

STOKE FLEMING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Minutes of meeting held on 24th September 2014

Present: Bob Bennis, Barry Clark, Struan Coupar, Simon Dowden, Jenny Farmer (chair), Katie Franks, Martin Judd, Joan Mason, Mary Newman, Sophie Rae, Alan Stockbridge, Nick Teage, Amanda Wiltshire, Nick Wood, Charlie Wreford-Brown.

Apologies: Carole Bretherton, Mark Malley, Barry Morris, Sarah Simnett.

In attendance: Graham Swiss, SHDC.

JF opened the meeting, and advised that Carole Bretherton had resigned as a councillor and as a member of the Steering Group. She welcomed **GS**, representing South Hams District Council (SHDC).

Funding

The funding that has been available to neighbourhood planning groups through Locality has run out but it is expected that there will be more available next year.

GS said that SHDC had no secret pot of money that could be made available to councils, though it can access some funds to cover its own costs. The first few councils in South Hams to embark on neighbourhood planning had been awarded "frontrunner" status and had each received £20,000 in funding. Thereafter the maximum available has been £7,000. SHDC receives £5,000 when a neighbourhood plan area is approved and a further £5,000 when a plan is submitted, to meet the cost of examination and a referendum.

SC pointed out that the £4.5 million in funding originally made available had been sufficient to make awards to around 600 councils, but more than 1,000 had already started the process, so several hundred would be waiting for the next tranche, with more joining the queue as time passed. He asked whether the Government was likely to increase the total amount available. **GS** said that was to be hoped for, though the amount for each council would probably remain around £7,000. Smaller councils would probably not incur high costs, especially if they did not have to employ external consultants.

Core Group

It was agreed that each working party (WP) will nominate a person to represent it on the Core Group that will be responsible for integrating the work of the WPs and establish an overall timetable for the process. For the first Core Group meeting the representatives will be **BB, BC, SC** and **MN**. **SC** will arrange an early date for a meeting.

It was agreed that the Core Group will advise when it considers that a full Steering Group meeting is required, and that this hopefully will be less frequently than monthly.

Chairman

In the absence of a volunteer for the position of chairman from the non-councillors on the Steering Group it was agreed that someone from each WP would act as chairman in rotation, possibly for a period of about three months.

Co-opted Members

SC asked about the status of the lay members who had been co-opted onto WPs in addition to the six lay Steering Group members. They are able to participate in Steering Group meetings, but would they, for example, have full voting rights? **JF** advised that only full members of the Steering Group would be entitled to vote, in order to remain in line with the Terms of Reference.

Working Party Reports

Each WP will circulate regular written reports on the progress it is making, prior to meetings. This is expected to reduce the length of meetings. Each WP will present a verbal summary of its report and deal with questions about it.

Evidence Base WP

The Group met this week and sees its function as providing the other WPs with solid base information. It has divided its work into four areas: Economic, Social, Environmental and Infrastructure.

GS said that SHDC has some information available, and that more could be accessed through its online resources, which include interactive maps.

Roads and Transport WP

The WP has begun by addressing the issues raised by parishioners at the Parish Meeting on May 21st, and at the subsequent Village Check days.

It will go out-and-about around the village considering the points that were raised. It also intends to establish a "Caring for your Village" system, in collaboration with the Stoke Fleming Magazine.

Planning and Development WP

In response to a question from **BC**, **GS** confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan would have legal status equivalent to the status of SHDC's Local Plan. Although the Plan would not be 100% watertight there would have to be very good reasons for going against its provisions, and any development that was not consistent with it could be challenged legally.

JF said that the Parish Council had not received notice of the South Hams Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which apparently had been published in July and on which responses are due by October 4th. **GS** regretted that this was the case and said notice should have gone to Parish Clerks. He explained that the document concerned land that was available, and was not about any SHDC plans to develop all or any of it.

BC asked if any Code of Conduct would be in place to cover the work of the Steering Group. This was discussed but no firm conclusion reached.

The WP believes its work will need to be integrated with SHDC's own progress.

The WP party would wish a replacement for Carole Bretherton, as **SS** is effectively part-time and there are now only three full-time members. As all available people are already attached to WPs it will be necessary to identify additional volunteers.

Consultation & Communication WP

A meeting was held with Bob Eaglesfield regarding the parish website. It was confirmed that the parish council owns the domain name and has copyright. Bob is willing to undertake the kind of development that is envisaged, but the WP believes the work should be put out to tender. It is necessary for a detailed specification to be drawn up so the matter can be progressed.

MM was unable to be present to talk to his presentation, and as it is necessary for him to explain and demonstrate that will have to be done at the next meeting. That will cover both Facebook and the website.

The stall at the Hort & Sports day attracted a fair amount of attention and 30+ additional contacts were gained. **JM** says there are about 500 households in the parish, somewhat higher than was thought, but to date we have details for about a quarter of that number.

The next priority is the rural areas. **KF** has offered to take the lead in Cotton-Venn-Redlap; **SC** in Combe-Bowden-Embridge-Blackpool. **CWB** offered to do Bugford and Ash.

SR is keen to reach out to overcome apathy and distrust, and reach out to new groups. The WP will discuss ways of achieving that at its next meeting.

GS recommended maintaining an audit trail of all consultation activity.

Any Other Business

SR questioned the composition of the Steering Group, with all councillors being members and only a lesser number of other parishioners. **JF** explained that was what had been set out in the Terms of Reference. **SR** thinks the balance is wrong and that can only lead to fewer people becoming engaged with the process.

Next Meeting

The Core Group to advise when a further meeting is required.