

**MINUTES OF MEETING NO 29
OF THE BOURTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP
HELD AT SANDWAYS FARM AT 7 30pm ON MONDAY 11th AUGUST 2014**

Present: M Withers, P Withers, G Overington, P Overington, D Scott, N Hall, B Martin, F Gillett.

In Attendance: Simon Firbank - Chairman of Bourton Parish Council

Apologies: A Scott

14.112 Minutes of Meeting No 28

These were accepted as a true record.

14.113 Matters Arising

MW thanked NH, PO and GO for putting together the excellent display for the public Drop-In session on the 2nd Questionnaire results, on 4th August. He also thanked PW, AS and GO for sorting and summarising all the comments received on the Questionnaire returns and for all group members who were present at the drop-in session.

MW said the meeting with North Dorset District Council, concerning the SEA, had taken place on 24th July, with Nicola Lazlo and Terry Sneller. MW, PW, NH and PO were in attendance.

Despite BM's email to her, there had been no response to MW from Mrs Honeywill of Silton Parish in respect of Silton Surgery.

MW said he had raised the matter of an updated Housing Needs Survey from NDDC in respect of affordable housing and they said they would consider carrying one out if they had the available resources. He suggested that, in our future discussions, we need to acknowledge the amount of affordable housing associated with the Mill development and that which might be generated from the recent planning application at Rugby Cottage. SF asked if members had seen a report in the Blackmore Vale Magazine on affordable housing. PW agreed to check it out and report back if it is of interest to the Group. MW reminded the Group that site allocations for affordable housing are not necessary within our NP, as they will be allowable as an exception within NDDC's emerging Local Plan.

14.114 Declarations of Interest

NH as a member of the VHMC, MW and PW as neighbours of the VHMC's preferred new village hall site.

14.115 Questionnaire

PW reported that 18 members of public attended the Drop-In session. PO said there had been no problems with questions on the day. Two notes were put in the Comments Box. The team felt that the low turnout reflected the fact that a good job had already been done with the headline results newsletter which had addressed all the questions on the Questionnaire only two weeks before. PW circulated a report of the proceedings for reference, which included the two comments in full.

14.116 Meetings/Focus Groups

14.116.1 Natural Environment Focus Group Issues

DS reminded the group of Chris Sperring's visit on 21st August, when he will carry out site surveys for the mounting of barn owl boxes in the area. He will also be giving a presentation in the village hall and will be accompanied by his own barn owl.

MW said that he hoped the grass cutting would be better planned next year, with full consultation between the Wildlife and Habitats Group and the Parish Council. Work on footpaths should be coordinated with BPC's footpaths officer. This had been minuted at the PC meeting.

14.116.2 Meeting with NDDC

MW reported on the meeting at NDDC on 24th July (see 14.113 above). He has been waiting for NDDC to comment on the draft notes prior to sending out a report to the Group.

He felt that NDDC were somewhat defensive about their previous meetings with the VHMC, as reported in the VHMC dossier. Their current view is that there is now a totally different set-up under the emerging Local Plan and, therefore, they are not able to agree/disagree with any past advice. It is now an 'open field'. Although this means that the group should look at all the sites assessed by the VHMC, they thought that some of these could be discarded at a desk-top session, so long as adequate reasons were recorded. That could leave five to seven sites to assess in greater detail. Terry Sneller provided some thoughts on how we can progress.

14.117 The SEA

BM had previously suggested that we all read the Exeter St James Plan. MW has copied the entire SEA (Sustainability Appraisal). He reminded the Group that the SEA applies to the whole plan and all the policies, not just to possible alternative sites for the village hall and

associated housing development. Therefore, when thinking policy, we need to look at all the base line facts, such as population, health, etc. as it will all count. Again, please read the Exeter St James plan and become familiar with it. It is logical and gives reasons as to why the 2011 census statistics are the starting point. Together with Terry Sneller's rough outline we can decide the relevant social facts, such as ageing population, before we set up our framework. **MW** agreed to circulate TS's note to the Group.

