

St Ives Neighbourhood Plan - Appendix A

Informal Public consultation July 2021

1. Introduction

This report details the process and results from the Informal Public Consultation carried out on the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan (SINP) during July 2021. The consultation took place as Covid-19 restrictions were being lifted. This affected the planning of consultation and there would be many people at that time reluctant to attend events or be part of large groups.

2. Consultation Process

Work carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan working group had identified three main themes for the SINP. These are:

- Environment
- Healthy Living
- Dynamic Centre

A local company was used to create a suitable logo for the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan that was used in the promotion and display materials.



Fig 1: St Ives Neighbourhood Plan Logo.


The consultation comprised a series of display boards with information describing the Neighbourhood Plan process, and work carried out to date on the three themes. A series of questions was included seeking the public's views of these ideas. There were also some open questions enabling the public to identify any other issues or specific ideas relating to the themes that should be included in the SINP. Copies of the display boards can be found on the Town Council web-site. The questions asked and responses are included in Section 4 of this report.

Two public exhibitions were arranged:

- At the Burleigh Hill Community Centre in the north of St Ives on Friday 16th July
- At the Farmers Market held in the town centre on Saturday 17th July

A third exhibition had been planned at the St Ives Carnival and Music Festival over the weekend on 10/11th July. However this event had to be cancelled due to uncertainties over Covid and the resulting financial risk to the organisers.

The exhibitions were promoted via an article in the St Ives Town Council newsletter *The Bridge*, which is delivered to all households in the town, the local free newsheet *The Riverporter*, local posters and via social media. Some local groups such as the St Ives Civic Society circulated details of the consultation to their members.



Neighbourhood Plan Update

Following a pause during the pandemic lockdown, work has restarted on the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan. So here is a quick recap on what a Neighbourhood Plan is and what it does.

A Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is a legal planning document, that once approved in a local referendum, helps define future development around St Ives. The NP sits alongside the local Development Plan produced by Huntingdonshire District Council to set out planning requirements that apply in St Ives. This can cover the design requirements of any new housing but also the protection and enhancement of existing facilities, transport and green spaces.

Having spent some time gathering data about St Ives as it is today, the plan is at a stage to hold the first of a series of public consultations on where we have got to so far and how the plan may evolve. The NP Team are working around a number of key themes such as enhancing nature, promoting healthy lifestyles and protecting and enhancing our town centre. Early on in the process, the NP Team concluded that St Ives had reached a natural limit in terms of area, so that no major new housing sites requiring major new infrastructure will be proposed. Any new housing will be limited to small sites within the existing town boundary.

The NP Team are investigating if plan can require that any new housing will have to meet the Passiv House standard of near zero carbon and include requirements to enhance nature. Within the town centre, is a new 'Innovation Hub' and part pedestrianisation the way forward? We will be seeking your views on these and other matters.


Providing that plans for the easing of COVID restrictions remain on track, the NP Team will be holding consultations around the town (please see panel below).

At these events we will have displays on the progress with the NP and a questionnaire to fill in. The questionnaire will also be available on the Town Council website. The NP Team is also keen to meet with local business and community groups. So if you would like a meeting to discuss specific issues relevant to your group please contact the Town Hall.

Come to see us:

16 July
Burleigh Hill Community Centre, Coronation Road 7pm to 9pm

17 July - St Ives Farmers' Market
St Ives from 10am to 1.30pm



Dynamic Centre Environment
St Ives Neighbourhood plan
Healthy Living

Bridge



ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

The Riverporter

Issue 89: 9 July 2021

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

There's good news, old news, very old news & now breaking news

Neighbourhood Plan Team to hold consultation

The good news is that things are gradually getting back to normal, with shops open and live music returning (see page 4). The old news involves our former Police & Crime Commissioner (see page 3) and the very old news is an article about Victorian education in St Ives (page 2). See breaking news below.

