

Kinver Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 - 2037

Issues and Options for **the Parish of Kinver**

Background information to support the first
Public Consultation questionnaire, June 2021



Welcome to the Issues and Options document for the Kinver Neighbourhood Development Plan first consultation. This document provides background information and context for the First Household Questionnaire on the Plan. The Questionnaire is being delivered to every household in the parish in June 2021.

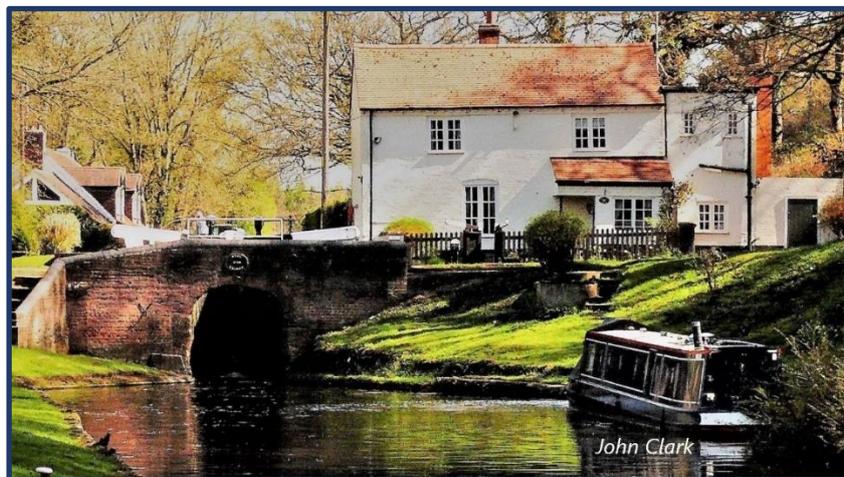
A copy of the questionnaire, and other information about the Plan, can be found on our website, kinvernplan.co.uk. If you would like to become more involved in the Plan's preparation, or you are interested in being kept up to date with the progress of the Plan, please email info@kinvernplan.co.uk or call the Parish Clerk on 01384 873878.

Table of Contents

Public Consultation	3
1. A Neighbourhood Development Plan for Kinver	4
2. More about Neighbourhood Development Plans	5
3. Kinver Today	6
4. Key Themes for the Neighbourhood Plan	7
4.1 Community and Amenities	8
4.2 Nature	10
4.3 Heritage	12
4.4 Economy	14
4.5 Climate Change	16
4.6 Homes	18
5.0 Next Steps	19

Appendices (separate document)

- Appendix 1. What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan?
- Appendix 2. Local Plan Core Strategy: relevant policies
- Appendix 3: Community facilities for public use in Kinver parish
- Appendix 4. Sports and Physical Recreation Facilities in Kinver Parish
- Appendix 5. Open Green Spaces in Kinver Parish



Hyde Lock, Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

Public Consultation

This document provides background information for the first questionnaire about the Kinver Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) which is published for informal public consultation in June 2021.

The consultation is an opportunity for everyone in Kinver Parish to find out more about the Neighbourhood Plan and help to shape it at an early stage. This document sets out the key planning issues identified so far, as relevant to Kinver Parish. It invites your comments about how we can address them in our Plan. It has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group of parish councillors and local residents, on behalf of the Parish Council.

There will be further public consultations on the Plan over the coming months. All responses will be considered carefully and will contribute to the Plan's policies and proposals. We are committed to keeping everyone informed at all stages and making sure all points of view are listened to. At the very end of the process there will be a local referendum and everyone on the electoral register will be invited to vote on whether the Neighbourhood Development Plan should be used to determine planning applications.



