

PART 2

Name: Gavin Drake

Organisation (if applicable):

Please state which part of the Neighbourhood Plan (for example which section, paragraph or policy) your representation relates to:

All – general response

Please use the space below to make comments on this part of the Neighbourhood Plan

This is a flawed consultation on a flawed plan.

THE PLAN

Hednesford Town Council have prepared the plan on the assumption that everything that is old needs to be protected; without considering whether the buildings themselves are worthy of protection, they seek to list everything of a certain age. This is living in the past and is harmful to the future regeneration of Hednesford. Take, for example, Market Street in Hednesford. The plan talks of retaining its “Victorian / Edwardian” character. It has no such character. Parts may date back to those eras; but Market Street is a muddled mess. Locally listing unattractive buildings simply because they are old will be a stumbling block to future progress.

Likewise, St Saviour’s Church. This is now closed; and locally listing this ugly and functional building simply because of its age can only serve to hamper efforts by its owners to find a new suitable purpose for it.

Things should not be protected simply because they are old. We can’t live in the past, as this local plan seeks to do.

THE CONSULTATION

The Town Council’s published list of responses to its own consultation is incomplete and completely ignores my own contribution to it. In response to a Freedom of Information Act request, the town clerk has informed me that the company that conducted the consultation “no longer operates”. He says: “I have every reason to believe that the outcomes the company reported at the time reflected the submissions received from respondents to the questionnaire.” It can’t possibly do that as my response has been ignored. This has been a sham consultation. If it meets the legal requirements to consult, then the legal requirements need revisiting.