

Is the Clavering Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group (CSG) like the parish council?

Clavering Parish Council (CPC) delegated producing the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and engaging with the community to a team of residents with a single CPC councillor who is a part of the CSG. The rest of the CSG team is made up of volunteers who are not elected. There is a distinct difference between the powers of the CSG team members and Parish Council members of CPC. All comments and reports published by the CSG are based on evidence and not members' opinions.

Once the CSG working party team believe they are ready for a final community consultation with fully formed policies and a complete document, they will present it to the CPC with a recommendation that they support and adopt it prior to what is known as a Regulation 14 Pre-submission consultation. It is at this stage that the CPC will vote to support the Neighbourhood Plan following the recommendations of the CSG and in so doing will allow the Regulation 14 consultation survey to happen. This will be a survey to every member of the electorate in the parish plus statutory consultees such as English Heritage, Natural England, the District and County Councils themselves and neighbouring parish councils. This must happen prior to the Parish then submitting the final documents to Uttlesford District Council for the next stages. In the meantime, CPC will control spending and oversee compliance with protocol and standing orders.

It is the CPC that will then, after the R14 Consultation has happened and any amendments have been made as a result of justifiable comments, submit the finished document to UDC for the next stages. The next stages will be for a wider consultation known as a Regulation 16 consultation when anyone can comment, followed by an independent examination of the documents and following any recommendations for amendments from that exercise, on to a Referendum vote by the parish electorate. This referendum vote will ask the parish electorate only if UDC should adopt and use the finalised Clavering Neighbourhood Plan to make future planning decisions for those planning applications in the parish.

Throughout this process, the CSG will provide regular updates on progress through written reports and periodically holding public meetings where anyone within the community can come along and ask questions. These meetings will be publicised and will have an agenda. The rest of the meetings that the CSG will hold will be to undertake the research and evidence gathering and to discuss findings and next steps as a part of the process to produce the Neighbourhood Plan documents themselves.

The CSG differs from the CPC in that Parish Councillors can vote on decisions being made by the Council at Council meetings based on their opinions and in accordance with the Standing Orders and Policies of the Council.

What does the CSG Team do?

A main function of the team is to collect evidence from the community and outside agencies such as Environment, Highways and UDC to prove specific needs or issues. Engaging with the community through their website, social media, consultations and events is also a key part of our activity. It must also comply with the constitution and protocols agreed with CPC and provide an accurate record of its

activities including meetings, spending and contact with stakeholders. These records include reports and documents that will ultimately form part of the NP.

What if there is a conflict of interests between the members' views and the NP evidence?

The evidence is all that counts in terms of the NP. Any recommendations the SG makes including site selection for development, will be based on the evidence it has collected. If a CSG team member has a personal view on a planning or infrastructure issue they can express their opinions as a resident in any consultation, just the same as any other resident can. If they feel their views are completely at odds with the evidence the NP presents, they can choose not to be involved in that topic or in the group as a whole.

Does where the team members live affect the NP outcome?

The CSG team does not get to vote for one option over another on any decision whether planning or infrastructure. All decisions are based on evidence gathered from community surveys and other outside agencies. The only influence an individual team member can have is as a resident, giving their opinion in a consultation that is open to all residents. For that reason, where an individual team member lives would not affect any decision made by CSG. The team members come from all over the village and the SG welcomes anyone from any part of Clavering.

Is it better if the team members are neutral?

Everyone that has volunteered really cares about Clavering for one reason or another. That passion and caring is the driver for their volunteering and is what makes them give their time. Some members, give huge chunks of time unpaid, which they would not do if they did not care. Having no opinion or being completely neutral is not a requirement and given the way the team works, it's fine to have opinions and still contribute to the NP efforts. The final check on the Plan, will be carried out by an independent planning inspector. He/she will decide whether it has been objectively neutral and followed the evidence available. If the plan is found to be deficient the inspector will return it for amendment before it can be taken to a Referendum vote by the village."

Adopted on 30th July, 2025

Rachel Tallon (Chair CSG)