So let's start with some good news. The St Ives Neighbourhood Plan Team will be holding their first consultation during July. There will be exhibitions at:

- Burleigh Hill Community Centre on Friday 16th July from 14.00 to 17.00
- Farmers Market on Saturday 17th July

and resources are available on the team hub

THE RIVERPORTER COVERING THE NEWS OTHER PAPERS DON'T

Above: The Corn Exchange audience enjoying England beating Denmark at a live-streaming on Wednesday. Left: John Cherry and Right: Martin Kemp playing at the first of the Chapel Arts at The Corn Exchange concerts. Below: The appreciative audience enjoying live music. For more details of the concerts see the article on page 4.

Fig 2: Extract from the Town Council Newsletter and front page of the Riverporter.

The display boards and questionnaires were also available on the St Ives Town Council website and physical copies were available from the Town Hall.

The majority of people used the on-line Survey Monkey option to complete the questionnaire.

To encourage people to complete the questionnaire a draw with 5 prizes of £20 vouchers to be spent at the St Ives Farmers Market was offered.

3. Consultations

The first exhibition took place at the Burleigh Hill Community Centre in the north of St Ives. The displays were located on tables around the hall to maintain social distancing rules in place at that time. Around 30 people attended, with many visitors spending around 20 minutes in the all.



Fig 3: Photos at the Burleigh Hill Exhibition.

The second exhibition took place at the St Ives Farmers Market, that was being held in of the town's car parks at that time due to Covid. The display was set up in a gazebo at the edge of the market, close to the parking area. This meant that the display was visible to many visitors to the town as they travelled from the car park to the town centre. It was not possible to count the number of visitors to the display, but the number is estimated to be between 100 and 125.



Fig 4: Photos at Farmers Market Exhibition

A total of 97 questionnaires were submitted. It can be seen from the numbers above that not all visitors to the exhibitions filled in questionnaires.

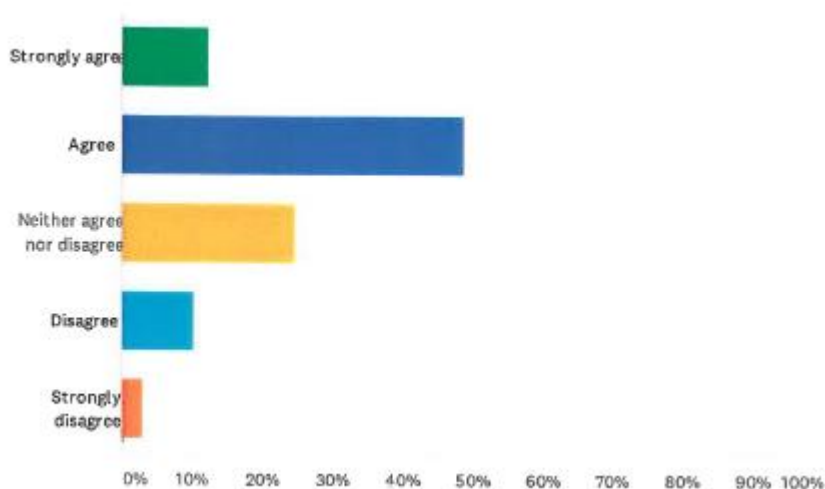
The results of the questionnaire are detailed and discussed in the following section.

4. Questionnaire results

St Ives Vision

The display boards set out a vision for St Ives as: “To make St Ives more attractive to residents and visitors by: diversifying the town centre economy celebrating our history and townscape encouraging more walking and cycling doubling nature and addressing the climate emergency”. Question 1 asked if people supported this vision.

Question 1: Does the vision for St Ives capture the issues that are important to the town in the long-term?

