



Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

Information Statement and Information for Voters for the Referendum on 6 May 2021

On 6 May 2021, there will be a Referendum on a neighbourhood plan for your area. This note explains more about the Referendum that is going to take place and how you can take part in it. In this note you can find out about:

- The Referendum and how you can take part
- The Neighbourhood Area
- The Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Neighbourhood Plan)
- The Development Plan (of which Neighbourhood Development Plans are part)

Introduction

A Referendum on the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan will be held on 6 May 2021.

The Referendum will be conducted in accordance with procedures which are similar to those used at local government elections.

The question to be asked in the Referendum is:

‘Do you want Maldon District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Wickham Bishops to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?’

The Referendum area is the same as the Neighbourhood Area, this is shown on the map at the end of this statement. The Referendum area is the whole of the Wickham Bishops parish area.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning aims to help local communities play a direct role in planning the areas in which they live and work. A community can prepare a neighbourhood development plan. This plan can show how the community wants land to be used and developed in its area.

Neighbourhood planning is a part of the planning system. It gives local communities the option to create statutory plans for managing future development in their area.

For some time communities have had the power to produce local community planning documents which have had some weight in the planning process and this remains the case. However, neighbourhood planning is different because it sits alongside the Development Plan for Maldon District, and has full status as part of the statutory development plan.

Neighbourhood Development Plans must be compatible with national and local planning policies and are subject to a consultation process, an Independent Examination and a local Referendum. If the local community votes in favour, then the plan is 'made' by the Local Planning Authority.

What is a Neighbourhood Area?

A Neighbourhood Area can cover single streets or large urban or rural areas. The boundaries of a Neighbourhood Area can be put forward by:

- Town or Parish Councils; or
- A neighbourhood forum (a group of at least 21 people in areas without town or parish councils)

In Wickham Bishops the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area is the same as the parish area. This was requested by Wickham Bishops Parish Council and was agreed by Maldon District Council on 7 November 2016.

Who can prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Neighbourhood development plans are prepared by Town or Parish Councils, or neighbourhood forums. In this case, the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by Wickham Bishops Parish Council.

What is a Development Plan?

In England, planning applications are determined by local planning authorities in accordance with the Development Plan. A Development Plan is a set of documents that set out the policies for the development and use of land across the entire local authority area. Within the Maldon District, the local planning authority (LPA) is Maldon District Council, although Essex County Council is the LPA for matters relating to waste and minerals.

Specified documents

The regulations state that Maldon District Council must make the following documents available:

- The Referendum version of the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan
- The Report of the Independent Examiner
- A summary of the representations submitted to the Independent Examiner
- A statement by the local planning authority (Maldon District Council) that the draft Plan meets the basic conditions (the Decision Statement)
- A statement that sets out general information on neighbourhood planning and the Referendum (this Information Statement)

The documents can be viewed at:

https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/8112/community_led_planning_and_neighbourhood_plans/11

Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if:

- You are entitled to vote in local government elections; and
- You live within the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Area (see page 5).

How do I register to vote?

If you are not already registered to vote, applications to vote must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by midnight 19 April 2021.

You can register at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

How do I vote in the referendum?

You vote by putting a cross (X) in the 'Yes' or 'No' box on your ballot paper. Put a cross in only **one** box or your vote will not be counted.

If more people vote 'yes' than 'no' in this Referendum, then Maldon District Council will use the Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in Wickham Bishops. The Neighbourhood Plan once 'made' (adopted) will then become part of the Development Plan for Maldon District.

If more people vote 'no' than 'yes', then the plan will not be 'made' and planning applications will be decided without using the Neighbourhood Plan.

Ways of voting

There are three ways of voting:

In person on 6 May 2021:

- At your local polling station. It is easy and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do.
- You will receive a poll card confirming your polling station for this Referendum.
- If you do not receive your poll card, you can contact us on 01621-854477 or email us on elections@maldon.gov.uk to find out where your polling station is.
- The polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm.

By post:

- If you have a postal vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this.
- If you are already registered to vote but need to make an application to vote by post, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm Tuesday 20 April 2021 at this address:

Electoral Registration Officer
Maldon District Council
Princes Road
Maldon CM5 9DL

- Postal votes can be sent overseas but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return your completed postal vote by 6 May 2021.
- You should receive your postal vote about a week before polling day. If it doesn't arrive in time, you can ask for a replacement. Information on how to do this will be on your polling card.

By proxy:

- If you can't get to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post, you may be able to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody that you trust to vote on your behalf.
- If you have a proxy vote already, you will receive a poll card confirming this.
- If you are already registered to vote but need to make an application to vote by proxy, you will need to complete an application form and send it to the Electoral Registration Officer to arrive by 5pm on Tuesday 27 April 2021 at the address below.

- Applications to vote by emergency proxy at this election applied for on grounds of either physical incapacity or absence in relation to work or service/occurring after 5 pm on Tuesday, 27 April 2021 must be received by 5pm Thursday 6 May 2021, at the address below:

Electoral Registration Officer
Maldon District Council
Princes Road
Maldon CM5 9DL

Referendum Expenses

The Referendum expenses limit that will apply in relation to the Referendum is £2,452.98

The number of persons entitled to vote in the Referendum by reference to which the limit has been calculated is 1,542.

How to find out more:

Further general information on neighbourhood planning is available at:

https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20048/planning_policy/8112/community_led_planning_and_neighbourhood_plans/2

For queries about neighbourhood planning in general, please contact Planning Policy on:

policy@maldon.gov.uk

For more information about voting and the arrangements for this Referendum, please see

the Council's website at: https://www.maldon.gov.uk/homepage/7030/elections_and_voting

ELECTION MAPS

WICKHAM BISHOPS CIVIL PARISH, ESSEX COUNTY
Civil Parishes or Communities

Key

- Parish and Neighbourhood Area Boundary
- Neighbourhood Area

