



# Stoke Fleming

## Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**Present:** Bob Bennis (Chair), Barry Clark, Struan Coupar, Katie Franks, Martin Judd, Alan Stockbridge, Nick Teage

**Apologies:** David Harris, Mary Newman

**Not Present:** Paul Bond, Simon Dowden, Sophie Rae

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February were approved.

### **Matters Arising**

BC wished to make it clear that when he had said there were things in the draft of Choices for Change that needed to be revisited he had meant “revisited in the draft neighbourhood plan”.

### **Chairman**

AS then took the chair on behalf of the Roads, Transport, Infrastructure and Environment working party.

### **Steering Group and Core Group**

SC reported that at the recent Core Group meeting it was agreed that from now on it would be important for all members of the Steering Group to play an active role in developing the Neighbourhood Plan. The Core Group had served an extremely useful purpose until now, but with the completion of the Choices for Change consultation initiative work will now begin on preparing a first draft of the Plan and that would require all the resources at our disposal. The Core Group recommended that in future the Steering Group should assume the lead role so that all members could be involved in discussions and decisions on all matters.

AS agreed with the proposal. He said his group had issues which it would raise. BB said he concurred with the proposal. MJ said it was only sensible for things now to be handled as a group thing. KF said the Steering Group should come more into play. BC sought confirmation that working parties would still continue their work.

BC added that it was questionable whether having the Steering Group take the lead would make a noticeable difference, as there in fact only seven people at this meeting.

It was agreed that from now on the SG would have to meet more regularly, and from now on meetings should be held monthly.

KF advised the meeting that Cllr Nick Wood had resigned from the Steering Group.

## **Membership of Working Parties**

SC said that under the terms of reference parish councillors had a responsibility to be involved in the neighbourhood planning process.

There was discussion about the need to augment membership of the SG and/or the working parties. MJ suggested seeking new volunteers. All the volunteers who came forward after the launch of the Plan in May of last year had been co-opted, but the overall membership had fallen (NB: from 21 to 12).

SC said he could appeal for new members through the NP e-mail database, and this was agreed. New recruits would need to be inducted with care as they would be unaware of background issues and much that had been discussed and considered. Above all it is important that Steering Group and Working Party members do not use their position to pursue personal agendas. Members must be objective and the process has to be driven by feedback from others.

AS suggested an approach to Probus, and MJ agreed to take responsibility for that.

SC said that the Roads/Transport group was fairly strong. The Evidence Base group should have adequate resources, but he had offered to assist them if need be. The Consultation & Communications Group has been coping adequately and with the launch of the new website and publication of Choices for Change might now have a relatively quiet period. The Planning and Development group, effectively only two strong and dealing with key issues, must be the priority for reinforcement.

A new parish councillor has been elected and should be available to join the SG. KF will speak to her.

## **Review of Choices for Change**

BC wished all to see 100% of the comments that had been made by respondents. He felt that was important, and the document that had been published was incomplete. SC pointed out that what had been published was intended for public consumption, to put before parishioners a representative spread of comments so that they knew what kind of thing other people had said. There was a data protection issue involved in that many of the responses also identified people and contained their personal contact details. Confidentiality had been promised and must be respected. IT would be necessary for one person to type up all the comments, without personal information, and not keep any record of the personal information. BB said that the Evidence Base group would take on the task.

AS said his group had some issues on the commentary. SC said that it also had been intended to interpret the outcomes in a digestible way. It was not intended to be exhaustive. Everyone who had received it had also received the table with the complete results in detail.

SC said that Choices for Change had been very significant. The job of the Steering Group was to consult the people of the parish and engage them in the neighbourhood planning process. Prior to this initiative awareness of the proposed plan had been sketchy, involvement low, and by some accounts apathy about it was possibly high. That was no longer the case. Awareness is now high and people have become engaged. Other members agreed.

AS asked if the Steering Group was bound by the responses to Choices for Change and was advised they it was not, as the initiative had been consultative and intended to advise the SG of the opinions held by parishioners. It had not been even a draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. Parishioners would vote on the Plan at referendum. MJ commented that from now certain things would be taken out and other things would be added. Choices for Change was in a sense a snapshot. SC said that the responses were a guide, not a decision.

MJ said that many of the options were easy. SC pointed out that they still had to be translated into action. For example, the SG would potentially have to identify a green burial site or establish how improvements to the Birdwalk could be implemented.

SC enquired whether others had seen or were aware of a SHDC document – Site Allocation DPDs, which showed possible development sites around the village, other than those in the South Hams Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA, which only covers land offered for development). The Site Allocation document contains land considered suitable for development, including land that has not been offered. It includes land in what was Area F in Choices for Change. KF was uncertain whether or not she had seen it. BC suggested it might be an old document, though there are references to development in what was Area C to development “beyond 2016”. It was agreed to enquire into the document and its relevance to the work of the SG.

There was discussion about the proposed West Dart development, which many people think would satisfy any need for Stoke Fleming to meet externally-set targets for development. SC said he felt that the situation had never been established clearly and it would be a mistake to be complacent. The report BC had circulated about the meeting with Debbie Holloway of SHDC contained words to the effect that West Dart was in SHDCs view “to meet the housing needs of Dartmouth”. BC confirmed that was what was said. Although the development would be on Stoke Fleming land it is important to ensure that Stoke Fleming, not Dartmouth, is “credited” with any development that takes place. BB said the Evidence Base group would make itself responsible for establishing the true situation.

SC said that irrespective of the position on West Dart, we had been very clearly advised by SHDC that a neighbourhood plan that did not contain provision for development in Stoke Fleming would be counter to Area policy and would not be acceptable. (Under the terms of the Localism Act all neighbourhood plans have to be in conformity with national and area planning policies.) SC said he felt that Stoke Fleming’s neighbourhood plan should allow for housing for local needs, including affordable housing in the area of the village, and in addition for some natural “organic” growth. He cited two current examples of people moving into new housing as permanent residents coming from outside the area, who would contribute to the life of the community. MJ remarked that West Dart was only two miles from the village.

The land covered by the SHLAA is that which had been offered, though some has now been withdrawn. The remaining land is very limited. SC suggested that contact be made with other relevant landowners to establish their current position in the light of the Neighbourhood Plan and Choices for Change.

KF suggested that the redevelopment of Windward House and Deer Park would provide some new housing, though not affordable.

### **Draft Plan**

It was agreed that work should now begin on a first draft of the Plan. It is necessary to establish the work that has to be done and allocate that to working groups. It was agreed that when the draft is published there should be a further public meeting or event, possibly open for a full day, to allow people to consider it and comment on it. The draft will be a substantial document, possibly running to 50 or more pages, After discussion it was agreed that a summary should be published and the full version posted on the website and circulated by e-mail.

There was general agreement of the importance that the momentum that has been created through Choices for Change should be maintained.

### **Additional funding**

There is sufficient money in reserve to cover a further round of consultation but not necessarily to allow the process to be completed. Additional funding is likely to be required. The Evidence Base group will make enquiries about that when they talk to SHDC.

### **Next Meeting**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm, to be chaired by a representative of the Roads/Transport group.