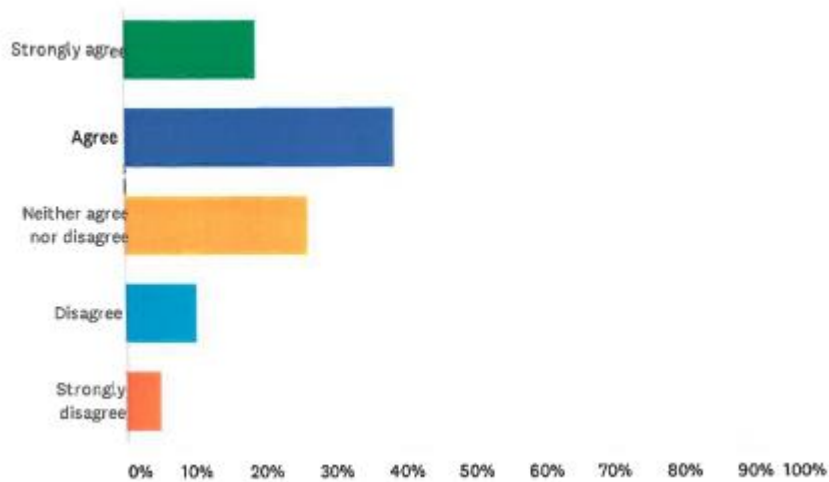


The responses showed that 61% either agreed or strongly agreed with the Vision, whilst 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Town Centre

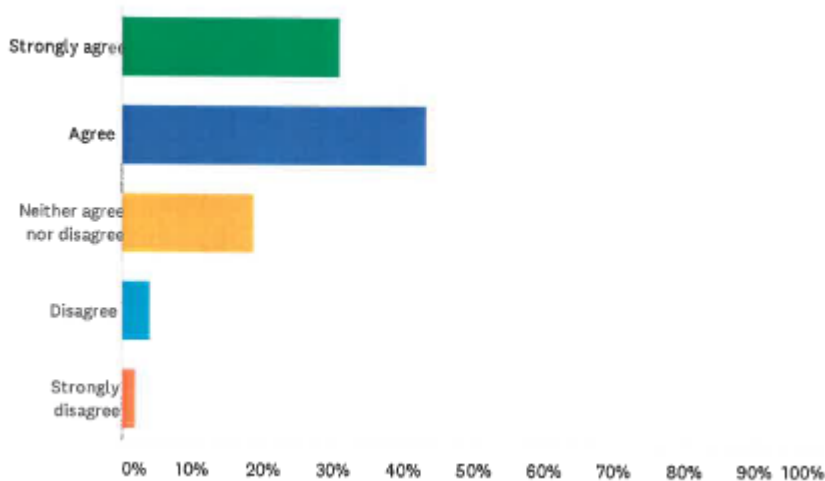
The next two questions related to the town centre. The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority working with Huntingdonshire District Council had produced a “Prospectus for St Ives” in February 2020. This included the idea for an Innovation Quarter in the town centre on part of an existing car park. Work is on-going to define the scope of the Innovation Quarter but it is likely to be a mixed development including new start up business units, flats and improvements to the existing bus station. The Prospectus also included ideas to improve the main Market Square by restricting car access and the introduction of new parklets providing some green space and places to meet.

Question 2: Do you support the idea of an Innovation Quarter?



58% of respondents supported the idea of an Innovation Quarter, whilst 16% were opposed.

Question 3 : Do you support the Concept of Enhanced Public Realm?

