

**MINUTES OF MEETING NO 21  
OF THE BOURTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP  
HELD AT SANDWAYS FARM AT 7.30pm ON MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2014**

**Present:** M Withers, P Withers, P Overington, G Overington, A Scott, D Scott, C Price, N Hall.

**In Attendance:** S Firbank – Chairman Bourton Parish Council  
H Palmer - Chairman Village Hall Management Committee

The NPG had invited SF and HP to talk to the Group, before the meeting, about the outcome of the meeting which had taken place on 17th January with the planning policy department of NDDC.

MW gave a short summary of his understanding of the main outcome of the meeting. NDDC had given a very clear indication that, if permission was needed for any private housing development on the land adjoining Sandways Farm, to support the proposed new village hall, it should be pursued through the Neighbourhood Plan. NDDC stated that the principle of private housing being built in this location would also be subject to it being accepted by the community as a whole.

MW said that this was good news and differed from the advice he had previously received from NDDC, which he had reported at the joint VHMC/NPG meeting last Monday. He sought confirmation from SF and HP that his summary of the meeting's outcome was accurate and both agreed that it was. MW went on to say that NDDC's position was that they wanted to see the best possible NP for Bourton and thought that a fully collaborative approach was the best way to achieve this.

The discussion then moved on to the forthcoming public meeting and questionnaire. NDDC had said that it was important that, in connection with the VH question, no exact numbers of houses was mentioned and that, instead, a defined area of land (0.3 hectares) should be shown on a map and that residents should be asked to approve the principle of allowing private housing in support of the VH.

SF said that Trevor Warrick had given his view of how NDDC members would vote, should a proposal be received for private housing to enable the new village hall on the proposed site, other than through the NP process. He said that Simon Rutter (from Proctors) had given as much assurance as he could that the public meeting and questionnaire route proposed would be sufficient to keep Brimble Lea keen to proceed with the proposal on behalf of the landowner. HP agreed that this was encouraging and felt that the new village hall project should be community led.

GO asked whether this would mean that the wording of the preamble and questions about the VH would need to be changed. MW replied that this would certainly be the case and he was awaiting Sarah Jennings' comprehensive response on all the questions in the draft questionnaire during the next week.

HP asked if the questions on housing would also be amended. MW said that he expected that would be the case but was awaiting SJ's response. AS asked if there would be major changes to the current draft text. MW said that, as we expected, there would be a lot of changes to the Settlement Boundary/Countryside Policy questions. He commented that, if the village was to opt to replace a Settlement Boundary around the village, rather than adopt NDDC's Countryside Policy, he thought that there would be a significant delay in producing a draft NP because of all the new research that would be necessary. Whilst there must be no bias in the questionnaire, he wanted the preamble to the SB questions to be accurate and reflect what NDDC were going to present at the public meeting.

DS asked whether, in the event that residents decided they wanted a SB, could NDDC help us with the methodology they had employed in deciding the current SB. MW thought that they would but NDDC had mentioned that their exercise was carried out in about 1999 and a number of factors had changed in the intervening time. Effectively, the main issues between the two different policies was that, with a SB there could continue to be scope for infill development within it whereas, with the Countryside Policy, there would be no private housing development in Bourton other than on specifically allocated sites specified in the NP.

HP asked how the NPG saw the allocation of the 0.3 hectares of land for private housing. MW said that the important factors would be that the new village hall was shown to be needed in the village, that the site was acceptable to the residents and that the "deal" being proposed for an area of private housing development, in exchange for a large site for the village hall, was also acceptable to them. The importance of not including numbers, as stated by NDDC, was that the landowner may want a smaller number of large houses or a larger number of smaller ones. The important thing was the acceptance of the principle of private housing and defining an area where it was proposed it should be sited.

GO asked whether the principle, described at the joint meeting last Monday, of only compensating the landowner for the value of the land being given up still applied. MW replied that this does not now apply. Effectively, NDDC are saying that, if the village approves, then a small number of private houses could be built to support the provision of a new village hall.

NH asked how the area of 0.3 hectares had been arrived at. MW said he had no idea as he was not at the meeting with Brimble Lea, however, HP had attended this meeting and she said that this proposal met with the aspirations of the landowner and Proctors had come up with a scheme. This was discussed with the VHMC and amendments were made to ensure that the development would be as inconspicuous as possible in the SW corner of the land. There was a discussion on how this would be shown on the map. MW showed HP a proposal for this and it was agreed that this should be shown as accurately as possible when NDDC were producing the map.

HP asked whether the village could be asked what type of housing they wanted. DS said that the results from the NP questionnaire showed that, if there was to be any new housing development, most of the respondents to the questionnaire wanted developments up to a maximum of five houses. MW said that, as he understood it, there had been no hard negotiation with Brimble Lea at the meeting with the VHMC and that the 0.3 hectare site

was what was wanted for the landowner to agree a deal, ie, it gave them sufficient land value to please them. It was felt that the questionnaire results on the preferred size and number of houses should be taken into account in future discussions over what had really been a trade off.

