

Winterbournes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (SG)

Minutes of 6th meeting held on 2 December 2013

Attendance:

Steve Bucknell (SB), Mervyn Pannett (MP), Chris Campbell-Jones (CCJ), Peter Ostli-East (POE), Richard Folkes (RF), Graham Lloyd (GL) and Maureen Atkinson (MA)

1. **Apologies:** Peter Biggins (PB)

2. **Minutes of last meeting.** The minutes of the 5th meeting held on 29 October, 2013 were accepted and approved. It was further agreed that as Jenny Head, Henry Head and Nigel Arkell appear in the records as members of the SG, they should be furnished with copies of the minutes and asked if they would still like to be members of the SG going forward. Jenny Lewys, an initial member, had already formally resigned from the Steering Group.

Action: CCJ

3. Matters Arising.

3.1 (5.4) On the 24 Nov 13, the Steering Group (SG) undertook a walk to familiarise itself with the Winterbournes under the guidance of MA who was able to provide the historical context and point out certain areas unsuitable for new dwellings. On behalf of the SG, the Chairman thanked MA for her time and the knowledge that she imparted on the walk.

3.2 The Chairman confirmed that a letter dated 14th Nov 13 had been received from Chief of Staff at the DCBR&N¹ Centre in response to one from the Parish Council dated 25 Oct 13 stating that there are no current plans for new dwellings at the site.

3.3 The Neighbourhood Website Article has now been published on line with minor editorial changes provided by the Parish Council. It was agreed that CCJ would contact Mr J Brown (website administrator) to ask if any questions on the article had been raised through the email link and, if so, to ensure that he forwarded them, or any general comments, to the Parish Council (Melanie Thomas, Clerk) for initial action. Indeed any correspondence received by members of the SG from parishioners should be passed directly to Melanie Thomas for action and not answered directly by the individual.

3.4 (5.6) MP mentioned that he was yet to contact Trevor Lewis on the subject of "Fauna and Flora" but as it was such a small area, MP thought it unlikely to be a major issue as the NP progresses.

¹ Defence Chemical Biological Radiological & Nuclear Centre

3.5 (5.7) CCJ reported to the SG on the subject of “Conservation Areas” and provided a hand-out. In essence, planning restrictions and approvals in a Conservation Area are more rigorous than normal, although new dwellings are allowed. In particular, planning applications would be advertised seeking comment from the local community on new development applications. CCJ suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan could pre-empt any advertisement by providing a view before such applications were presented to the Council. The Council has a statutory duty under the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990² to designate and manage Conservation Areas i.e. an area of special architectural or historic interest, so designated by a number of different interest groups.

3.6 (5.8) POE had researched areas designated as Glebe land and the status of graveyards within the Parish and had established that the land on which the Glebe Hall is located, the site of the former church and churchyard of St Edward (W Dauntsey), the site of the former church and churchyard of St. Michael’s (W Earls), the churches and churchyards of St Mary the Virgin (W Gunner) and St Michael & All Angels (W Earls), and the Vicarage (W Earls), as well as the site of W Earls C of E school are the only Glebe lands in the civic parish of the Winterbournes. Interestingly, POE comments that there is no specific mention of the Glebe field, between St Michael's church and the Vicarage. POE mentioned that there was no debarment to new development on Glebe land. However, MA pointed out that some parcels of Glebe land were used for recreational purposes and should definitely not be available for new housing and made the point also that the SG would not want new buildings on old graveyards. The SG would need to consider the issue of building on Glebe land further when formulating the NP.

3.7 (5.9) SB confirmed that the clerk to the parish council had re-activated the council’s account with Ordnance Survey and that it was now possible to access relevant local maps electronically. In addition, the OS confirmed that additional users could access the IT system, but would need passwords. It was agreed that MA and RF would become users of the site on behalf of the SG and so SB would ask the clerk to obtain the relevant permissions from the OS.

Action: SB

3.8 (5.10) SB advised the meeting that he had yet to complete his investigation of the small development planned at the Parish’s southern boundary.