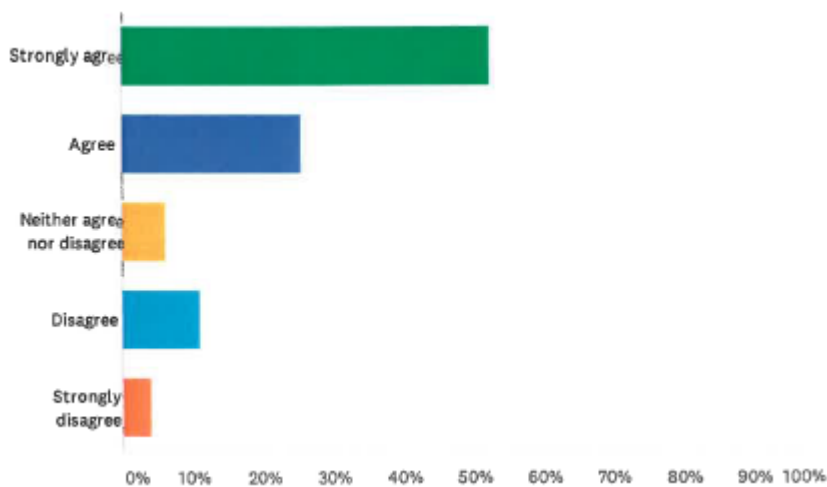


75% of respondents supported the enhancing the public realm, whilst 6% were opposed.

Housing

The next section of the display covered new housing. The current Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan includes for 450 new houses in the St Ives spatial area. This area is slightly larger than the SINP area as it includes parts of adjacent villages that form part of the built up area. The majority of these houses have already been built or have outline planning permission. The NP Working Group had looked at new sites for housing and concluded that there were no suitable sites outside the existing built up area and asked if people agreed with this view.

Question 4: Do you support the idea that no new sites outside the built up area should be allocated for housing?



79% supported the statement that no new sites should be allocated, whilst 15% indicated that there should be new housing sites around the existing built up area. The following question asked how many new houses should be provided.

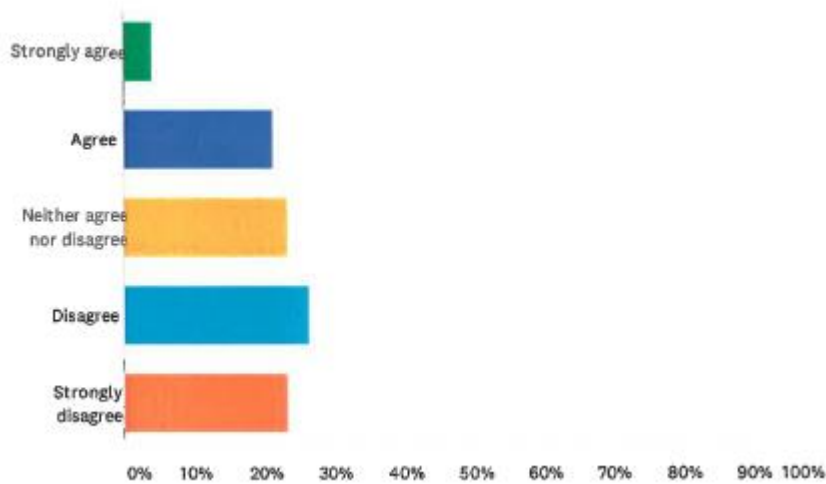
Question 5: If you do not agree with question 3, how many new houses should be provided within the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan area?

Whilst 15 people disagreed with Question 5, 23 people indicated they would like more housing outside the existing built up area as follows:

Number of new houses	Number of responders
Up to 250	11
Up to 500	6
Up to 1000	5
Over 1000	1

The working group had identified a possible site for new housing within the existing built up area which was to use part of the car park of the Co-op supermarket in the north of the town. The car park is not fully used and part of the car park had received planning permission to build a petrol station; application 13/01962, although it was not built and the planning approval has expired.

