



Stoke Fleming

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Minutes

Meeting of the Steering Group held on Monday 10th August 2015 in the Village Hall

Present: Katie Franks (chair) Bob Bennis, Barry Clark, Struan Coupar, David Harris, Martin Judd, Nick Teage.

In attendance: Peter Sandover

Apologies: Gail Dorrington, Simon Dowden, Mary Newman, Sophie Rae

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th July were approved.

Matters Arising

BC wished to make it clear that Village Housing Initiative is delivered through SHDC and is not a Stoke Fleming scheme.

Meeting with SHDC

A meeting with Graham Swiss of SHDC was held on 16th July, attended by BB, BC and SC. SHDC see the West Dart development as being the natural expansion of Dartmouth, even though the housing would be largely built on Stoke Fleming land. Members were anxious that Stoke Fleming should receive due credit for any development there when any figure for new housing in the parish is set, and also that the financial benefits that accrue from it should be enjoyed by the whole parish. Stoke Fleming will receive the precept, but should also benefit from part of the Section 106 or CIL funds. In addition, the Parish Council was advised last week that SHDC will receive a New Homes Bonus of £1,000 per property per annum for six years, which for a development of 200 houses would amount to £1.2 million. That could fund significant developments, in the village as well as at Cotton.

Negotiation with SHDC on that is a matter for Parish Council, which should take steps to ensure we benefit from what is due.

On housing SHDC advised that if we made reasonable provision for new housing in the village that would probably be acceptable. PS suggested writing to either Alan Robinson or the CEO to ensure our views were received at high level.

South Ham Neighbourhood Plan Forum

Eleven councils in the area that are involved in developing neighbourhood plans had a second meeting at Modbury last month to discuss matters of common interest. Some had said that they were “running out of steam”, short on funds and had had to “go back to the beginning and start again”. These problems are seen as a result of attempting too much with limited resources. It was agreed that Stoke Fleming, currently making good progress, should be able to avoid such pitfalls.

Site Selection Criteria

SHDC had said that neighbourhood plans should develop criteria for selecting the sites on which development should take place, and be able to demonstrate that these had been applied consistently. SC had circulated a summary of the current SHDC criteria. Stoke Fleming could either

adopt these as they stand, amend them or draft new ones. The judgments made on sites, based on criteria, are often subjective. PS suggested sticking close to the SHDC, interpret them to suit our own circumstances and demonstrate robust evidence for the policies we develop. He has challenged SHDC judgments in the past. The Steering Group will discuss the matter again at a future meeting.

Action: All

Affordable Rural Housing Guide

The Parish Council has received a new guide on planning for affordable housing, and also a copy of the last Housing Needs Review in respect of Stoke Fleming, which was carried out in 2007. Although the number of people on the housing register is low, these documents highlighted the fact that a) not everybody who might want affordable housing had applied to go on the register and b) that in addition some people may leave an area because they cannot find affordable housing there. IN some cases, therefore the actual need may be significantly higher than the register suggests.

Working Party Reports

Members discussed the issue of housing density in new developments. SHDC had suggested medium density would be appropriate for Stoke Fleming but the densities that had been achieved were higher than that. More space should be allowed in future, either for individual dwellings or by incorporating green spaces and other forms of communal space. PS suggested that the Steering Group should develop criteria in respect of design, density and other issues.

The Evidence Base group plans to carry out further traffic surveys, but evidence collected so far suggests that outside the times of “school runs” further development along School Road would not cause problems.

Proposed General Policies

A list of proposed general policies had been circulated prior to the July meeting and it had been agreed that a decision on these should be taken at the August meeting. Two changes had been made – one to give preference to brownfield sites in terms of development and the other to highlight the need to improve connectivity between the two halves of the village. Unless one wants to run the gauntlet of the A379 on foot the only alternative is the Bird Walk, which is poorly maintained and unattractive. KF had toured the village with SC and they felt that the development of better links within the village could be an important aspect of bringing cohesion to the Neighbourhood Plan, and possibly more important than housing development.

The proposed policies which were agreed, are:

- ❖ There will be a presumption in favour of development on brownfield sites.
- ❖ Any substantial new development, primarily to meet the needs of Dartmouth and other parts of South Hama, should be sited in the Cotton (West Dart) area of the parish. Any S106 or CIL funding resulting from such development should be applied to the benefit of the parish as a whole.
- ❖ Only limited new development will be permitted elsewhere within the parish, primarily to meet local need and provide for a measure of organic growth.
- ❖ Development site selection will be based on criteria compatible with those currently used by SHDC, but bearing in mind the 20-year life of the Neighbourhood Plan will take into account suitability rather than immediate availability.
- ❖ The Plan will establish an overall permitted level of residential development. Development would be on any of the selected sites but in aggregate would not be allowed to exceed the overall limit, unless the limit is adjusted as a result of the formal reviews that will be carried out every five years.

- ❖ Affordable housing to meet local need is a priority and any development on brownfield or greenfield sites will have to demonstrate that at least part of it will meet established local need.
- ❖ Small-scale development in rural areas, particularly on existing sites, may be permitted.
- ❖ All planning applications will still be subject to the normal procedures and permissions.
- ❖ Inclusion of a site in the Neighbourhood Plan does not imply that landowners must accept development on their land; it would only leave them free to do so.
- ❖ The Neighbourhood Plan vision is for gradual development over the period of the Plan, matching growth to local need.
- ❖ The establishment of better connectivity between the different parts of the village through the creation of new or improved roads and path is a priority and must be allowed for in any proposed development.

These policies will be open to review as planning progresses.

Provisional Specific Policies

At its July meeting the Steering Group had considered a list of issues, arising out of the responses to Choices for Change, which it felt could perhaps be adopted provisionally because they had received either overwhelming support or opposition. These covered about 40 of the 55 issues that had been set out in Choices for Change. These were agreed. Work can now proceed on establishing what would be involved in bringing them to fruition.

The Steering Group will consider that matter again at its next meeting, following which a full list will be published.

Other Matters

Discussion on the various appendices to the Plan and on what detail of the Steering Group's business should be published were deferred to a the next meeting.

Commentary by Peter Sandford

Mr Sandford, an architect who has specialised in planning matters and community engagement for the last 15 years and who has been involved in various neighbourhood plans, had participated in the meeting and gave a commentary on the subject generally and what he had gleaned about Stoke Fleming's work to date. Some of key points made were:

- The Neighbourhood Planning process is a long haul; you need resilience in order to complete the journey
- There is still a long way to go. Don't underestimate the tasks ahead
- Make the community more sustainable
- Pass a sustainable village on to future generations
- A good neighbourhood plan should add things to the community
- Look at it in design terms, because it is the physical vision of what you want
- Emphasise design quality
- Look at things physically
- Have a vision for the future
- Say to the community – this is the vision, these are the policies
- Cluster policies around themes
- Each policy has to be backed up by evidence
- I have not read much about your vision for the place. You do need something
- Keep the community as involved as possible and keep them inside

- You have a good website and what is on it is good. You could put a lot on it
- Have a local definition of brownfield sites – yours may not match theirs
- Focus on policies and evidence, not the work
- Have sites, but don't say which, when. "These suitable; these not; brownfield first"
- Focus on policies, not sites
- Present to the community *in draft*
- South Hams approach is about procedure; it is not about Your Place
- Engage with/consider the needs of young people. It is their future
- Consider the (local) economy. People working from home can drive that
- SHDC have a duty to support. Use them, ask them for the information you need

Date of next meeting

7th September in the Village Hall 6.30 pm