

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group held on Thursday 8th January 2015

1. Present: John Jeynes (JJ), Alastair Shankland (AS), Carol Kambites (CK), Terry Webb (TW), Clare Sheridan (CS) (*Chair*) , Chris Cowcher (CC) (*Minutes*), Nick Chase (NC)
2. Apologies for Absence: Vicky Redding, Gary Powell, Rob Waite, Ben Creed, Hugh Garai.
3. Introductions: Nick Chase introduced himself as a resident from Regent Street, interested in helping out with the developing plan where he can. Nick's day job is for an organisation called ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and part of his role there is a representation on the National NDP action group, so it is hoped that he may be able to impart some professional advice about the process from a national perspective as well as being a resident of Stonehouse.
4. Declarations of Interest: None received
5. Approval of the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group held on 18th December 2014:
 - a. The group expressed disappointment that there appeared to have been missed opportunity to promote the NDP and current survey, through recent mailings from the Town Council and other local politicians. Nothing was mentioned in Christmas/New Year newsletters. **ACTION:** Feedback to the Council
 - b. The group also expressed disappointment that David Drew had also not promoted the NDP in recent mailings. Given that there is cross party consent on NDPs, and they will still exist into the next government there appeared to be no real reason (political or otherwise) behind omitting any comment on the NDP.
 - c. VR to provide an update on the grant application as an appendix to these minutes at a later date. **ACTION:** AS to approach VR and ask for this
 - d. Schools meeting actions progressed, referenced later in this meeting
6. Budget Expenditure: No additional expenditure to report in the interim period between meetings
7. Project Healthcheck:
 - a. Survey Consultation: 3,500 (**ACTION:** AS to check this figure with Liz) homes canvassed, but to date a low return has been received – potential to extend the return deadline discussed and approved. It was noted that in terms of evidence for the NDP, the group only needs to demonstrate the consultation opportunities available, the return rates to consultations will not affect the weighting given to the document in official capacity at a later date.
 - b. Evidence file: Following on from the conversation about evidence of consultations the point was raised about maintaining a master file of all consultations and public announcements – AS has been carrying out this activity.
 - c. Stroud District Council activity: Surprise was raised at the point that SDC have known about a number of issues and concerns being raised by businesses on Oldends Lane trading estate – traffic flow and volume – as part of NDP consultation as it would appear no action has been taken by the authority to resolve the issues.
 - d. Focus group activity:
 - i. CC flagged up that he had been allocated the Environment Group lead but did not know anything about this – potential typo? He did however agree to help this group out with activity, and although he has no specialist expertise to offer CC is happy to help facilitate a meeting of this group to progress activity. One suggestion is to hold a 'Walk around' character assessment of the green spaces. **ACTION:** CC to propose dates (CK/CS to share with Simon Pickering and Stroud Valleys Project)

- ii. CC/TW to convene a meeting about the retail and amenities group to discuss next level of engagement. JJ pointed out that the businesses on Queens Road now need to be considered part of the High St/retail centre. JJ also flagged the need to establish the intend future usage of the former snooker hall. **ACTION:** CC/TW to circulate meeting date to all so that others can join if they wish to.
 - e. Statement of purposes for each policy document: Clarification was sought on the night about these as part of developing policy documents; AS pointed out that it is best practice to try and get the body of text written first and then create these additional sections later. Refer back to workshop work with Elin about how the Statement of Purpose can work – explains what we are trying to achieve in one overarching statement.
8. User group consultation planning:
- a. CK/CS reported positive engagement with the local schools following an action set at the last meeting. Both will attend the student council at Maidenhill on February 4th – group raised potential need for second consultation engagement for follow up? There has also been contact with Park Infants, who want to lead on their own activity – which may involve a member of the NDP group going in to help. Still to contact Richard Gasser about Park Juniors.
 - b. Engagement with Wycliffe discussed separately, as the engagement here would be as a business (major employer in the town) and as a school. **ACTION:** AS to develop a draft letter for CK/CS to use to set up a meeting. It is likely that Wycliffe would be interested on commenting on a variety of potential development sites – including the proposed filling station on the old Ship Inn site.
9. Any other business:
- a. Conversation about potential CIL investment in Stonehouse from the proposed development in Eastington – or lack thereof. NC believed that this shouldn't be the case and that the CIL should be invested in to sustain services in the surrounding areas also i.e. not solely to the parish in which the development was taking place. **ACTION:** NC to circulate a briefing from Eric Pickles on the subject; reference: the overriding of national policy.
 - b. NC expressed surprise at the content of the recent SDC workshop, attended by members of the group where it was stated that SDC would not support an NDP referendum until the SC local plan was adopted. NC believed this to be untrue, and that an NDP adopted following referendum, in an area with no local plan would still be classed as material consideration. **ACTION:** AS to recirculate the SDC presentation so that NC may have a copy. **ACTION:** NC to raise the issue with DCLG, as part of his role on the national NDP group
 - c. The proposed development in Eastington has raise the need for engagement with their NDP group, and also the one developing in Standish. **ACTION:** Separate meetings to be set up a later date with Eastington and Standish to discuss progress and the need for some cross parish policy activity.
10. Workshop session: Environment and Green Space Policy
11. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 22nd January 2015, 6.30pm at Stonehouse Town Hall. VR to take minutes.

Minutes written by Chris Cowcher, should you have any comment about content or wish to raise any inaccuracies for editing please feel free to contact – cacowcher@hotmail.co.uk