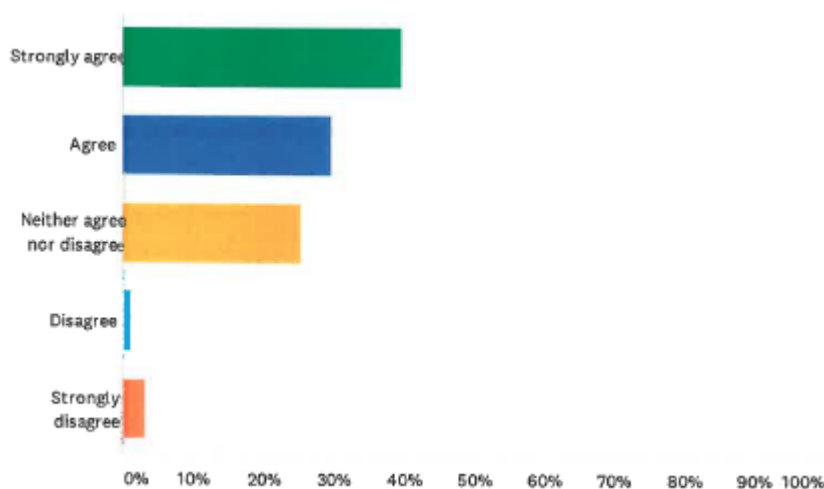
Question 6: Do you support the idea of using the underused car park at the Co-op for new housing?



50% of respondents disagreed with the idea whilst 25% agreed. The NP Working Group will need to decide if this idea should be progressed or if other ideas for this area should be developed. Under question 14, a few people noted that the ideas were biased towards the town centre and little was indicated for the rest of the town.

Question 7 asked about including the requirement for zero or very low carbon standards for new development. The passiv-house standard is widely used as a benchmark for low energy use in buildings.

Question 7: Do you support the idea of Passive House standards for new development in St Ives?



70% of respondents supported the idea, whilst 4% were opposed.

Town Facilities

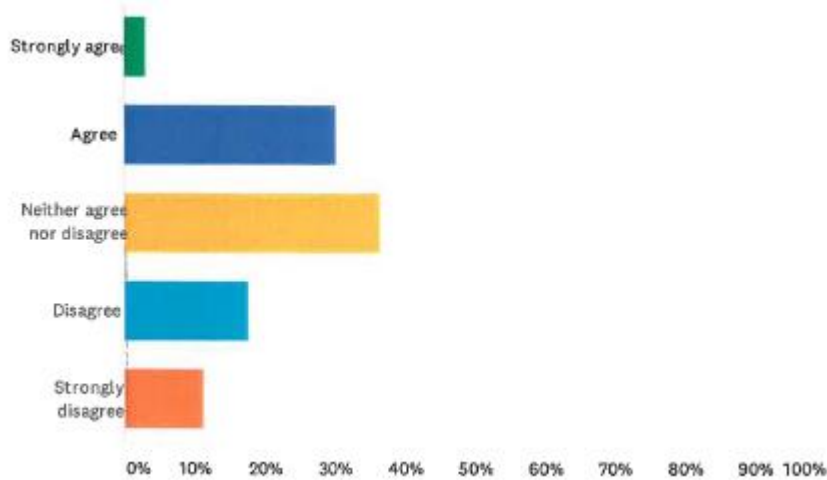
The display boards included a map showing where existing facilities were located within St Ives, for example, schools, doctors surgeries, shops and play equipment. Question 8 was an open question asking what additional facilities were required.

Question 8 – Are there any new facilities that should be provided in St Ives and where should they be located?

	Include in NP	Town Council	Other Local Authority	Other Groups	Community Project
PEDESTRAIN MOVEMENT					
Seating for stopping and resting along main walking routes					
Accessible toilets designed for disabled and young people					
Access to well connected streets in and around town					
Outdoor paths and routes accessible to all					
CYCLING AND WALKING					
Better connected walking and cycling routes					
Wider footpaths shared between cyclists and pedestrians					
RECREATION					
Upgrade children's play equipment at parks and create new parks					
Make sport opportunities more locally available for 12+ years					
A new or refurbished swimming pool for younger children					
An outdoor swimming pool for all ages					
New indoor soft play area for younger kids					
PUBLIC SPACE					
Street furniture fit for purpose in and around town					
Traffic and pedestrian free zones in and around town					
Pedestrian and traffic free zones in the town centre					
Free car parking in St Ives					
LOOK AND FEEL					
Niche and casual food options in the town centre					
Spare retail or office space converted into community spaces					
Reinvigorate out of town shopping areas					
Extra space created for retail					
Provide arts and craft events and exhibitions					
HEALTH AND WELLBEING					
More open green spaces for relaxation and recreation					
More trees and gardens planted in town					
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS OPTIONS					
More support for business parks and flexibility for them to grow					
Support cycling and walking to business parks					
More information on incentives and schemes to make business sustainable					
Available options to fund business grants					
Access to green ideas/incentives to make business more sustainable					
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS					
Secure and convenient cycle storage and rail and bus station					
Access to more street and residential EV charging points					
NEW DEVELOPMENT					
Need guidance and funding on how to climate proof your house					
A good quality GP surgery					
Build and new Secondary School					
A venue to watch films					
Build future office spaces within exciting business development layout					
More rental homes needed eg vacant sites at Vindis London Road					