Kinver High Street

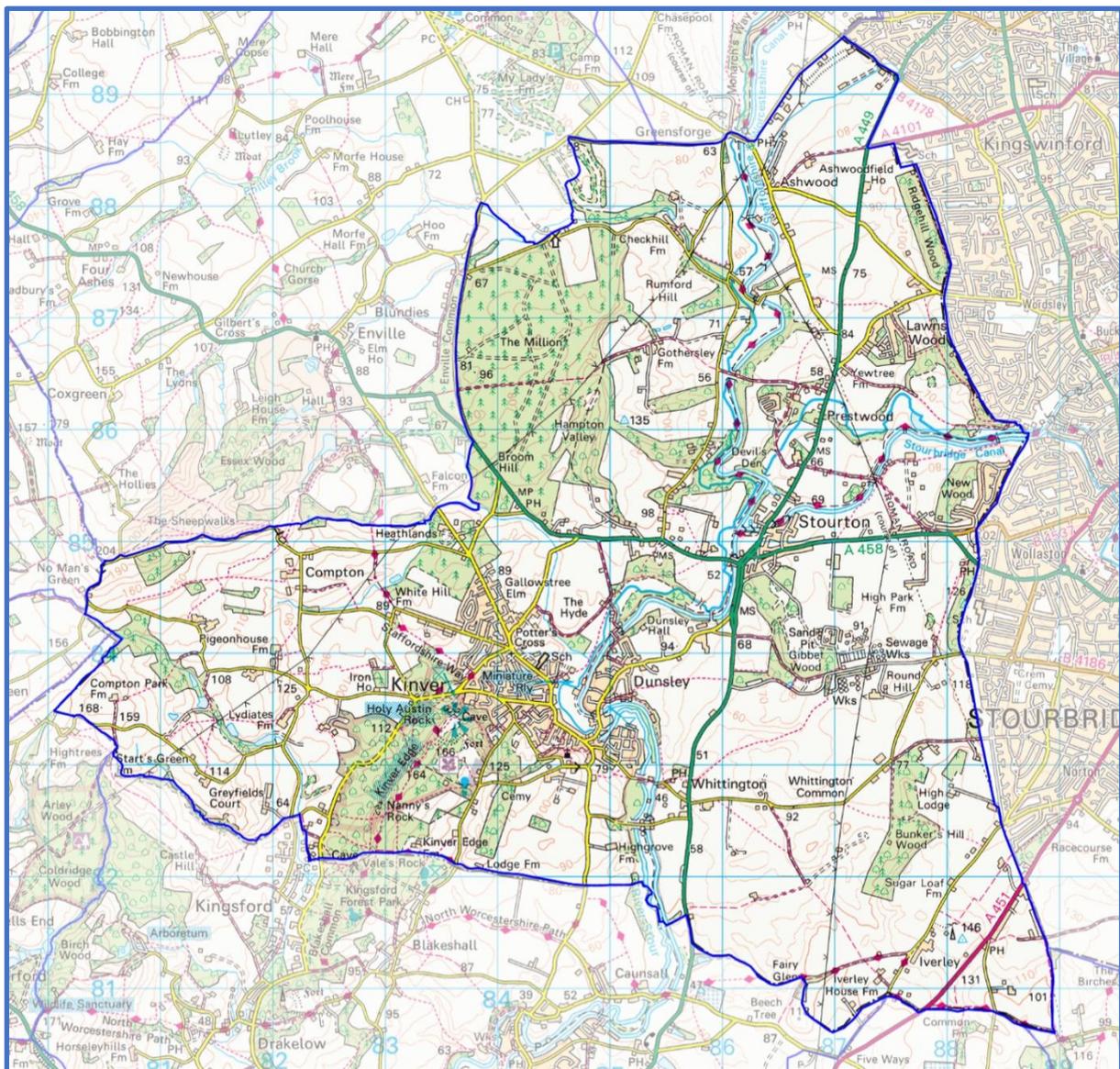
We need to know:

- Do you as local residents and stakeholders agree with the objectives and key planning issues we have identified so far?
- Which of the possible policy options and actions do you support?
- Is there anything important that you think we have missed?
- Do you have any other comments on how the Plan should develop?

1. A Neighbourhood Development Plan for Kinver

Kinver Parish Council made the decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan, in order to ensure that Kinver continues to evolve in a way which serves its residents and future generations. Having a Plan in place will give us a greater say in planning decisions and in the protection of our special rural environment and built heritage. The 2020 Planning White Paper suggests that Neighbourhood Plans could have a greater role to play in future.

The Neighbourhood Plan's area is that of Kinver Parish (Map 1). It was designated by South Staffordshire Council on 24th September 2020. It will run to 2037, to match the Local Plan, and may be revised as required to keep it up to date.



Map 1. Kinver Parish and Designated Neighbourhood Area. (Copyright OS 2021)

Kinver NDP Issues and Options

A Steering Group made up of Parish Councillors and Kinver residents has prepared the first questionnaire. Once the results are in, the Steering Group will start working on the detail of the Policies and collecting the necessary further evidence to create the Plan. There will be several more opportunities to comment and to contribute to the development of the Plan over the coming months. We welcome and need participation and support from residents in developing the detail of the Plan.