SF asked if NDDC had accepted the proposal to whittle down the sites to be assessed in detail to five or six sites. MW said that they had, provided we use logical criteria and apply the same criteria to all sites.

MW asked whether the Group thought that we should employ consultants to help with the SEA exercise. SF asked whether it would be difficult to find consultants with the necessary experience, given all the background work already done. MW thought that this should be possible. SF asked if it would help taking into account the time factor.

MW said that any consultant would need leading with all our evidence and we had a strict deadline of 31st December, by which time we would need to have paid any monies to consultants for their completed work. DS asked if it was a question of balance between our time and effort and the costs involved in time spent bringing consultants up to speed. MW agreed that this was the case. He thought it a measured risk if we go ahead prior to the completion of the Local Plan.

MW thought there were two areas for the group to consider before employing a consultant and these were the SEA and policy writing. The two are linked but we would not want a consultant to do both. The SEA must inform policy and policies must not clash with the SEA. He felt that help will be more useful on the SEA process rather than policy writing. NH agreed that he would like to see a consultant involved with producing the SEA framework. MW said that there was not much experience of Neighbourhood Planning and we would need to consult with care and much guidance.

BM thought that the policies will come from all our evidence and hence our input is very important. MW said that evidence is not only the opinions we already have from the village. Some strong opinions may have been given but this may not tally with other factual evidence. For example, we may need more information on the number and type of housing to be provided. BM asked if we need to define specific sites before the SEA. This would fit in with the existing evidence. FG felt it was a 'chicken and egg' situation.

MW reiterated that we cannot show a preferred site. BM asked if we can show the number and location of the sites. MW said that we must look at all the selected sites in detail with exactly the same criteria and score fairly on each. We cannot just conduct a survey with the sole aim to prove that the preferred site is the best. BM mentioned the economic aspect of the site selection and asked whether these criteria can be used in our assessments. MW said that

this would be included and that, had the VHMC not already done a survey of sites, we would have needed to select a number of sites to assess from scratch.

MW suggested that we convene a further meeting to conduct a desk top approach, to see if we could eliminate some sites, using criteria that we all agree are relevant. NH handed out some preliminary work he had done to assist the selection of criteria. SF asked for a copy of the NDDC framework. This was given to him. Again, it was agreed that we all read the Exeter St James SEA.

MW brought up the VDS and the landscape characteristics of the area which had been provided by NDDC. He referred to the Levitt-Therivel/URS Sustainability Appraisal and said that Cat Loveday had mentioned that Planning Aid had a connection with URS who may be willing to assist us with the SEA. He felt that we might get some help from them which is covered in our grant from Planning Aid. The majority of adopted NPs that he had seen had used the Levitt-Therivel/URS method for their SEA.

MW confirmed that at the recent NDDC meeting, the first thing we had asked was, “do we really need this SEA when at least one of the statutory consultees appeared to have questioned the need?”. We were told categorically that we would fail at examination without it. FG asked if we had thought about potential consultants. MW replied that we had. There were three, although we had not had recent contact with them and had, in the past, been discussing NPs as a whole rather than SEAs. At this point SF left the meeting.

Plan of Action. It was agreed that a meeting will be held within the next 7-10 days, to attempt to reduce the number of potential sites, to be arranged by **PW**. The meeting will also discuss and evolve criteria for scoring/matrix and will look at the terms we want for appointing a consultant. In the meantime, **MW** will talk to URS via Planning Aid to seek help with structure and framework. FG asked if consultants could be employed for checking our NP. MW said that NDDC will wish to screen it thoroughly because, if it is adopted, it becomes part of their planning policy. If we then disagree with NDDC we might want to use a consultant.