Tourism is an important part of the town. Local businesses also require accommodation for their visitors and sometimes staff. Question 9 asked about providing additional hotel accommodation.

Question 9 – Should the St Ives NP support the provision of extra hotel accommodation within the town and where should be located?



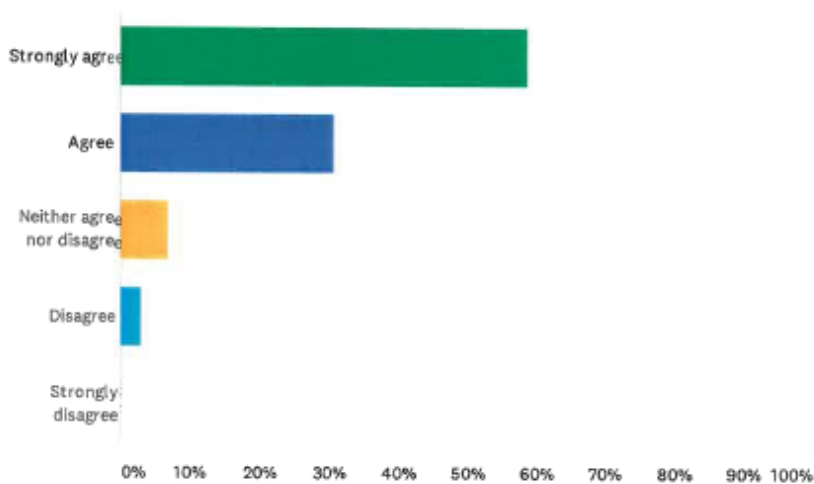
The response to this question was evenly split between 33% who agreed and 29% that disagreed with 36% neither agreeing or disagreeing. The second part of the question asked where any new hotel accommodation should be provided.

Responses included making use of disused shops and buildings in the town centre, adjacent to the park and ride and upgrading the existing Dolphin hotel.

Healthy Lifestyle / Active Travel

The display boards included a map of the town with the main off-road footpaths and cycling routes along with some suggested additional routes. Questions 10 and 11 related to improving walking and cycling routes within the town.

Question 10: Do you support improvements to walking and cycling routes within St Ives and to adjacent villages?



90% of respondents supported the provision of better walking and cycling routes within St Ives and out to adjacent villages with 3% against. Question 11 asked for specific improvements.

Question 11: Which particular improvements would help you make more journeys by foot or cycle?

81 people responded to this question with some making multiple suggestions. The following table provides a summary of these responses.

Comment	Number of similar responses	Include in NP	Town Council	Other local authority	Other business	Community project
Secure bike racks	1					
Link existing routes	2					
More cycle routes	12					
Improved signage	1					
Wider paths	6					
Improved lighting	1					
Reduce cars in town centre	4					
Divert Ouse Valley Way	1					
Better surfaces	2					
Off road routes especially Ramsey Road	4					
Improved crossing of the by-pass	2					
Improved links to villages	8					

The responses to this open question fall into 3 categories. Many responses covered all categories.

A. Infrastructure and Connectivity of Cycle & Walking routes.

55% of the responses to this question highlighted a number of issues regarding the problems they encountered during cycling and walking within the St Ives area.

