

Minutes of the meeting of the Stebbing neighbourhood plan steering group

3rd April, 2018. Friends Meeting House, Stebbing

1. Members Present

John Evans
Christina Cant
Jackie Kingdom
Andrew Martin
Val Stokes
Judith Farr
The Secretary

2. Apologies for absence

Bernard Bazley

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed. Following on from Andrews report at the last meeting on the revised NPPF, John asked if he had received the housing numbers arising from the revised draft NPPF. Andrew confirmed that he had not as yet received this. John also said it was agreed at the last meeting that paperwork for the meeting would be circulated by the Saturday evening prior to the meeting, unfortunately he had ‘fallen at the first hurdle’ and apologised for this.

4. Public Questions

There was one member of the public in attendance but no questions. The Chair stated that the group were very receptive to questions as part of its public consultation exercise. The member of the public asked whether the group thought UDC would ever make a decision on their local plan. Andrew stated that the government are looking intensely at 3 Councils in South Essex (Castle Point, Basildon and Brentwood) that have yet to produce a plan. If this situation continues, the department for communities and local government will take over and appoint someone to do it for them. John and asked the member of the public present whether they thought the start of the meeting was the right place for public questions or whether it might be better placed at the end? The member of the public said they were happy with the public question time at the start of the meeting.

5. Action List review

Action 8, Andrew explained that it was difficult to get useful information at present because regulation 18 underestimates the number of houses required and until the outcome of the West of Braintree proposal is known, the figures are not going to be correct. It was agreed to leave this action open until later when more useful figures should be available.

Action 11 will remain open until the plan is complete.

Action 23 is complete, Jackie added that the Parish Council completed on the purchase of the Mill Lane Playing Field last week.

Action 25, John said he would like to recommend using the ancient tithe map and the mapping currently available to denote the historic hedges, to undertake a detailed survey of all the species would be too much of a task. Jackie asked whether Rachel had said that Stebbing were the only

Parish to have considered including this, John confirmed this was the case, Rachel said ancient hedges could be mentioned but there was no need to go into great detail.

Action 32 is complete.

Action 36, Christina said that the problem with class sizes in Stebbing is that because it only has 5 classes and a 6 year intake, the class sizes do fluctuate. The school has approximately 127 pupils currently but ECC plan to increase this to 150 which would obviously mean bigger classes but they would still be of differing sizes. If the school expands much more, there is one classroom that could be divided to make 2 which would require another member of staff, but with the current number of pupils the budget cannot support this additional expenditure. Should the numbers increase to the 150 mark, the budget may then allow for the extra class and as such, classes smaller. Action complete

Action 37 is ongoing and there is an item on the agenda

Action 38 is incorporated into the draft. Action complete

Action 39 is ongoing

Action 40 is down to Michael Kingdom as an absent volunteer – Jackie said that she wasn't sure if there was much difference, but she would pass it to Michael to see if there is anything to add

Action 41 is complete

Action 42 is complete

Action 43 is complete

Actions 44 & 45 were marked a closed as it was decided not to look for new members to join the steering group at this late stage in the plan.

6. Budget / Funding (Locality funding rules extended)

John had handed round the last version of the budget sheets prepared by Francine earlier in the meeting. John said he had been in contact with Francine via email to say we were meeting this evening and that he might be in touch again after seeking the views of the other members of the Steering group not only to keep the spreadsheet up to date but also in relation to any further funding that may be required. The latest sheet showed that the group were currently underspent by £2500, The secretary said that he didn't think the figures were correct, the date at the top of the sheet was 31st October 2017 and the secretary was aware of bills that have been paid since this date. The secretary also stated that some of the £5000 UDC grant has definitely been used.

