

Stonehouse Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes of a Working Group meeting

held on **Friday 25th October 2013**

1. Present – Carl Berry, Anna Creed, John Jeynes, Rick Jordan, Clare Sheridan.

2. Apologies – David Drew, David Joyce, Carol Kambites, Paddie Norman, Agnieszka Paszkiewicz, Vicky Redding, Rob Waite

3. Minutes of Meeting of 25th September 2013 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair

4. Matters Arising

CS reported that in addition to making and maintaining contact with Eastington Parish council re co-operation on neighbourhood plans, she would also do likewise with other neighbouring parishes.

Headings

AC requested an additional heading for '**Education & Training**' She explained that all our schools aspire to be 'first choice for Stonehouse residents', and are working hard to achieve this aim by working together and celebrating achievements and successes. It would be a worthy goal/aspiration that the Oldends Lane businesses be involved in training our local schools/college leavers and so promoting the talent of our community. Following discussion it was agreed that this heading would be a valuable addition to the working document.

There was discussion lack of heading '**Sport & Recreation**' CB commented that although football was the only sport in the town that entered teams representing Stonehouse into local and regional leagues and competitions, in previous generations the town has had other sports teams, eg Cricket – Stonehouse Cavalier, whose demise co-incided with the closure of the Arrowsmith Pavillion. Likewise the town is not represented in other sports (eg rugby, netball, hockey etc)

It was felt that lack of sporting facilities within the town (compared to other towns of similar size) constrained the development of sports of all types within the town. CB commented that Stonehouse Town football teams (STFC and STYFC) involves significant numbers of adults and young people and has increasing number of teams at all levels. There was discussion about the lack of usable facilities, in particular the Stagholt site, where purpose-built changing facilities were no longer in use as the adjacent pitches were often unusable in the season's winter months due to problems with drainage. If these problems could be rectified, the pitches and their changing facilities could be used by STYFC teams. CB requested use of the Stagholt site for the 9-a-side pitches now required by FA for u11s, as the increasing number of pitches required meant that it was not possible to accommodate additional pitches at Oldends Lane sports field.

It was agreed that 'Sport & Recreation' as a heading would enable development of sports facilities for a range of sports to meet the needs of the towns diverse and growing population.

AC to contact RW to add to the Headings on the draft document, new headings 'Education & Training' and 'Sport & Recreation'.

Leisure, Open space & wellbeing

Ship Inn site: JJ reported that following a meeting with David Hagg (SDC Chief executive) he had received a letter from Mr Hagg given written reassurance regarding the future of the Ship Inn site. He read from the letter: 'GCC transferred the (Ship Inn) site to us (SDC) in lieu of capital contribution towards the restoration of the Cotswold canals'.

JJ commented that although the negotiations has taken almost 18 months, this preferred outcome had been reached with would enable the development of the site as a gateway lining the canal to Stonehouse town, enabling the community to benefit from the redevelopment of the canal. Working group members thanked him for his persistence and hard work on this matter

5. Land Use – Marking the Map

Working group members used the map of the Neighbourhood plan (parish) to those areas of land within the parish boundary that should be developed for particular functions or remain undeveloped to be retained as open space and for community use.

Land for Industrial / Business use

Oldends Lane area has been identified in SDC Local plan as a key site for industrial/commercial development. Currently, some industrial units on the Oldends Lane/Brunel Way complex remain empty, new business were coming into the area, and others were expanding. In addition, areas of undeveloped land within the 'industrial' area were identified for future industrial/commercial development.

Land for Retail/Commercial use

SDC Local plan identified for and additional 500m² of retail space, on and around the current High Street. After discussion, it was agreed that the additional space on the High Street area – from Bath Road/Burdett road, along the High Street to Gloucester Road – was difficult to find. A location adjacent to the High Street Medical Centre was identified for possible development, although this is currently the 'secret garden' in private and unknown ownership.

Land for Housing

The working group discussed various sites within the parish boundary and identified as follows.

Land to preserve for community use and protect from housing development

LA schools Playing fields (Educational Development only permitted): The Shrubberies School, Maidenhill School, Park Junior School, The Park Infant School & Children's centre

Protected play spaces: Wharfdale Way Play area, Meadow Road play area, Elm Road hard court, Laburnam Walk Recreation Ground, Oldends Lane Playing Field.

Land at base of Doverow Hill (behind Rosedale) – key wildlife habitat

Land adjacent to canal (Stroudwater navigation) and River Frome: This canal corridor lies on the flood plain for the river and adjacent canal and as such should be protected from development, particularly as areas of the flood plain just outside the parish boundary have already been developed.

Land for future housing development

As noted at the previous meeting, housing developments already granted planning permission or even underway (88 dwellings) will contribute to the total figure required (100 dwellings) for Stonehouse. Consequently the numbers of new dwellings required is relatively low.

Land adjacent to A419 (Ebley Road) to west of town centre:

After discussion this site was identified as an ideal site for housing. The land currently forming a little-used area to the west end of the playing fields of Wycliffe prep school between Ryeford Road junction and Horsetrough roundabout. The site is ideal as it is within the current building line, leading onto established road providing excellent access, with good transport links, being within short level walking distance of town centre and railway station.

Land between canal and A419 (opposite Avenue Terrace):

The working group felt that although this plot of land could provide a site for housing development is part of the canal corridor to the south west of the town and forms an important site for wildlife as a wetland habitat. CS commented on the fate of the Great Crested newts following the development at Court View and it was agreed that key habitats within the town boundary.

Buildings

There was subsequent discussion of the need to protect historically-significant buildings from unwelcome and inappropriate development particularly for housing as these form important landmarks and give our community a sense of place and identity. It was commented that several building within the town have listed building status and RJ suggested contacting Stonehouse History Group for a list of buildings which are listed or which have historical importance to the town. He agreed to contact Jim Dickson/Vicki Walker regarding this.

6. Funding – deciding how funding will be spent

CS reported that GRCC will provide advice, guidance and support with compiling a Neighbourhood plan and that the grant funding which has been applied for will help to funding administrative and practical support.

CS referred to an email from RW detailing examples of what grant money can be spent on, including:

- Training sessions for members of the steering group
- Help with putting together a project plan
- Help with developing and analysing an evidence base to identify issues
- Contributions to required studies eg housing needs, recreational needs etc
- Engaging a planning expert to help draft relevant policies

JJ suggested using contacts with the local universities etc to identify a pre-or post-graduate student who may be will to provide support to this working group and community as part of a protect or dissertation. CS will contact CK regarding this.

AC suggested contacting Thame town council, whose Neighbourhood plan document we have already used for reference as Thame has several similarities with Stonehouse. JJ suggested developing links and the possibility of a few members of the working group spending the day in Thame to enable us to benefit from the lessons Thame had learned during the development of their Neighbourhood plan, particularly with regard to streamlining the process to produce a workable user-friendly document.

7. Any Other Business – none.

8. Date of next meeting

Thursday 21st October in the Town Hall at 6pm or 7pm.

CS will contact working group members to establish preferred time.

Actions:

RJ to contact Jim Dickson/Vicki Walker regarding listed and historically-important buildings.

CS will contact CK regarding identifying a post-graduate student to provide project support.

CS to liaise with Town Clerk to obtain an updated enlarged copy of the parish map for next meeting.

Signed

Date

Clare Sheridan - Chair of working group