Many commented on cycle routes not joining up and having to cross busy roads. Much of the Marley road area of the town is not connected to any cycle network that lead to the town centre.

Also, there is a requirement to have wider paths that are clearly marked to segregate cycle and walking and independent of the roads.

St Ives has a growing business/industrial sector that is not adequately supported with a safe cycling and walking network for the workforce.

B. Safety concerns regarding the existing network

51% of the responses highlighted safety issues when walking or cycling.

The area around the Morrison's and Aldi roundabouts is causing a lot of concern for both shoppers and workers. The volume and speed of approaching traffic is hazardous and a major problem.

Some commented on the road surface and pot holes as being an issue and overgrown hedges and shrubbery restricting safe viewing.

Inconsiderate and speeding cyclists were mentioned especially when walking and cycling with young children.

Once again the width of path and being segregated from busy roads is making cycling unsafe.

Negotiating illegally parked vehicles e.g. East Street/Town Centre is hazardous.

C: The lack of Town Centre resources to accommodate cyclists and walkers.

10% of the responses made direct reference to the Town Centre lacking enough facilities to accommodate cyclists and walkers. Insufficient bike racks was a common theme.

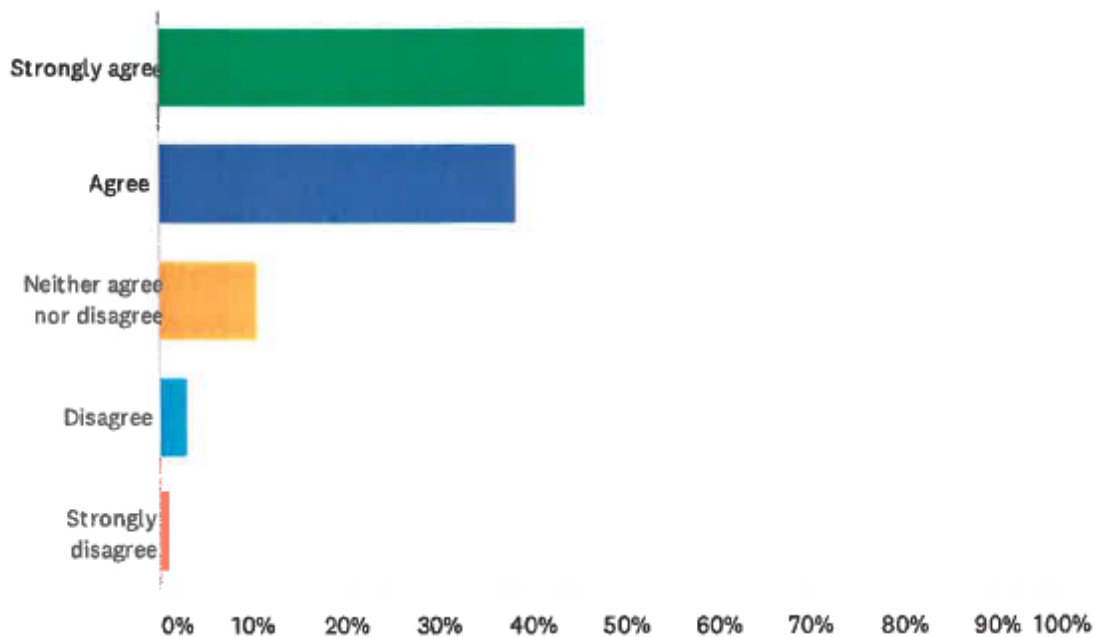
Also the need to pedestrianise the centre was presented to create a sense of wellbeing when cyclists and walkers visit the town. Once again illegal parking in the town and Bridge St. was commented on.