2. More about Neighbourhood Development Plans

Neighbourhood Development Plans were created to give local people a greater say in planning decisions that affect their area. They can set out local design principles; protect important facilities, historic buildings, the natural environment and open spaces; and identify where development should take place. Our 'Made' (i.e. adopted) Neighbourhood Plan will stand alongside the South Staffordshire Local Plan in determining the outcome of planning applications.

A Neighbourhood Plan must reflect the wishes of local people. There will be a number of consultations to encourage local people to contribute ideas and expertise to make sure the Plan is right for Kinver. In addition, the Plan must be 'examined' to ensure it 'meets the required basic conditions', which includes being compatible with relevant national and district policies. The final Plan has to be approved by Kinver parish residents and stakeholders at a local referendum. For more detailed information, please see Appendix 1.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot do everything. Since it deals with planning issues, it cannot directly control matters such as services, public transport, health care and highways. However, it can protect structures necessary for such services; it can require or encourage new developments which have a positive impact on the parish; and can identify desirable uses for financial contributions from developers.

A Neighbourhood Plan must take due account of both national and local planning policies. This means, for example, that the Kinver Plan cannot propose a smaller number of houses than have been specified in the South Staffordshire Local Plan. The National and Local Plan policies which our Plan needs to take into account are summarised in Appendix 2.

3. Kinver Today

The parish of Kinver is located within South Staffordshire Council local authority area. It lies to the west of the urban areas of Stourbridge, Birmingham and the Black Country. The Parish extends over 4,196 ha and had a population of 7,225 in the 2011 census, which had changed little by 2019. Kinver is the main population centre, with outlying settlements including Stourton, Iverley and Lawnswood.

Kinver village is dominated by the sandstone ridge of Kinver Edge. The Rock Houses and Kinver Edge are a popular visitor attraction under the National Trust. The whole of the non-built area of the parish is Green Belt, creating a green corridor to the west of the Black Country. The River Stour runs through the area and the parish includes beautiful stretches of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and the Stourbridge Canal. The landscape is of woodlands, streams and undulating countryside, with a mix of arable and grazing land.

Kinver parish includes a wealth of built heritage and archaeological assets, and two conservation areas (Kinver centre; and the canal corridor). Kinver High Street was laid out as a 13th century planned town with a wide central street, to house a market, flanked by houses each with long narrow plots (burgage plots), and the street retains a number of historic buildings.



Kinver village is well served with shops including a supermarket, a pharmacist, a butcher, a bakery, four pubs, two social clubs, and several eating establishments and takeaways. There are 3 schools educating infants through to sixth form; and 3 pre-schools. The wider parish also contains pubs and restaurants, and other enterprises including farms, garden centres, care and retirement homes, liveries, and a major anaerobic digestion facility.

Kinver parish abounds with societies, special interest groups and charitable trusts which add community cohesion to the parish. The majority of employment however is in nearby towns. Public transport is limited, and car use is necessarily high.

4. Key Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

An overall Vision for the Kinver Neighbourhood Plan, and draft objectives, have been identified below. For each in turn, this document discusses the potential policies which could be included in the Plan, to guide new development in our parish. We also identify related actions which could be considered by the Parish Council, but would not be part of the Plan itself. Of course, many policies and actions are relevant to more than one of these objectives.

Draft Vision

To protect and enhance the character, features and rural setting of Kinver Parish, while developing in a gradual and sustainable way which meets the needs of local people.

Draft Objectives

1. **Community and amenities:** To protect and enhance infrastructure and amenities, for all who live in Kinver Parish.
2. **Nature:** To protect and enhance the rural landscape, ecological status, and wildlife habitats.
3. **Heritage:** To protect and enhance the built and historic heritage in the parish.
4. **Economy:** To support a thriving village centre and promote local business activity.
5. **Climate Change:** To ensure our buildings and infrastructure are sustainable, adapted to the changing climate, and fit for the low-carbon future.
6. **Homes:** To provide a positive planning framework to guide the development of the right mix of new homes, appropriately located, which work well within and enhance the village and wider area.

Objective 1. To protect and enhance infrastructure and amenities, for all who live in Kinver Parish.

4.1 Community and Amenities

Kinver has a wide range of local community, sports and recreation facilities, and a variety of clubs and services mostly run by volunteers. The Edward Marsh centre, the Community Library, and the two churches generate activities central to village life, while several other venues also host local clubs and events (see Appendix 3). The strong response to the Covid epidemic from volunteers and businesses has been important in maintaining normal life and morale.