On the subject of access to the proposed housing development, MW's personal view was that the proposed access was not in the best location, as it went over open land which should remain unspoilt. HP agreed but pointed out that the landowner did not own the alternative access and their lawyers were checking their rights.

HP asked when it would be appropriate for the VHMC to talk to the landowners who would be affected by the VH and housing development. AS said that it would come as a big shock to them. MW said that it would have to be before the public meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February. After some discussion, it was agreed that it was the VHMC's responsibility to inform those concerned, as had been agreed at the joint meeting. AS suggested that, to identify the relevant parties, it would make sense to stand in the area of the proposed development site and identify the houses/gardens which overlook it. HP intends to invite those affected to meet to discuss the proposals by way of a letter drop.

HP offered to help with the questionnaire distribution. MW thanked her but said that the NPG had a very good team of volunteers who had done this before. HP offered to broker a meeting between the NPG and Brimble Lea. MW said that he thought this would only be appropriate after the public meeting and results from the questionnaire so that there was no influence over NPG processes. The NPG members all agreed.

SF admitted that he was impatient and wanted matters progressed as soon as possible. He hoped that Simon Rutter's view that Brimble Lea would be willing to proceed under the NPG processes is justified. MW's personal view was that they were more certain of a satisfactory outcome for their client through the NP process. Other routes could be high risk and expensive.

HP suggested that Question 3 of the VH part of the questionnaire should be either changed or dropped. It was decided that, as this issue had been discussed and agreed at the joint NPG/VHMC meeting, it should not be changed.

At this point SF asked HP if she had anything further to add about the meeting with NDDC and events leading up to that meeting. HP said that she had wanted to have a separate meeting with MW to discuss the issue with him personally but this had not been possible. She still intended to fulfill that commitment. MW thanked HP for attending the meeting and she left.

There followed a general discussion about the events leading up to the meeting with NDDC, which everyone had been made aware of, and how NDDC had asked that the Brimble Lea representative should not attend. It was thought that his presence would have been a hindrance to a free discussion on technical planning policy issues forming part of the NP processes. After some further discussion of related issues, SF left the meeting.

### **14.13 Minutes of Meeting No 20**

These were accepted as a true record.

### **14.14 Matters Arising**

There were none that were not covered by the agenda.

### **14.15 Declarations of Interest**

MW and PW as neighbours of the preferred new VH site.  
NH as a VHMC member.

### **14.16 Meetings with Organisations/Individuals**

#### **14.16.1 Members of the Public**

MW reported that, along with SF and PW, he had met with David & Rosalie Watkins to follow up on two allegations made at the last PC meeting. These were that they wanted to know if and when the NPG's interviews with landowners were to be made public and why the PC had not discussed and commented on the draft NDDC Local Plan. These issues were fully dealt with at the meeting and a copy of the draft notes of that meeting had been sent to the Watkins, SF and NPG members for comment.

#### **14.16.2 VHMC**

The NPG had met with the VHMC, with SF in the chair, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January. The meeting was held in a spirit of cooperation from both groups. Minutes of this meeting had been circulated by PW to those attending.

MW had reported at the meeting that, following a conversation he had with Nicola Laszlo of NDDC, there may be problems in trying to get private housing on part of the preferred VH site in return for giving up the rest of the land for the VH and amenity land. This issue was so important that he suggested that representatives from the VHMC, NPG and PC have a meeting with NDDC as soon as possible to clarify the issue. SF asked MW to set this meeting up to be attended by HP and PW from the VHMC, SF from the PC and MW representing the NPG.

It was agreed that the matters discussed at the NPG/VHMC meeting should remain confidential to those attending until this matter was cleared up.

A meeting subsequently took place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January with Trevor Warrick, Sarah Jennings and Nicola Laszlo from NDDC's planning policy department. The VHMC attended, with the addition of Simon Rutter of Proctor's, who have been acting as architects for them.

The meeting has been fully discussed in the preamble to these minutes and in the presence of SF and HP.

### **14.17 Public Meeting/Questionnaire**

This meeting has been arranged for 7.00pm on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February in the village hall. The programme will include an update on progress of the NP, discussions about the numbers of new housing, information about the settlement boundary, the new VH and certain environmental issues.

MW would introduce the meeting, give a progress report on how the NP is proceeding and talk about housing numbers. The issue of the Settlement Boundary and Countryside Policy would be presented by SJ and NL from NDDC. This would be followed by a short presentation from Peter Williams on the new VH and DS would talk about environmental issues. There would then be a general Q & A session and MW would sum up at the end and remind people of the importance of the questionnaire.

GO had prepared a flyer for insertion into the next parish magazine which everyone thought was excellent. 400 were to be ready for collection on Tuesday and they needed to be with Carol Affleck by Wednesday. GO also confirmed that the printer would need 3 or 4 days to print the questionnaires, although this may need to be extended if there was going to be two folded A3 sheets.