The town centre is a 'landing spot' for many activities and some responses highlighted that a number of cycling and walking routes converge on St.Ives. Cycling clubs regularly use St.Ives to stop off but not adequately catered for. Also mentioned was that the Busway path has connected a lot of cyclists and walkers from neighbouring villages and as far away as Cambridge. New developments such as Northstowe are already visiting via this route. It is now evident that the cycle racks in St. Ives are regularly used and full with other means used to secure bikes safely.

Green Space

The display boards included a map of the town showing the main green spaces and proposed the creation of a "green ring" around the town as a long term project to enhance existing green spaces and provide a leisure route for walkers and cyclists.

Question 12: Do you support the concept of the St Ives Green Ring?



85% of those that responded supported the idea of the green ring, whilst 4% were opposed.

The following open question asked the public what their priorities would be for improving nature within the town.

Question 13: What should be prioritised to improve nature in your neighbourhood to enable you to 'embrace your space' ?

There were a total of 74 comments Made for this question (with some residents making several comments). The comments have been consolidated and the comments that were mentioned more than once are (please note that some responses fit more than 1 category):-

Comment	Number of similar responses	Include in NP	Town Council	Other local authority	Other business	Community project
Plant more trees (not just hedges), green/woodland areas/improved waterways (prioritised over housing)	18					
More wildlife/wildflower areas and cut hedges to allow birds to nest. Install bird/bat boxes and also try and encourage more bees and butterflies etc	10					
Traffic management (reduce speed limits, illegal parking, prevent rat runs through housing estates etc)	7					
Clear rubbish	6					
Pedestrian routes (mainly in the town centre)	4					
Education	3					
Community orchard	3					
Tackle anti-social behaviour vaping and drug abuse (notably warners park is mentioned a few times)	3					
More Parklets/seating	3					
More resources required/proactive maintenance plan/volunteer management	2					
Better access to/around lakes	1					
Reduce light/noise pollution	1					
There is plenty of green space already	1					
Water for wildlife	1					
Stop using weed killer	1					
Active measures to address biodiversity loss/climate emergency	1					
More free open air events	1					
No more building	1					

Maintenance of drains/waterways to prevent flooding	1					
No parklets (use existing space)	1					
Stop mowing the verges	1					
There is no space available in north road	1					
More farming space req	1					
Green footpaths	1					
More "green fingers" in town	1					

Other Issues

The final question was an open question allowing the public to add any new issues that had not been covered in the consultation.

Question 14: Are there any other subjects that should be covered in the Neighbourhood Plan ?

There were 67 comments made, with some residents making several comments. Many responses repeated comments that were made for other questions. The comments have been consolidated and are:

Comment	Number of similar responses	Include in NP	Town Council	Other local authority	Other business	Community project
Traffic calming	7					
Pedestrianisation	7					
Dealing with poor parking	6					
Traffic congestion	5					
Improve alleyways in town centre	4					
Improve flood protection	4					
Wild flowers on verges	3					
Turn St Ives into an Eco-town	3					
Parking too expensive	3					
More police	2					
Improve bus-shelters	2					
Encourage new businesses into St Ives	2					
Reduce speed limits	2					
Better access to the River	1					
Encourage more visitors	1					
Building Conservation	1					
Support for community groups	1					
More pedestrian crossings	1					

Bus services to villages	1					
Car pool / share scheme	1					
Bus routes through town centre	1					
Space for young people	1					
Protect the Octagon	1					
Retain All Saints Church Hall	1					

5. Conclusion

The 2021 consultation has shown support for the general themes being discussed for the Neighbourhood Plan.

In particular there is:

- Support for the St Ives Vision
- Support for the Innovation Quarter but more details are required
- No support for major new housing sites
- Limited support for housing on the Co-op car park
- Strong support for low carbon / Passiv House standards
- Mixed support for additional hotel provision
- Support for walkway and cycle route improvements and additions to create a town network with links to local villages
- Support for the green ring
- Support for town centre traffic reduction schemes

A variety of suggestions on possible improvements and changes to the town which will need to be considered during development of the Neighbourhood Plan or passed onto local authorities or other organisations to take forward.