Kinver Community Library, volunteer run, in the centre of the village

Health services include a local pharmacy, and a local surgery. However full access to GP services can require travel outside the parish to Kingswinford, an hour away by bus. Hospital services are provided by Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley.

Kinver parish has a full range of schools, and pre-school provision. The schools have recently become academies, and some rebuilding is underway and planned. The High School shares sports and other facilities with residents.

Sports and physical recreation facilities are varied (Appendix 4), and include football clubs for children, football pitches within the village, and sports facilities at the High School and elsewhere, tennis clubs, allotments, and extensive footpaths.

Kinver's population of about 7,000 is poorly served by public transport. Bus services to nearby towns are few and currently too limited to support commuting to work, or evening travel, although discussions are underway to improve the service. Due to Kinver's location at the southern tip of Staffordshire, access to district and county services is also difficult, with no direct public transport options. Car use is necessarily high, and those without cars are at a disadvantage.



St Peter's ancient church on its hill above Kinver village

Potential Policies for the Plan: Community and Amenities

The Neighbourhood Plan can protect and enhance existing local infrastructure and facilities and set out where new infrastructure is needed as a result of new development and changing local needs.

Potential policies could:

- Identify local facilities for protection
- Identify local facilities which require investment, using e.g. developer contributions and other funds
- Ensure that new development delivers appropriate local infrastructure and improvements

Other Potential Actions: Community and Amenities

Actions which could work towards enhanced village amenities include:

- Liaison with schools and clubs to review provision of activities and spaces for young people
- Liaison with schools to maintain/ improve access to sports facilities by the community
- Providing more allotments for local people.

4.2 Nature

Objective 2. To protect and enhance the rural landscape, ecological status, and wildlife habitats.

Kinver parish is set in a beautiful landscape, highly valued by local residents and visitors alike. However the Parish's natural environment and biodiversity are under pressure, with development, intensification of land use and climate change all contributing to loss of habitats and species.



The Parish is on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation, and the boundary is marked for much of its length by a ridge which creates a dramatic transition between urban and rural landscapes. The River Stour winds through the parish, flanked by farms, woods and seasonal wetlands. Much of the rural landscape is under grassland and arable farming, with extensive tracts of woods including The Million, and Bunker's Hill (Woodland Trust).

Above Kinver village rises the abrupt, largely wooded, sandstone ridge of Kinver Edge (National Trust), with its superb views and trails for walkers, cyclists and riders. The native lowland heath vegetation is an internationally rare and threatened habitat, and the 124 ha Kinver SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) on Kinver Edge is designated for this heathland and associated invertebrates. The parish includes several other SSSIs, designated ancient woodlands, and a nature reserve at Chance Wood.

The whole of Kinver Parish outside its built-up area is Green Belt, established to protect the countryside from urban encroachment. Recent developments have taken land out of the Green Belt for housing.



Varied habitats and wide views on Kinver Edge

Potential Policies for the Plan: Nature

- **Require developers to protect wildlife and provide biodiversity net gain** through improved management of sites, enhancing wildlife corridors, and working closely with local organisations such as wildlife groups and the National Trust.
- **Identify locally significant views for protection.** For example:
 - From Kinver Edge over the village and surrounding landscapes (360 degrees)
 - Along the canal, Hyde Lock, Kinver Lock and Whittington Horse Bridge etc.
 - Views approaching Kinver via Bridgnorth Rd., Enville Rd., Dunsley
 - Views to and from Ridgehill
 - Views to and from Bunker's Hill.
 - From Wollaston ridge, west to Prestwood and Gothersley

Other Potential Actions: Nature

- **Identify Local Green Spaces for protection.** Communities can seek to identify green spaces for protection, e.g by Local Green Space designation, subject to the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). While many green spaces already have protection, the Steering Group intends to list all such spaces and determine which need additional protection. A partial list is in Appendix 5.