It was agreed that there should also be 20 laminated posters to be put up in various locations by NH. Design work on the questionnaire itself would have to wait for SJ's comments on it to be received - it was due later in the week. There was discussion about whether or not there would need to be two A3 sheets folded to include all the information, even though it was now intended to have MW's introduction to the questionnaire as a separate sheet. Again, SJ's comments would be critical to this. It was also thought that an article should be prepared for the BVM advertising the meeting and DS agreed to prepare a draft for distribution to the group.

DS then raised the subject of the number of questions that there would be on the environment. It was possible that there would be four and these were discussed. A final decision on how the Local Green Spaces issue was to be handled was also partly dependent on the response from NDDC. There was also discussion on particular land that may be designated. It was recognised that there may be some conflicts when looking at land use issues between, for example, affordable housing exception sites and areas of environmental interest.

MW said that he would need to talk shortly with Natalie Phillipson at NDDC about the printing of maps and what was going to be included, in addition to the VH site and the associated housing development. DS said that it would be useful to include the IOWAs and Local Green Spaces.

### **14.18 Policy Writing**

MW said that he had not had time to draft a brief for planning consultants yet but hoped that this would be completed shortly, after he had spoken to Liz Beth. CP asked who we would

be approaching for planning consultancy advice and MW mentioned the two practices that SJ had suggested.

The key was to make the brief as tight as possible, with a fixed timescale and fee. MW thought that the areas where we needed help were on converting evidence into policies and the various cross-referencing of data that would be necessary. GO suggested that she has a contact who works at the British Library who could be helpful. There was also discussion about whether Brian Martin could be persuaded to help as he was very methodical. AS reminded the meeting that Liz Beth had suggested that planning trainees might be available from Planning Aid. PW would talk to BM and MW would contact Liz Beth.

DS had circulated some draft policies from the environment group but these had not yet been read. Comments please back to him when read. AS thought that her draft policies would be following shortly.

### **14.19 Focus Groups**

AS said that she had met the senior countryside ranger for ND, with SF and Danny Lawes, to discuss the maintenance of footpaths. The ranger was new and he was appalled at the treatment we had received in Bourton. He lives in Blandford and is arranging for a gang of workers to come to Bourton for two days in February to repair styles, gates, etc. Any additional volunteers would be welcome. This is at no cost to the PC. NH said that this was some good news to publish on the website and MW said that it would be included in his report to the next PC.

DS reported the successful presentation given by Joy Wallis of Dorset Wildlife Trust with supporting displays from Bernard Sullivan. Some 50 people had attended and there were some additional volunteers recruited for the environmental group. MW thanked DS and all his team for arranging the event, which was sponsored by the NPG. DS said that Bernard Sullivan had been the prime mover within the group and further events are planned for the group, including a visit to Moldrum's Ground and a bat walk.

NH said that he had been in contact with Sue Mitchell, who deals with transport issues for Dorset Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. She has offered to help with a number of small initiatives for dealing with traffic concerns, which she has done with many other parishes. She will walk around the village and NH suggested that they link in with AS's group. Brian Martin has also offered to help in this area. It may be useful to also involve our County Councillor, Andrew Cattaway.

### **14.20 Communications**

This had been dealt with earlier in respect of the forthcoming public meeting and questionnaire.

### **14.21 Programme**

MW had looked again at the programme and, as expected, there had been some slippage. This had been due to a number of factors including family illness within the group, the

delays brought about by slippage on the draft Local Plan, and dealing with difficult local issues. It was thought that the overall delay to the original programme may be 3-4 months, although it may be feasible to recover some of this.

MW did not know whether the funding body, the Communities Development Foundation, would be prepared to extend the funding date beyond the end of July 2014 but he would ask. In case this could not be achieved, he had asked for a sum of £1,500 to be included as a contingency in the PC precept which was to be debated at the next PC meeting. GO/MW would work together to revise the programme for discussion with the funders.

#### **14.22 Budget/Funding**

GO reported that there was a further account for £5.50 which needed to be presented to the PC for direct payment. This was for the second advert in the parish magazine for the Wildlife and Habitats event and was payable to the Parish of Upper Stour.

MW reported that he had sent in the quarterly monitoring report and mentioned within it that there may be a slippage in the programme.

#### **14.23 Any Other Business**

DS raised the question again about the Local Green Spaces issue. After much discussion it was thought that this would be covered by the Countryside Policy, if the village accepted this rather than requiring a replacement Settlement Boundary. CP said that we did not want infill development throughout the village with the resulting loss of the village's rural character. Infill would not be allowed under the Countryside Policy. It was also important for the village to protect "green fingers" in the village which break up the built up areas. This was not only relevant to the main road but included all areas.

#### **14.24 Date of Next Meeting**

This was arranged for Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 18 Mill Rise at 7.30pm.