

EAST BOLDON FORUM

East Boldon Neighbourhood Forum

Shaping the future of East Boldon



East Boldon has its own Neighbourhood Forum, formally designated in January 2018. Details of the constitution and a map of the Forum area are on the website at: www.eastboldonforum.org.uk.

East Boldon boasts a vibrant community of willing hands and an eclectic mix of facilities, businesses, services and transport links. It is a popular place to live with excellent schools and a range of housing options, but there are questions about future development and the wider planning policies of the region. Concerns centre around pressures of possible new housing, traffic and parking problems and the protection of the environment. Local people can and should make decisions about the future of their neighbourhoods. In consultation with their communities, residents have the power to develop a vision for all aspects of their local area, including the built environment and building codes. They can press for the retention of wildlife corridors and for an infrastructure to be provided for the well-being of residents and benefit of local businesses. To support engagement with young citizens, links with schools are important. As in a similar Neighbourhood Forum in Whitburn, members aim to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan to meet local needs and create a key part of the official planning strategy for the future. Continued dialogue, through regular meetings, leaflets and drop-in sessions ensure objectives are agreed. Members have conducted research into local business needs and have mapped historic buildings, pathways and green spaces. Biodiversity records show local flora and fauna disappearing at an alarming rate. Should insensitive development occur, once commonplace species will disappear. Whilst not attempting to frustrate genuine progress, we have a responsibility to raise concerns when greenbelt land is seen as a commodity, rather than a natural heritage asset to be enjoyed by all. Our application for Government funding through "Locality" has been successful and will support independent research into evidence for the Plan. East Boldon is already a wonderful place in which to grow up and grow old but voices are needed to keep it so.

Our region is renowned for its friendliness and openness. Communities are welcoming and resourceful. The village is no exception. Blessed with a characterful centre, acknowledged by its status as a conservation area, residents and business people are justly proud. The pattern of the ancient linear village and with limestone walls lining pathways leading to views over open fields still exists. People of all ages are appreciative of the green spaces surrounding the village, providing leisure facilities and havens for flora and fauna. To preserve their cultural heritage, volunteers in the

village share their time and talents freely. Various groups have been formed. The Facebook group, "Pride in East Boldon", with almost 2000 members, evolved as a network for the community, sharing interests, historic photographs and memories, advice, local news and concerns. "Friends of East Boldon Parks" organise magical events for all, such as the recent scarecrow competition. The latest team of volunteers is the "East Boldon and Cleadon Library". Now a registered charity, it has taken over the local library service from the Council.

We would welcome more people willing to help with the Neighbourhood Plan. For information, please contact us at: info.eastboldonforum@gmail.com or attend our meeting on Monday, 28 January in East Boldon Scout Hut at 7.30 p.m.