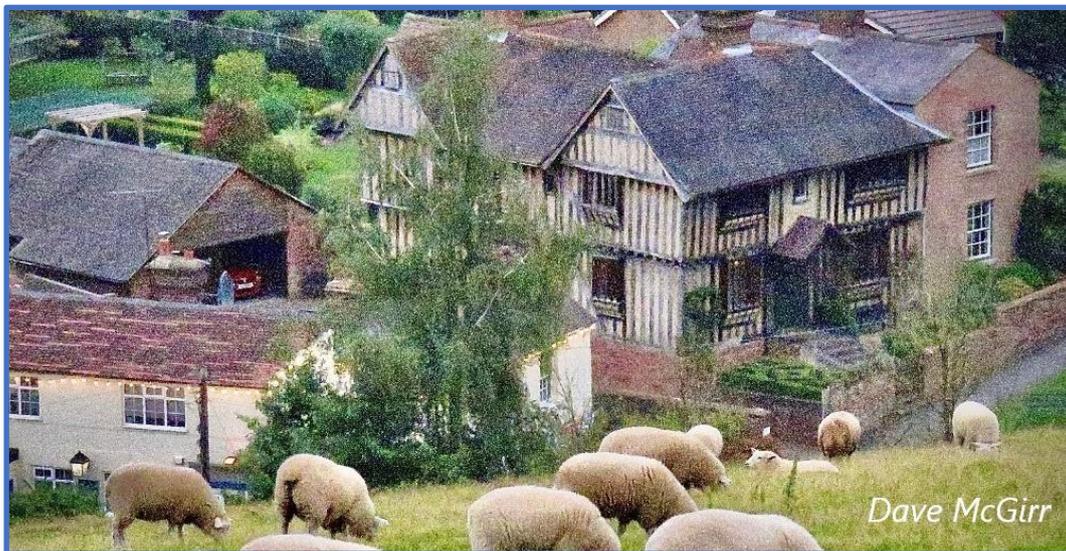


English bluebells, plentiful in Bunker's Hill and other old-established woods

4.3 Heritage

Objective 3. To protect and enhance the built and historic heritage in the parish.

Kinver has been an important place for many millennia. People have been here continuously since the retreat of the ice sheets, some 10,000 years ago. The Bronze Age/ Iron Age hillfort is the most visible site in the parish, but we also have other prehistoric and Roman sites. The castle at Stourton was a royal hunting lodge and the new (13th century) planned town was granted borough status and graced with many fine buildings.



The Old Grammar House

Kinver is the centre of the largest group of inhabited rock-cut buildings in Britain and one of the largest in Europe. As well as Holy Austin Rock on Kinver Edge (National Trust), there are numerous caves and rock houses, many of which date back to the Middle Ages.

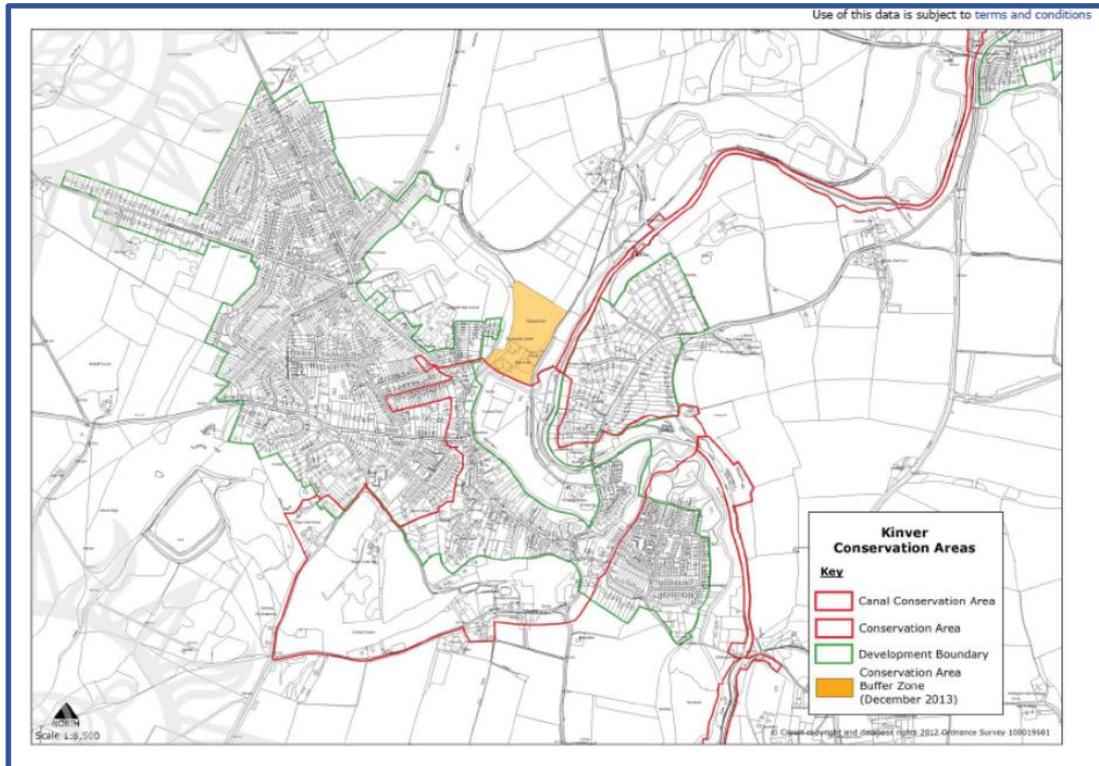
Kinver had a thriving iron industry in the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. As this declined tourism took over. Kinver's heritage assets are part of what draws visitors here, and they give a sense of identity and continuity to the parish.



