

# NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM

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**Below is the Draft Vision which sets out what Thurston might look like in 15 years-time. This is based on feedback from residents who have engaged with Thurston's Neighbourhood Plan process either by answering the initial survey; filling out questionnaires; submitting comments via email or attending the Public Meetings held.**

**Please let us have your comments on the Draft Vision - we want to improve it. Now is your chance to do that.**

“Thurston 2030 is a vibrant Suffolk village community surrounded by attractive countryside. The village continues to be a safe, enjoyable place in which to live and bring up a family. It is a thriving village serving a wider rural hinterland. Since 2015 well-planned housing, business, health, educational and recreational provision has taken place.

Thurston has retained a clear gap between the village and Bury St Edmunds. What it has done is to protect the best of its historical buildings and spaces of value to the community along with the surrounding countryside, recognising they are an important part of what makes Thurston a special, individual place.

The population has grown steadily since 2015 and that has enabled the community to enjoy the benefits of improved community infrastructure. New housing development has addressed the needs of the local community without changing the village 'feel'. Small-scale developments, including affordable and self-build housing, have continued over the years. In particular, groups of new starter, family homes and bungalows at various sites have been built so that young families have been able to find affordable housing locally and older people to down-size.

The growth of Thurston has also enabled improvements to education and health provision. A well-used and greatly appreciated health centre includes doctors, dentists, pharmacy, and social workers. It has become the focus of small developments for over 50s, where residents benefit from purpose-built housing, sheltered accommodation, a well-run nursing home, and social and health-care services.

The centre of Thurston village has retained a good range of shops and services. New retail outlets, including eating places, and valued stores selling everyday items have located within both existing buildings and a new development in the centre of the village. New small-scale commercial units in and around the village have helped to nurture a thriving small business community. New businesses, many of which provide local services of value to the community have steadily sprung up. In general, Thurston is seen as a place where small companies can 'do business'. The presence of the railway station and the proximity to Bury St Edmunds has helped to nurture this progress.

New sports and leisure facilities have been provided partly through financial contributions from residential development. A range of leisure facilities have been built. These provide a wide-ranging offer of activities that have been popular with children and young people: teenagers no longer say “there’s nothing to do in Thurston”. Accessible, linked pavements, footpaths, cycle paths and bridle-ways link homes to village facilities and also encourage residents to keep active. Everyone can benefit, from parents with babies in prams to the oldest member of the community.

With retention of central open spaces and access to the countryside has been improved and the village has a ‘green’ feel to it. An additional area for burials has been created near the existing churchyard: it is peaceful and has encouraged wildlife. Green spaces and trees have been designed into each scheme and access to village facilities has been provided by footpaths, cycle paths and mobility scooter runs. Indeed, Thurston feels like a village knitted together with a network of high quality open spaces and connecting pathways.

The village has been developed taking a holistic approach. New developments have been integrated into Thurston, rather than feeling like bolt-ons: they have been sympathetically designed to fit in with the style of development in Thurston to which residents have been accustomed, strengthening its appeal for everyone.

The essence of life for young families, people who work in the village or surrounding towns, and the elderly has been enhanced”