

## **Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

### **Minutes of Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in the Melland Room**

**Present:** Dermot Mathias (DM - Chair), Ian Bacon (IB), Nick Chancellor (NC), Eric Eisenhandler (EE), Richard Farrell (RF), Angela Hoy (AH), Lydia Inglis (LI), Miriam Jacobs (MJ), Mike Marshall (MM), Helen Mathias (HM), Pat Mattimore (PM), Anne Millman (AM), John Ogden (JO).

**In attendance:** Paul Whitehead

**Apologies:** Joe Goyder (JG), Chris Lakeland (CL), Jo Lakeland (JL), Andrew Maxted (AMax), Alex Musson (AMus), Anton Nath (AN), Kally Peigne (KP), Charlotte Perry (CP), Gwyn Rees (GR).

- 1. Welcome.** DM welcomed the new members to the group from the Parish Council, LI and MJ.
- 2. Minutes** of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May were agreed.
- 3. Matters Arising**, not otherwise on the agenda:

**Landscape appraisal.** DM reported that BD would shortly be updating the appraisal to give a definition of 'low capacity'. **DM** would follow up to ensure this was the case.

**Sustainability Scoping/SEA.** **DM** reported that he had not completed the questionnaire but would do so and submit to the Vale.

**Finances.** DM reported that BD had advised that his time costs were more than double the fees he had charged and that he would inform DM of the precise figures in an email.

**AOB.** DM reported that a third member of the Parish Council would be joining the Steering Group in future, CP. DM had already met new members CP and LI (MJ was unable to attend) in order to inform them on the work of the committee to date. RF reminded the group that the BNDP would be submitted in the name of the PC and therefore it was extremely valuable to have three new representatives from the PC.

- 4. Feedback from focus groups:**

**AM** had already circulated notes from these two group meetings (attached).

**Building and design aesthetics.** AM reported that there were 16 volunteers in this group, of mixed demographic including two practising and one retired architect. The

focus group thought that a design statement could be based on the 2004 village plan including the best of the 1967 plan (a copy of which MM brought to the meeting). It was agreed that members of this group would be asked to develop a design statement/policy facilitated by AM for discussion by the policy group. All the policies would then be discussed by the whole committee. RF also stressed the importance of the PC representatives ensuring that the PC is happy with the policies before we consult the village on them.

AM requested that at the focus group's follow-up meeting, design statements from other neighbourhood plans be made available and also the 1967 plan. DM agreed to extract some examples from other plans.

**Housing Needs and Infrastructure.** AM reported that the key points raised by this group (see attached note) were similar to those voiced in the Housing Needs Survey. IB felt that would strengthen the validity of policies once they were formulated and that we could point to these focus groups as being part of our consultation process. AM explained that the final focus group of younger people in the village was still to meet.

NC suggested that all the focus groups should be consulted on our draft policies once formulated. IB requested photos of their meetings for inclusion in the final plan.

## 5. Report back from the working groups

**Policies.** DM reported that two meetings had taken place between NC, IB, PM (once) and DM. He hoped to provide feedback for the next meeting of the steering committee. He also hoped that the group could meet David Potter and Andrew Maxted of the Vale before then to review progress. The working group planned to consult individuals with specific knowledge for different policies.

**Living in the village.** PM asked for further guidance on the length of this section and IB suggested that they look at other NPs, particularly Woodcote. AH suggested that details of residents' associations should be included in their report and asked to be advised of them. Their report should be submitted to the editorial team by the end of June. RF asked whether there would be a policy on who would be entitled to apply for any affordable housing built in the village giving priority to those with a local connection. NC explained that we had a draft policy and after a short discussion it was agreed that this would be reviewed by the steering group along with all the other policies when drafted.

## 6. AOB

LI expressed her concerns that the steering committee had not fully regarded the importance of the historic environment of the village. In particular she pointed to advice on

neighbourhood plans from Historic England (previously English Heritage) - see <http://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/neighbourhood-planning-info-2014.pdf>

DM said that this topic, having been considered at earlier meetings, had fallen by the wayside and acknowledged that it needed more emphasis. After discussion it was agreed that it should be taken into account in our policies and **LI** agreed to join the focus group on building and design. **LI** will also hopefully draft a section providing some historic context for our plan.

MJ asked whether we would be seeking to protect green spaces in the village. DM explained that we had an initial draft policy for green spaces which needs more work. Paul Whitehead asked whether we could have a policy to protect our cob walls in addition to protecting historic sites. It was agreed that we should try to do this.

**7. Date of next meeting** Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015 , 7.30pm in the Melland Room

## **Blewbury Neighbourhood Development Plan: Policy Development – notes of focus groups**

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### **Building and design aesthetics (focus group held on 31/05/15)**

#### Principles for building and design within the village

- Refer to a Village Plan developed c 1964 featuring the work of Martin Sylvester
- Resist uniformity and continue with diversity of styles and materials, including new materials
- Follow golden rules re proportions (external and internal spaces, windows, doors etc): focus on proportion rather than style
- Follow building lines along individual roads and respect the character of the street to provide unity (e.g. don't allow individual buildings to come closer to the road where others are set back)
- Above all, ensure there is “architectural joy” – variety and creativity: even if a large development has to happen, the houses must NOT be all the same
- Respect the landscape and protect the open spaces in the village
- Be more clever about need and position of solar panels – e.g. panels facing away from the road
- Ensure there are bin sheds and bicycle sheds in new builds
- Respect neighbours and the need for privacy
- Establish the principle of getting a building job done within a specific period to avoid noise, nuisance and safety issues, and avoid damage to pavements and walkways

#### Principles for building and design on the edges of the village

- Adventurous architecture / do not conform to one style
- Provide unity by what is put in front of the houses – e.g. hedging
- Ensure a palette of materials, e.g. red brick, clay tiles
- Ensure there is open space within any development, e.g. Bridus Mead
- Design roadway outside the development not inside – e.g. London squares as a model
- Trees and landscaping, play areas and wilderness
- Ensure privacy – e.g. Martin Sylvester's L-shaped gardens
- There must be footpaths providing the infrastructure link to the centre of the village

#### Other notes and queries

- Re-use pictures in the 2004 plan
- Members of this group willing to take photos of model developments elsewhere
- Does the local plan have policies re roof tiles and solar panels?
- Has anyone got the c1964 plan
- Are there any examples of policies from other villages on this subject?

**Housing Needs and Infrastructure** (focus group 01/06/15)

Principles for Housing Needs Policy

- Any development must have a mix of types of housing (ref Grahame Close with 44 identical houses; ref Greenway development outside Didcot which appears to have a mix) to create a 'ladder of opportunity'
- Some affordable properties must be available even within a small development
- (need to establish what affordable means technically – is it below the market price?)
- Dibley's model is instructive: place some sort of limitation over any new development
- Specify that a small % can be self build

Principles for Infrastructure Policy

- Make certain sites absolutely no-go sites for through traffic (e.g. Berry Lane school route), particularly with threat of Blewbury being a rat run for increasing traffic from Didcot – all traffic must be served by Didcot Road and A417
- Make a park and walk scheme to encourage walking and cycling
- Traffic calming on A417 – investigate possibilities within the context of no street lighting (ref to Sensor read lighting in mainland Europe)
- 20mph throughout the village
- Crossing on A417 to Recreation Ground
- Preserve open spaces
- Ensure any development has green space in the middle with plenty of trees – put planting in first
- Maintenance of roads and walkways especially where building work is taking place
- Many principles in 2004 village plan still stand