Narrowboats on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

Kinver NDP Issues and Options

The Parish contains the Kinver Conservation Area, and a section of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area. (Map 2). The Parish is home to dozens of national Listed Buildings (see historicengland.org.uk/listing) and many more on the South Staffordshire Local List.



Map 2. Kinver Conservation Areas

Potential Policies for the Plan: Heritage

The Steering Group considers that there is a need to protect heritage and historic structures in Kinver Parish, and to maintain and enhance the context in which they can be appreciated. The Plan could:

- **Develop a Design Guide for Kinver parish**, which can take account of the Conservation Area and the different style of building appropriate to different parts of the parish. The Steering Group has commissioned the consultancy AECOM to help develop such a Guide, with Government funding.
- **Identify important views which help us to appreciate our heritage**

Other Potential Actions: Heritage

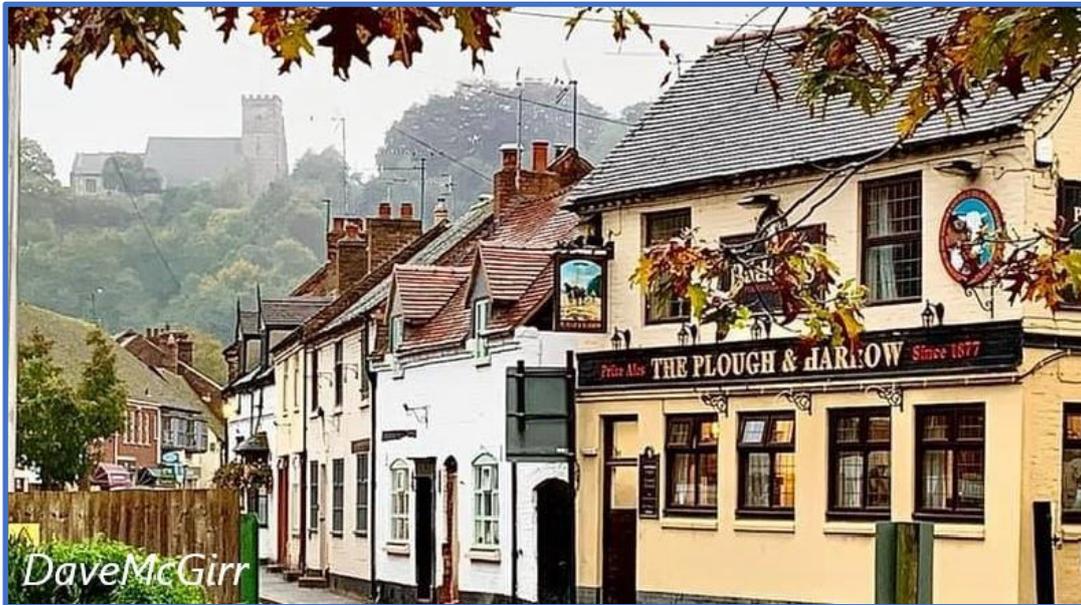
- Identify non-designated heritage assets for protection, and add to the Local List
- Protect our unique rock-cut buildings and sites
- Maintain and enhance the setting of heritage assets
- Identify and protect historic landscapes
- Identify canal assets and incorporate them into the parish vision
- Work with local bodies including the National Trust and the History Society

4.4 Economy

Objective 4. To support a thriving village centre and promote local business activity.

The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to establish a supportive framework for appropriate local economic development for shops and small businesses, including tourism and hospitality.