Action:- Greg to contact Francine to obtain an updated budget spreadsheet

John reported that the Locality grant rules have been extended, the basic grant is £9000 and an extra grant of up to £8000 available if the neighbourhood plan meets the qualification, the eligibility includes if the neighbourhood plan allocates sites for housing or includes design codes in the plan and 3 others that don't apply to us. Judith asked whether the guidance specified the size the sites have to be to qualify. John said that there was no mention of it in the guidance notes. John suggested that if Francine is happy to continue looking after the budget that she is asked to investigate this further with her existing contacts at locality. The secretary added that the original grant agreed of approximately £9000 was subsequently increased to £14000/£15000 due to the proximity of the proposed West of Braintree development and that from the figures on the spreadsheet we had received a total of £11764 from locality to date. John added that he thought one of the reasons for the increase was that technical assistance was offered to us from Aecom but due to the conflict of interest Aecom would have regarding the West of Braintree proposal it was agreed that this would not be appropriate for us and they therefore agreed to the increase in funding. Andrew asked how much of the locality funding had been spent. The secretary

responded that all of the £11764 had been spent because with locality you had to say upfront how much you wanted and for what purpose. If the grant is agreed then the grant can only be spent on what it was intended for and proof of this has to be supplied. Also the grant has to be spent within a specified time period or before the financial year end, any amount not spent has to be repaid. The UDC grant differs in that the Parish Council pays any invoices and then claims the money back from UDC up to the agreed grant amount. Judith asked whether the UDC grant was a one off, the secretary confirmed that this was the case. The secretary added that there was no reason that further grant funding could be sought from Locality up to the agreed amount, but it would have to be for known amounts. John added that he thought this would have to be looked into as he thought the old scheme may now be closed. It was agreed to ask Francine to investigate this.

Action:- John to speak to Francine regarding the changes to the Locality grant funding to see how / if this affects us.

7. UDC reply 03 April 2018 re meeting

John reported upon the response received from UDC concerning the scheduled meeting with them in March. Cllr Mills has come back with a response that says UDC are still awaiting a further Heritage assessment before taking heritage issues further in the context of West of Braintree. Andrew added that he thought we could ask for some of the information under freedom of information. John asked whether it would be a good idea to ask for this? Andrew said some of the information would be disclosable, possibly not the first draft, but we should be able to obtain the cost and provider. It was thought that we should ask for the information via the normal channels in the first instance, if we don't then get an answer then to press forward with a FoI request as this is now holding up our neighbourhood plan.

Action:- John to contact Stephen Miles at UDC in the first instance to ask for information regarding their Heritage assessment

Andrew stated that there are very strong constraints relating to heritage that cannot be ignored.

John stated that the new NPPF bolsters the significance of heritage and it is therefore even more important that UDC conform. John asked if we should use some of the language used in the draft NPPF when we come to look at the heritage section of our draft plan. Andrew agreed that we should. Christina asked Andrew why he thought that UDC had left it until this late stage to do its Heritage report. Andrew responded that Braintree had done the same and Historic England are still objecting to the settlements as they don't think Braintree have done sufficient work on the impact.

Judith asked whether the meeting with UDC will now take place. John responded that the meeting would take place, but there was no point in spending the time and money for Simon Neesam to attend while UDC would only be able to talk about a limited number of items.

Andrew added that we should also ask whether UDC's Heritage consultants have been provided with the Stebbing Heritage assessment. John added that he would also mention that UDC have not added all the information to their website that we have provided, whereas for Great Chesterford everything they have submitted is there.

The Secretary asked that as the meeting with UDC had not taken place in March and there had been a query over how the invoice for Simon Neesam would be paid as it was over the amount that could be agreed by the steering group whether a proposal should now to be taken to the April Parish Council Meeting. It was agreed that this should be done.

Action:- Greg to email Judith with a draft Proposal for the Simon Neesam expenditure

8. Review of draft plan and further allocation of editing tasks

The draft plan as it stands is now version 3. All comments made have been included in this latest draft. Jackie pointed out that on page 7, Ruffells Place seems to have disappeared from the list of brownfield sites that have been built on.

