holiday camps; it is felt some visitors drive straight to the millpond down school hill and then straight out without being aware of what is available*
- Many local businesses cited poor mobile phone signal – some saying it was a big problem and was affecting their business; holiday parks/B&Bs saying it was difficult for visitors staying in the village /some businesses still needing to go into the garden to receive calls*
- There were no major changes of premises being planned for/cited as needed from the business respondents. The only requirement for new premises was from sole trader therapists looking to use a local therapy room and/or room for group sessions.*



From the initial 2016 survey almost 60% of respondents felt that specific types of business should be encouraged. These were agricultural, tourism (which is seen as important to the village economy), professional and educational, but not manufacturing or construction.

4. Policy ... Business premises.



- a) New business premises, storage facilities, units or yards will be supported providing that they have no negative effect on local character and are in conjunction with the other policies of this Neighbourhood Plan This is to include expansion of existing businesses.*
- b) In particular businesses which provide agricultural diversification will be supported.*
- c) Any proposed expansion of existing mobile and static caravan/mobile home parks and storage should be scrutinised to ensure that it would not be to the detriment of the rural nature of the parish.*

- d) New employment premises or expansion of existing premises must provide adequate parking for employees, visitors and customers.
- e) Businesses run from home and home working are supported. They must be in keeping with the locality and must cause neither nuisance to neighbours or detriment to the locality.
- f) Change of use from residential to business will be accepted outside Stoke Gabriel Village providing they provide employment opportunities and do not cause detriment to the rural setting.
- g) The plan will not support change of use of existing static caravan/mobile home parks and storage to residential development sites.

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