Retailing and hospitality venues such as pubs, restaurants and cafes have been under significant pressure for several years as shopping habits have changed and many have moved to online retailing. During 2020-21 businesses have been facing additional pressures resulting from restrictions on trading linked to Covid-19 and national lockdowns.



Most retail outlets, and many catering businesses, are in Kinver High Street

Since the pandemic and the resultant increase in people working from home and startups, the number of people working in the village and its environs will have increased dramatically. We believe that home working is here to stay.

We wish to encourage more small businesses to base themselves in the Parish and to encourage the provision of small workshop/storage units. The recent small office development at KinverPoint using redundant buildings is a good example of the facilities that we wish to encourage.



Modern office buildings in Kinver

Potential Policies for the Plan: Economy

Recent changes to permitted development rights and use classes mean that planning restrictions have less influence on changes of use. In South Staffordshire's Local Plan, Core Strategy Policy 8 states that 'encouragement will be given to appropriate uses, activities and investment in village centres that will sustain or enhance their character, attractiveness, and conservation heritage and lead to the centres becoming more vibrant and economically successful and preserve a range of services appropriate to the Centre.' Our Plan could:

- **Encourage investment in Kinver High Street by improving the public realm and accessibility for all, e.g.:**
 - Better signage within the village for direction to its facilities
 - Publicity and signage for walks in and near the village to showcase our heritage assets and encourage footfall in the High Street
- **Encourage and identify opportunities to provide flexible business space, e.g. office/storage/workshop facilities.**

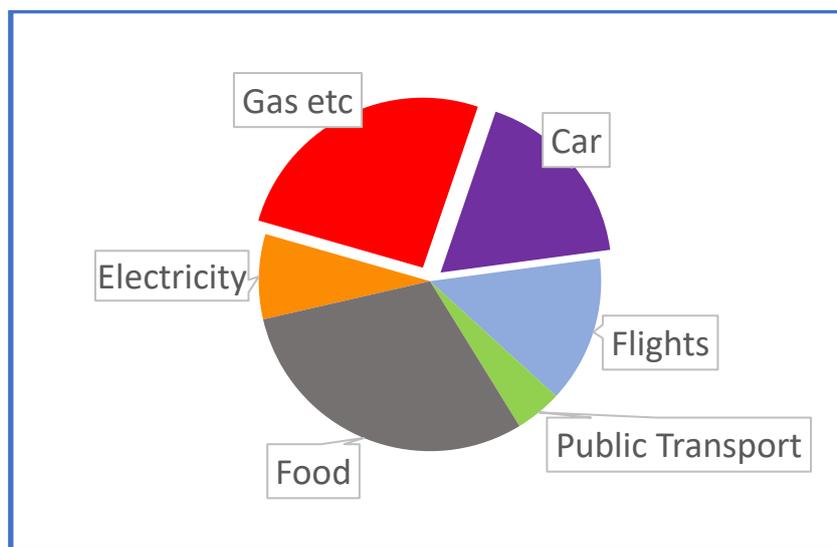
Other Potential Actions: Economy

- Consult and liaise with local businesses, including home workers
- Encourage business support groups
- Work to improve the internet service for all
- Work to improve mobile phone coverage

4.5 Climate Change

Objective 5: To ensure our buildings and infrastructure are sustainable, adapted to the changing climate, and fit for the future.

Our Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared at a time of extraordinary and rapid change, locally and globally. To combat climate change, fossil fuels will be phased out, and new ways of reducing energy use and damage to the environment are being rapidly developed.



Kinver parish: Carbon footprint per home per year: (Parish Carbon Footprint Tool)

About 17% of the Carbon footprint of households in Kinver is down to heating with gas and other fossil fuels; and another 12% is due to private transport, mainly by car. Both these can be tackled by local action, often with other benefits to the community. Better insulation; and renewable energy, including solar panels on our buildings, will reduce energy bills; while making it easier to cycle or take public transport to work and encouraging electric (or hydrogen) vehicles will cut carbon emissions from cars.



Climate change is already leading to more extreme weather, including droughts, heatwaves, and intense storms. We need to adapt by managing our built areas and landscapes to minimise flash flooding from storm events; by becoming more water efficient; by designing homes to cope better with heat as well as cold, and by ensuring new homes are built safely above expected future flood levels.



Extract from of the current map of risk of river flooding: Environment Agency

Potential Policies for the Plan: Climate Change

The Steering Group and Parish Council acknowledge the climate emergency, and the need to work towards a healthy low-carbon future.

