

**Minutes of the meeting of Whitchurch Village Plan Steering Group, held at 7.30 on Tuesday 21st January, 2020 at St. John's Hall, Whitchurch, Bucks.**

**Present:** Charlotte Lincoln (Chair), Karen Smethurst (Sec), Mel Perry (Minutes), Jeremy Sampson (WPC Rep), Helen Armour, Keith Armour, Judith Foster, Jane Holliday, Lucy Tallyn.

**Apologies for absence:** Diane Cox, Gordon Pell, Matthew Smethurst.

**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

CL welcomed those present to this meeting and accepted the apologies for absence.

**2. Communications:**

**2.1 Communications received**

No direct communications had been received, other than those allocated to point 4, below.

**2.2 Public Website**

Nothing new on the website.

**3. Updates from PC**

Members of the SG were informed that Caroline Heron has resigned her position as a Parish Councillor. However, she has expressed a wish to continue working with the SG; for which members are grateful.

The forthcoming Parish Council elections (May 2020) were discussed. It was agreed by all that whatever happens with the election results, could affect this NSG and its way forward. Discussions covered procedures for parish council elections.

**4. Update on boundary of the NP and Designated Area Application. Agree future course of action.**

**The Whitchurch/Oving Parish Boundary:** CL has contacted the other residents who live just over the Oving Parish Boundary. The residents of "Hawthorns" as well as the management of Chiltern Care Homes both wish to be included in our NP. Therefore the residents of 2 out of the 3 properties wish to be included in our NP.

We also know that the owner of "Wayside" has written to Oving Parish Council to object to the inclusion. CL clarified that there is no requirement to give a reason.

CL stated that she has been in touch with the Clerk to Oving PC and the best way forward is to inform them of those other residents' views. Then it will be up to Oving PC to decide which way to go.

SG members discussed the boundary between the two parishes.

JS referred to item 3, above, and said that CL and KS were officially at liberty to write on behalf of the PC; as stated at the recent WPC meeting. CL agreed and clarified that she will always copy in the WPC Clerk.

**The Whitchurch/Hardwick Parish boundary:** CL mentioned the recent response from Hardwick PC to the effect that they wished those residences on the southern edge of Bushmead Road, to remain outside of a Whitchurch NP.

JS said that many years ago those residents had been canvassed and had wished to remain within the Hardwick parish.

Discussions ensued about how to let the residents know the position, and that we are duty-bound to inform them.

**ACTION:** CL – to advise those residents on the southern side of Bushmead Road by letter that whilst they had given their views on the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan, Hardwick PC had asked for them NOT to be included because Hardwick PC feels that they are representing those residents. To advise them that should they require any further information, would they please contact Harwick PC. We can continue to communicate with those residents because they are using the village amenities, school etc.

It was also agreed that Hardwick PC should be written to, explaining what we are doing.

It was agreed to produce an A4 flyer to be distributed with the Whitchurch News, as the best means of communicating the latest information to residents.

CL to ask O'Neill Homer whether the different approaches by those PCs were ok for inspection.

Once we have the answers from both PCs, KS already has the necessary forms for completion.

**5. Review of Vision report from O'Neill Homer. Agree future course of action in regard to Site Specific/Non Site Specific Neighbourhood Plan.**

Having had time previously to consider the report, members were asked to give their views regarding options 1, 2 and 3 by O'Neill Homer.

Those present were asked to give their views regarding options 1, 2 and 3 put forward by O'Neill Homer.

It was agreed that the report was a fair reflection of the recent meeting with O'Neill Homer. It was further agreed that those present that evening had been given time for reflection.

CL said that DC, whilst unable to attend tonight's meeting, had met with her and KS the previous evening and had given some guidance, for which we are grateful.

CL stated that the bones of what we need to do are already in this report document.

JH showed concern that the local plan would not protect us.

KA felt that the new Buckinghamshire Council will be focused on property developments, and that there's a lot of pressure on the Government to provide more housing.