Action: SB

² A copy of the Act is held in the records maintained by the SG for reference

4. Report from the NP Workshop of 19 Nov 13

4.1 MP had attended the Wiltshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Workshop on 19 Nov 13 and had provided an emailed report of the event³. MP felt he had very little to add to his report.

4.2 There were three aspects MP thought worth mentioning. Firstly, the workshop was keen to emphasise the importance of local decision making, including such initiatives as the village taking ownership of local businesses such as the pub or the shop. MA pointed out that these businesses could be registered as community assets so that if the owner wanted to sell his business, a six month period would be required so that villagers could make representations. This six month cooling off period could also be detrimental to the sale of a business. The alternative would just name the businesses as community assets in the NP without registering.

4.3 MP had learnt that there were 3 NPs currently in place in the whole of the country, that there were 600 designated which had reached the 1st stage of development, 51 had submitted draft NPs for audit and subsequent referenda, and 603 which were in a similar state as ours. At the meeting, representatives of Wiltshire Council showed a map of where NPs were in train in the county, but MP had noticed that the Winterbournes was not marked. SB advised that he was not aware of a formal notification procedure but MP was minded to approach the Link officer (Sarah Hughes) in the planning department to clarify the position.

Action: MP

4.4 MP advised that the process was to define your neighbourhood area (the boundaries) and then send your application to Wiltshire Council. MP will obtain a more detailed understanding of the process from the Link officer, as above. MA questioned whether we could look beyond our parish boundaries as the parish could be affected by developments immediately outside of them. POE thought it was likely that we could only draw attention to such issues, but they would not be a material part of our NP. GL warned the SG that this could be a major issue if, say, a field lay in adjoining parishes. Conversely, POE pointed out that the neighbourhood area could, in practice, be smaller than the parish boundary. MP went on to mention the settlement boundary (or planning boundary), which SB informed the meeting, was the boundary of the built-up area outside of which no new build was historically allowed. However, the settlement boundary could be flexible and it would be for the NP to determine the boundary limits. POE raised concern that changing the settlement boundary could cause some parishioners to complain (perhaps local land owners) and demand sound reasons for the change. RF felt that the current boundary is an easy one to defend as it already exists. It was agreed that the boundary issue was a fundamental issue to resolve before the SG proceed with its NP application. GL emphasised that before the SG informs the parishioners of the settlement boundary (whether as it is or as changed in any way), it needs to be sure of its reasoning, otherwise the SG could be seen as lacking credibility. The meeting decided that it would be best to obtain clarification on

³ Email 20131113-15:38 pannettrtw@yahoo.co.uk (on file)

this issue and particularly the legal status of any settlement boundary determined by the NP.

Action: MP

4.5 MP's second observation from the workshop was that NPs should contain a number of policies, most of which are very high level. One parish had a policy that there should be no 2nd homes in the town and that affordable homes should be only for local people. The legal veracity of such policies was open to question and discussed by the SG and MP's aspiration was that the SG would generate more relevant policies for the Winterbournes NP.

4.6 The third aspect arising from the workshop was the fact that the NP should only contain policies that are achievable at a local level, what the workshop defined as "local and related to planning". The NP may contain, possibly in a separate appendix, aspirations that are outside the local planning authorities power, such as enhancements to bus routes, which are controlled by various the bus companies, or improvements to roads controlled by central government. MA considered that the type of housing could also be included under 'improvements' given that old people may live alone in big houses and young families may be living in small houses; perhaps the NP could influence the ratio of housing in the parish in this respect, although this might generate its own challenges. SB made the point that new housing would provide additional funds to the parish which would be used for improvements such as a car park for the primary school and perhaps these aspirations could be included in the NP. However, it had to be borne in mind that the Winterbournes are only looking at 2 or 3 new houses a year, although there is the option to build more.

4.7 In discussion at the workshop, MP told the council representative that what the SG really needed was a template against which to generate the NP, rather than employing a consultant to advise on each stage. The representative took that thought away with her.