In new developments, planning policies could:

- Encourage renewable energy technologies e.g. solar panels;
- Promote energy and resource efficiency including water management;
- Minimise runoff from new developments e.g via 'Sustainable Drainage' systems, to reduce flooding during storms
- Encourage buildings which are climate resilient e.g. by siting and design to avoid overheating in summer
- Ensure that the impact of climate change on flood risk is taken into account in siting new developments

At present building standards including insulation and thermal efficiency standards are dealt with through Building Regulations, and cannot be prescribed by the Plan. However the Plan can include policies promoting sustainable design, underpinned by more detailed design codes or design guidance. The Steering Group has commissioned a Design Code which will include such issues.

Other Potential Actions: Climate Change

- Supporting home working to reduce travel.
- Encouraging renewable energy generation, or developing a Community Energy project, to provide local Green energy and income.
- Seeking financial support to promote improved insulation to reduce energy costs in existing housing.
- Promoting EV points in new builds and conversions

4.6 Homes

Objective 6. To provide a positive planning framework to guide the development of the right mix of new homes, appropriately located, which work well within and enhance the village.

Kinver is set in the Green Belt, just outside the West Midlands conurbation, and development pressure is high. House prices are also high, making affordability a problem especially for young people. The parish's settlements contain a mixture of housing ages, sizes and styles which generally work harmoniously together, and we believe it is important that future developments should be modest in size and not overwhelm the villages roads and infrastructure, nor contribute to runoff and flooding.



Neighbourhood Plans must work within the national and district-level planning policies, and must 'plan positively' for development. This means that our Plan must support at least the number of houses allocated within South Staffordshire's Local Plan. However our Plan can influence the scale, type, location, and infrastructure provided in developments.

The Current South Staffordshire Local Plan

Under the existing Local Plan two sites were allocated for housing, one off Hyde Lane, now nearing completion; the other off White Hill (south side). A further 3.9ha, the remainder of the White Hill site, was taken out of Green Belt for future use (termed 'safeguarded' land.)

The South Staffordshire Local Plan Review

South Staffordshire's Local Plan is currently being reviewed, for the period up to 2037. It has been confirmed that the 'safeguarded' land off White Hill will be brought forward for development. A further 2 small sites (up to 1 ha each) are suggested, for Kinver village itself, which is likely to mean taking land out of Green Belt. It is not yet clear whether any land will be allocated for development in the remainder of the parish. South Staffordshire Council intend to publish and consult on their 'Preferred Options' for sites in late summer 2021. All residents and stakeholders in the parish can respond to that review. Our Neighbourhood Plan will not be complete at that time, but the Parish Council will respond to the consultation on behalf of the parish.

For more information see the South Staffordshire Council Local Plan Review website pages, e.g. <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-review-2.cfm> .

Potential Policies for the Plan: Housing

Issues identified by the Steering Group include

- providing suitable types and affordability of housing for Kinver residents;
- protecting as far as possible the Green Belt and other open spaces,
- promoting small scale brownfield and infill sites to meet housing needs; and
- ensuring that housing contributes to improving rather than aggravating issues such as infrastructure and flood risk

Housing Needs policy:

A Neighbourhood Plan can include a policy to help ensure the types, tenures and sizes of houses are appropriate to meet local needs, including affordability. A range of affordability options exist. The Plan's Steering Group is commissioning a Housing Needs Survey (which will be sent to all homes) and a Housing Needs Assessment (which will look at existing statistical data about Kinver). The results will provide the evidence to underpin a Kinver housing needs policy.

Local Criteria Policy:

The Neighbourhood Plan can include a 'Local Criteria' policy to guide new housing development in Kinver which will be used to assess housing schemes as and when proposals come forward. Some possible criteria include that developments should be small scale; comply with the design code; and should avoid areas at risk of flooding.

Policy on contributions to new infrastructure and facilities:

The Plan could set out the priorities for use of any Developer contributions for the benefit of Kinver parish.

Allocation of sites for development:

Neighbourhood Plans have the option to choose to allocate sites for housing. Site Allocation could be considered at any future review of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan process can also include finding additional sites, for instance for affordable housing schemes, if there is an identified need.

5. Next Steps

Once the results of this Consultation are in, the Steering Group will use them in preparing the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for Kinver parish. The policies and actions will be informed by additional technical studies, research and evidence collection. It is hoped that the Draft Plan will be published for consultation by early 2022.

Thank you for taking time to respond to the Questionnaire!