The need for demonstrating a given amount of land supply for 5 years was discussed, and if a certain clause does not apply, then our documents would be weak from a legal position and developers would make applications to develop.

CL stated that the new BC will have to have its new plan by 2024 and will have to re-assess all housing applications.

We are a "Large" village with very little development - remarkable by our lack of development, but large because of our services and infrastructure.

HA said that more development would mean getting money back and legacy for the village, maybe more school places and traffic calming. However, we would still be a village with traffic problems because stuck between expanding areas.

S106 funding was discussed at length – JS clarified this by stating that it comes in two chunks.

- a). Local Authority directed funds to be allocated by the local authority
- b) local funding – which can be directed by the PC, though at present it's believed this can only be spent on leisure & sport.

Additional funds are available from the New Home Fund Scheme,

## Vision Document Option 1

Schools intake, clarified by JH - Whitchurch Combined School currently has 48% of children from outside the catchment area. The school takes 209 pupils, lots are from the Berryfields area. Two storey primary schools are generally not allowed.

Vision Document Option 2 - which is 'on trend' development (based on the historical rate of growth of the village). This would mean a call for sites for development to support a planned growth programme.

Even if you do a "Call for Sites" if there's a site which you particularly favour you can include in your plan, but you do have to be careful that you assess all the plans that are on the table using a consistent approach.

It was mentioned that the driveway leading to the allotments from Oving Road is known as "Victoria Street" and that it may have had planning permission granted many years ago.

The process of setting policy for development and for assessing sites will provide the basis for assessing any planning applications elsewhere in the village, ensuring consistency of approach.

It was agreed to check with AVDC that boundary situations (being diverse) are appropriately resolving, even though different; so that we do not have problems with these later on. CL

It was also felt that If no sites are identified then we will be back to square one. Therefore we should look at as many sites as we can.

A potential traffic survey was discussed.

It was agreed that the SG needs to have a criteria that works and is rigid and transparent. CL: we should work out our evidence base, then come to a conclusion. We can define the mix of houses and types.

### Option 3

It was unanimously agreed that we would not choose the vision document option 3, based on how much it would affect our village.

The SG voted on each option and it was unanimously agreed that option 2 was the most appropriate in our situation.

CL to write to PC to explain the change of strategy.

It was noted that Government policy may change the planning situation in the future.

## **6. Communication Plan**

A plan for the next couple of months:

This is what we have been doing:

- taking on a consultant,
- some of you will have had letters because you live on the edge of the plan.
- The consultant has been garnering information.
- We have chosen a particular direction for a clear strategy, following our meeting with the consultant.
- The area of designation is being clarified. Details to follow.

KS. Bucks Action Plus - check - will come out and lead community meeting – which we will need to pay for. This used to be free of charge, but is not anymore.

## **7. Community Plan**

A question was put to those present - how to get this off the ground?

KS stated that the Community Action Group would come and lead it, and that it was formerly free, but not any more.

Action for KS: offered to find out how much this would cost, and that we could ask the PC whether they would fund it.

A launch event for our Community Plan was discussed. KS offered to look at other Community Plans and update us, specifically the one for Oving.

Action – All: Between now and our next meeting with O’Neill Homer – SG to go back through the questionnaires and have a dedicated brainstorming session.

It was also necessary for the website to be maintained and edited.

Next meeting – to include background research and information.

## **8. Whitchurch News Submission**

See point 6, above.

Tuesday 17th February would be the next deadline to submit items for the Whitchurch News. KA offered to construct the draft document for distribution with the Whitchurch News (March edition).

## **9. Any other Business**

None

## **10. Agree meeting schedule for next six months.**

CL to contact AVDC separate to WPC, regarding the boundary issues

The next Whitchurch PC meeting is 10th February 2020.

If the PC would like to see the consultant's report, we can forward a copy.

Next SG meeting Tuesday 11th February - venue and time, to be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 9 pm approximately.

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