5. **Finance.** MP reminded the SG that there is £7k available for consultancy, etc. POE envisaged that consultancy support would possibly assist the SG when seeking formal approval from the Council of relevant documents. GL would find it more beneficial were the SG to produce the required draft documents but the consultant would review them before submission to ensure their acceptability. I.e. The SG would contract the consultant to meet the outcome required. SB pointed out that we would be unlikely to receive any funding until the NP had been registered, in any event. MP said that he would speak to the Link contact to gain an understanding as to how the funding is managed Jenny Lewys, when she was a member of the SG, had been completing the form for funding but it had proved complicated and had not been submitted. SB mentioned that the Parish Council was unlikely to feel the need to fund the NP in the early days as there was considerable information on the web and elsewhere that the SG could tap into. SB would be happy to see how far Jenny Lewys had progressed and perhaps re-establish the funding link.

(NB: At this juncture GL had to leave the meeting)

6. Feedback from Parish Walk MA's view, shared by the SG, was that the 'chalk pit', was a major issue as it would not be possible to build there. POE pointed out that it was not really our responsibility to assess the geology but to determine where, in our view, new buildings would not be acceptable. MA had produced some very useful guidance on the environment, flooding, and history for the SG's use on the walk for which the SG was very grateful. At the time of the walk, the SG was unable to determine "red" "amber" and green areas, but did acquire the context in which the parish is set.

7. Definition of Neighbourhood Area

7.1 It is necessary to determine the Settlement boundary as a first step. An ancillary action is for the SG to determine what are meant by the "red", "amber" and "Green" designations. POE's view is that red indicates an area where the SG would not like to see new developments at all, amber indicates where the SG feel that new developments might be appropriate (subject to certain restraints), and green indicates that the SG had little or no concerns. SB made the point that the SG cannot begin to designate the coloured areas until the area had been defined and this needs to be a priority for the SG before the next meeting. POE would find it difficult to comprehend why the SG would fix upon a boundary narrower than the current one as there does not appear to be any logical reason to do so. This would be difficult to explain. This view was generally shared amongst the SG members. POE suggested that as the SG has to consult with the parishioners, we could formulate a question around "do you want this or that boundary". The question remained over the difference between the settlement boundary and the parish boundary and MP would obtain clarity on this (action as at 4.4 above). The default position is that the parish boundary is the basis for taking the NP forward, although Mike Hewett may have a view on this.

7.2 SB suggested that Unitary Councillor Mike Hewett would have a view and that perhaps he should be invited to attend the next SG meeting so that we could ask him specific questions. This was considered a positive step by the SG and SB agreed to approach him. It was considered that Sarah Hughes should also be invited as this activity was part of her job description in the view of the SG, but it was felt that perhaps Mike Hewett's advice would be enough for one evening.

Action: SB

8. Ordnance Survey on-line mapping See 3.7, above. In addition, SB volunteered to investigate the need for a software platform to support our mapping requirements and to investigate the OS database. MA volunteered that she had an overhead projector that could be used to show maps to a wider audience during village consultations.

Action: SB

9. **Wiltshire Council Link Officer** The Chairman will make efforts to contact Sarah Hughes to gain clarity on the issues raised above.

Action: MP

10. **Village consultation** The Chairman ventured that he would aim to have a public consultation before he departed the UK in April 2014 so that, as a first step, the boundary of the parish for the purposes of the NP could be agreed and the colouring methodology adopted. It was considered that it would be beneficial to consult earlier with parishioners and to do this, it would be useful to know how other parish NP SGs have approached this. In any event, it would be necessary to book the Glebe Hall for the event⁴ by which time it would be an aspiration to have our NP at least registered with the council.

11. **Co-ordination between NPSG and PC** SB reported that at the last Parish Council meeting there had been some discussion as to how much of the SG's work should be audited by the council. Generally, the opinion was that the SG must be a visibly independent body and this was accepted by the council. However the NP is an item on the Parish Council's agenda and so minutes of the SG's meetings should be made available to the council and more widely on the parish website. This was agreed by the SG and so SB will arrange for the minutes and other relevant documents to be made available under a transparency initiative.

Action: SB

12. **AOB** None.

13. **Date of Next Meeting** Monday, 20th January 2014

⁴ Provisionally booked for Sat 5 April 2014 from 13:00hrs to 17:00hrs