John asked how the group would now like to move forward. Judith asked whether getting comments / information separately from the members worked for John, John responded that it did. Judith asked whether the group should all go through the latest version and get back to him. John said he was happy to be the master editor so it was agreed that this was the best way forward.

John said that he has accepted the changes made to date; therefore version 3 would be used as the latest base version.

It was asked whether the inclusion of the maps for footpaths and bridleways etc would require an Ordinance Survey licence number. John said he thought the Parish Council should have an O/S licence number, the secretary said this was not the case, the only thing the Parish subscribed to at the request of the former Chair was Parish Online, the Secretary didn't think this was the same as having an Ordinance Survey Licence number.

Action:- Greg to look at where the O/S Licence number comes from for use in the plan

Christina asked whether there were any specific parts of the plan that John would like the group to spend more time on. John responded that he would like to suggest that after Andrew had stripped out the parts that need to go into the appendices, he would then make comments on whether additional time needed spending on particular parts. John said that he thought Judith's suggestion of a glossary was a good one and asked whether she would be happy to take this task. Judith said she would be happy to do this and the abbreviations.

Judith added that the only thing she was unable to find was the breakdown of the religious beliefs in the RCCE document. Andrew said he had this as part of the census and he would forward this to her.

Action:- Andrew to send Judith the breakdown of religious beliefs from the census

Judith asked when John requires responses back to him by. John said by 11th April

9. Update on new NPPF (relevance to NP)

Andrew said there was nothing new to add.

10. Photographs for draft plan

Jackie said that she thought photographs that are to be included in the plan should be ones that are easily recognisable to the residents, as while there are some very nice vistas of the village from obscure places that whilst lovely, will only be recognised by a small number of people and what we don't want is people spending their time wondering where the pictures are of, distracting them from the main purpose of the plan. Given the poor response in the past to the competition for photographs for the village map it wasn't felt that this would be a good idea. John asked whether anyone knew the name of the person who had contributed to a past edition of the Stebbing Scene, no-one was aware, but Richard the editor should have the information.

Action:- Bernard to look at getting suitable photographs / contact Stebbing Scene to see if previous contributor would like to take some for the neighbourhood plan.

Jackie suggested including pictures of the village in action, i.e. cricket, bowls, walkers, morris dancers mobile library and other activities.

11. Next Residents Consultation stage

This has been included as something for the group to think about and aim for. It was thought unrealistic that we would be in a position to present the draft plan to the public before the summer holidays, it was thought that while the group should have a stall at the village fete, this wouldn't be the correct time to do it as there would be too many other distractions.

Christina asked whether this would be the final draft or whether any comments from the public could be incorporated prior to it going to UDC. John looked at the dates on the Thaxted plan and they indicated that it did not have to go to UDC prior to a public consultation. Attached to the front of the Thaxted plan are pie charts showing the numbers of people that have attended their public exhibitions etc. It was agreed that this was a good idea and should be incorporated into our plan. It was decided that having the next consultation in conjunction with any other event was probably not the best idea; again there may be too many other distractions plus getting the plan to that stage by the dates of existing events may be unrealistic.

Andrew added that he had driven round to look at some of the development sites that have been provisionally identified, he thought none of them were straight forward sites and may need some sort of highway infrastructure, this may need the assistance of a professional.

Jackie suggested that we aim for the weekend of 10th/12th September, John agreed that we could launch the consultation prior to the village fete and then close 2 weeks after. It was agreed to defer the decision on the date until a later meeting.

12. Other third party (statutory & other) Consultations

We currently have the list of those we need to consult. John asked whether it was worthwhile contacting them in advance of the actual consultation so they were aware of our intentions and to also confirm contacts. It was agreed that initial contact should be established as soon as possible. John said he would draft a letter ready for the next meeting.

13. Village Fete booking

It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group should have a stall at the Village Fete in September.

14. AOB

There was no other business

The meeting closed at 9.00pm