

Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Minutes of Meeting on 10th August 2015 in the Melland Room

Present: Dermot Mathias (DM - Chair), Eric Eisenhandler (EE), Richard Farrell (RF), Angela Hoy (AH), Miriam Jacobs (MJ), Jo Lakeland (JL), Helen Mathias (HM), Pat Mattimore (PM), Anne Millman (AM), John Ogden (JO), Gwyn Rees (GR).

Apologies: Ian Bacon (IB), Nick Chancellor (NC), Joe Goyder (JG), Lydia Inglis (LI), Mike Marshall (MM), Chris Lakeland (CL), Andrew Maxted (AMax), Alex Musson (AMus), Anton Nath (AN), Kally Peigne (KP), Charlotte Perry (CP).

In attendance: Andrew Bateson (AB)

1. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 13th July were agreed.
2. **Matters arising** not otherwise on the agenda:

Sustainability scoping/SEA. DM reported that although the report had been submitted to the Vale, they had not responded. **DM** would contact them.

Landscape appraisal **DM** has prepared a draft policy to define the built area of the village. He hoped that an advisor (yet to be appointed, see below) would advise ;on the advantages of this

Living in the village. **CP** had advised by email that she hoped to have completed her report on travel and traffic in the village in the next two weeks.

Drainage and flooding. GR had drafted a policy as recommended by Thames Water stating that flooding, drainage and water supply had to be considered by any prospective developer. **GR** would forward the policy to be included in these minutes.

Young people focus group. AM reported that she had had an extremely productive meeting with 9 young people in the village aged between 11 and 16. Their egalitarian views in relation to the BDNP stressed the importance of affordable housing and maintaining the interconnectedness of different areas in the village, (eg they were opposed to gated communities).

3. Update on plan

- **Editorial.** EE displayed a proposed numbering scheme for each new draft of the BNDP which was agreed. He asked that those commenting on any draft should not edit text directly but email comments to EE and AM.
- **Landscape Character Assessment.** RF drew attention to the anomaly of the assessment in Area 8, Eastfield Farmstead, as low capacity whilst the leylandii hedge remains. Should this incongruous hedge be removed the resulting assessment would be negligible capacity. **RF** would discuss this with BD.
- **Policies.** Policy 5. RF and JO commented that the policy providing for smaller, affordable homes would be hard to implement as no sites had been set aside for such development. DM reminded the group that it had been agreed at previous meetings that there was no desire to nominate specific sites. He suggested that any infill development would have to comply with the policy and that if Rural Exception Sites were nominated this would provide opportunity for such development. Much discussion took place on this point and it was agreed that there was a basic conflict between the perceived need for smaller affordable housing and the desire to limit infill and sizeable developments outside the built environment. It was agreed that the policy needed to be discussed in more detail on the Away Day (see below). In the meantime **AM** would attempt to quantify the demand for smaller housing from the Housing Needs Survey.
- **Design.** AM reported that a design statement had been developed by the 7 members of the focus group. Members of the steering group congratulated AM on the quality of the statement and she reported that another draft would be written once more comments had been received. Light pollution and crime prevention were included in the statement but AM was not sure whether this was necessary.

4. Issues

Green Space designation. At the previous meeting LI had agreed to submit some proposals but had not done so as yet. DM reminded the group that there had to be good reasons to make such designations. JL offered the help of a new member of Sustainable Blewbury and would liaise with DM to enlist his help. RF reported that he had obtained the old planning application number for one of the green spaces under consideration where the application had been refused in 1987. It should be possible to research why planning had been refused. **MJ** offered to obtain a list of green spaces owned by the PC.

Assets of Community Value. DM briefly described the implications of this designation and the resultant draft policy (No.12). Some discussion took place about the businesses that could or should be included but no final decision was reached although the majority felt that Savages should be registered. It was agreed that the matter should be discussed again when more members of the steering group were present.

5. Advisor

After a query from AH, DM confirmed that AMax and DP were still available but that it would be sensible to also employ an independent advisor particularly if any of the contents of the BNDP were in conflict with the Council's views. Andrew Bateson was such an independent planning consultant. He addressed the group and suggested he could work on a 'check and challenge' basis to help insure that the BNDP conformed to the Local Plan, would pass formal inspection and be acceptable to the majority of the village in the referendum. He charged £450 per day. JO confirmed that £8,000 was still available and DM reminded the group that the costs of the consultation process still had to be taken into account. **DM** would investigate whether the VWDC would cover printing costs. **AM** and **DM** agreed to draft a brief to submit to AB and two other planning consultants before a decision was made to appoint anyone.

6. Away Day

It was agreed that this was necessary in order to be able to spend an uninterrupted period of time to agree contentious policies such as:

- Housing needs and the conflict with lack of capacity.
- Reconciliation of the lack of desire for either infill building or building outside the village envelop with the perceived need for housing
- Giving villagers priority in the allocation of any affordable housing.

DM undertook to organise the date of this Away Day and it was agreed that the Manor Barn would be an ideal location if possible.

7. Date of next meeting: Monday 14th September, 7.30pm in the Melland Room