14.118 Policy Writing

MW asked BM if he could go through the VDS to draw out issues on building design which could be incorporated into the NP as policies. BM asked if the VDS could be referred to in its entirety in order to inform the policies. MW said that in order for any proposal to have teeth, it needs to be a policy. We would especially need the VDS for design issues, perhaps relating to the Mill and other developments. With the emergence of the Local Plan, the VDS would be superceded. PO asked what would be the position if the NP is rejected - what happens to the VDS. MW thought that when the emerging Local Plan is adopted the VDS would become a historic reference document.

DS asked if the NP can refer to the VDS as a supporting document. MW said, that once the NP is adopted, that is a statement of policies and the VDS will be superceded. It will, therefore, be important to extract as much as possible from the VDS and write it up as policy for our NP. The majority views expressed in response to the two Neighbourhood Plan questionnaires should also be incorporated in policies.

DS said he had just emailed the Group with his stab at policy writing on the Village and Landscape Character. He has searched the VDS and both Questionnaires to reference the formation of policy. Was he on the right track? MW replied that he was - he had been about to ask DS to do exactly what he has done and for BM to look at the design features for policy writing. This brings the two parts of the VDS together and it would be very helpful if **BM and DS** could liaise over this, as there would be a degree of overlap in the two tasks. DS felt his title might need adjustment as it is more about open spaces and views (rural character) than the character of buildings.

FG asked whether each policy would have evidence to back it and MW said that this was correct. He felt that the housing policy would pre-empt the SEA. He needs to hone it to make a simple policy but needs further input from local surveyors about the types of property needed in the area and the property market in general.

DS said that AS had produced Health and Social Welfare Policy headings and references. **FG** offered to help NH on the Infrastructure policy and MW suggested the use of resources on-line for transport links, etc.

14.119 Communications

It was agreed by all members that there would need to be a level of confidentiality throughout the SEA process, including in respect of any named sites. There will be time for members of the public to make comments at the Public Consultation stage. PO asked what happens to all the consultation work - does it become part of the NP. MW said that it becomes an appendix. The draft NP will go before BPC for comments.

MW reported that Ros Everleigh from Marnhull NP has requested an electronic copy of our first Questionnaire rather than the PDF version on our website. PO agreed to do this.

14.120 Programme

It is estimated that we are three months behind schedule, because of the delays we have endured, mainly from NDDC's moratorium on support to NPGs. **MW** agreed to talk to our funders about this and determine if spending can be extended beyond 31st December 2014.

14.121 Budget and Funding

MW asked GO to think about how much work there is to do and prepare a suitable budget around the result. She should omit the cost of consultants, but include printing, hire costs, mileage, ink and stationery, etc. GO asked if NH could be reimbursed £10 for the Velcro stickers and suggested that MW should submit a mileage claim to the next PC meeting.

14.122 Any Other Business

PO asked if we had seen the outcome of the issue reported in The Times newspaper concerning a challenge by a developer against an adopted NP, which had been mentioned at the last meeting. MW said he had not but would find out if possible.

14.123 Date of Next Meeting

This was arranged for Monday 8th September at 7 30pm at Sandways Farm.

Neighbourhood Planning Group - Action List from Meeting No 29

- Item 14.113** **PW** to check out BVM report on affordable housing and report back if it is of interest to the Group.
- Item 14.117** **MW** to circulate Terry Sneller's outline document to assist in the setting up of our framework.
- PW** to arrange an interim meeting to discuss the SEA, with a view to reducing the number of potential sites and to discuss and evolve criteria for scoring/matrix.
- MW** to talk to URS via Planning Aid to seek help with structure and framework.
- Item 14.118** **BM** and **DS** to liaise over the content and design features of policy statements.
- FG** to help NH with the Infrastructure policy.
- Item 14.120** **MW** to talk to our funders to determine if spending can be extended beyond 31st December 2014.
- Item 14.122** **MW** to investigate the outcome of the issue reported in The Times concerning a challenge by a developer against an adopted NP.