

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held in the East Dean and Friston Village (Small) Hall on Thursday 21 March 2024 starting at 7.30 pm.**

**NPSG Members Present:** Cllr Michael Bustard (Chair), Lesley Durso, Cllr Grant Fowler, Tim Pontin and Jonathan Timberlake

**In attendance:** Alison Eardley (Planning Consultant); Katrina Larkin (Deputy Clerk)

*No members of the public were present*

1. **Apologies:** - Maria Stack, Cllr David White
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
  - a) The minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 23 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair
  - b) The Group took note of the record of the Q&A session at the Consultation Evening on 29 January 2024
3. **Project Plan and Engagement Plan**
  - a) **Project Plan:** - the Group reviewed the Project Plan and the following points were noted:
    - Design Code – the AECOM draft should be finalised by the end of March
    - Local Housing Needs Assessment – AECOM had produced a draft apparently based on the incorrect assumption that Wealden District Council was the planning authority for the parish. The draft could be delayed whilst it was revised in line with the South Downs National Park’s housing needs assessment, completed in December 2023.
    - Local Green Spaces – the audit was essentially complete
    - Significant Local Views - further work was required to assess which candidates should be protected
    - Heritage items - further work was required (i) to assess which heritage items from a list of 118 possible candidates (mainly monuments and artefacts) should be protected, and (ii) to improve the representation of early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing. **ACTION: JT to circulate an Excel sheet of candidates; AE to circulate guidance on criteria for inclusion and set up a Zoom meeting for all members**
    - Non-policy actions – a list had been compiled and circulated
    - Screening – the Group noted that the project was still on track for a draft to be sent to the SDNPA for screening in May. The SDNPA would need to consult Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency to

identify any 'significant impacts' of the proposals. There were unlikely to be any significant impacts as the proposals were generally protective

b) **Communications/Engagement Strategy:** - the Group considered the draft Strategy prepared by TP (Report 3b Powerpoint v.3) in response to the issues raised about communications, particularly at the Consultation Evening on 29 January 2024. The report was welcomed in its entirety and the following points were noted:

- Permanent display – the Village Hall Trust would consider whether a permanent NP display could be mounted either on the stage of the Main hall or in the foyer.
- Permanent posters – a graphic designer resident in the village should be requested to design a poster (A3) for display purposes, particularly for the weekly Village Market. The Group would expect to pay for this work **ACTION: LD to contact a designer; AE to provide a template.** This should name the parish council website as the principal source of updated information. The parish clerk should be requested to put the posters on the council noticeboards **ACTION: KL/SA**
- Continuous website updates – the Residents' Association website and the Village website were also carrying updated information, and the council website should be linked to them **ACTION: KL/SA**
- Visits to village club/society meetings – at the Annual Village Meeting the Chair would offer at least three societies the chance to hear an NP presentation at one of their meetings **ACTION: MB**
- Social media – it was suggested that the Facebook group with the most hits locally was the East Dean Community Facebook page, and that this should be used so far as possible **ACTION: SA**
- Parish Magazine – regular updates would be provided **ACTION: TP**
- Annual Village Report – the Chair would give a substantial presentation at the Annual Village Meeting on 12 April 2024, and there should be a reference to this either in the body of the Annual Report or in separate handouts to go on chairs, all carrying the Group logo **ACTION: KL to check progress of the Annual Report with SA**
- Handouts for Annual Village Meeting – these should be A5 and similar to the posters **ACTION: AE to provide templates for these too.**

c) **Reflections on the Consultation Evening:** - the Group considered the Powerpoint assessment prepared by LD, assessing what had worked well (interactive displays and feedback forms; panel representation and expertise; opportunity for Q&A; informative presentation/action to date, next steps; and collecting location information of attendees); and also what could be improved on:

- more time for attendees to complete feedback exercises
- representation and engagement with wider demographics
- keeping agenda on track and questions relevant
- resident knowledge of local and neighbourhood planning
- knowledge of the current context and challenge

- encouraging actual involvement alongside feedback

Members agreed that the majority of these points and the Key Actions arising from them were now being addressed by the communications and engagement strategy. In addition:

- Five Common Themes identified as coming up repeatedly in Q&A sessions and the like, should be addressed on the website information pages and in the presentations to be given in various forums by the Chair **ACTION: KL to revise the webpage with FAQs; MB to deal at meetings.**
- An effort should be made to gather input from children. For example, primary school children should be invited to say what three wishes they would like to see fulfilled in the parish, and teenagers should be asked what things they would like to do and what places they would like to get to, and what would help with these things **ACTION: LD**
- The screening window i.e. the period of about six weeks when the SDNPA would be consulting higher authorities over the possible impacts of the NP proposals, should be used to disseminate information on the policies put forward, so that further reactions could be gathered. There had so far been little input from the public on walking and cycling routes. Afternoon gatherings could be held (with tea) to make it easier and more attractive for elderly residents to attend. 'Carousel' meetings might be held, enabling attendees to move around from one topic table to another, with short presentations being given at each one. A village lunch session might be used in a similar way.

#### 4. **Update on evidence gathering for each of the Plan themes**

Members noted that AECOM would need final comments on the Design Code draft by 29<sup>th</sup> March. **ACTION: all members to send their comments to KL not later than Monday 25 March for collation, checking by members, and onward transmission to AECOM by the deadline of 29 March.** Some comments were noted at the meeting and recorded for collation, including general requests (i) that more prescriptive language be used; (ii) that more detail be given about the special character of the East Dean portion of the Downlands Estate, and the hamlet of Crowlink; and (iii) that more detail be given on making existing homes sustainable; and (iv) that some photos should be upgraded. **ACTION: LD to get better photos of the Downlands Estate; JT to get photos of Crowlink; KL to collate comments for approval by Group and forwarding to AECOM.**

In addition, though not specifically for AECOM, the owners of proposed new Local Green Spaces should be consulted for their comments **ACTION: KL; JT to obtain History Group booklet on the Bowling Green.**

#### 5. **Plan walk-through**

AE had produced a first draft of a skeleton Plan which would be considered at the next meeting on 2 April 2024

#### 6. **Photographic Competition**

The Group deferred consideration of the entries (Repot 6) t the next meeting on 2 April 2024. The prizes for the winning photos would be awarded at the Annual Village Meeting

7. **Next round of funding/technical support**

The Group noted that the final invoices in the current round of funding were about to be paid, and the End of Grant Report submitted to Locality. As yet there had been no announcement about the next round of funding, 2024/25. However, the parish council had set aside funding in its own budget and the project work would continue.

8. **Annual Village Meeting Presentation**

The Group agreed that AE and MB should work together on the content of MB's presentation at the Annual Village Meeting, 12 April 2024.

9. **Dates of future meetings**

a) **Annual Village Meeting – Friday 12 April 2024**, both halls of the village hall, doors open 5.30 pm to browse displays, business begins at 6.30 pm

b) **Dates of future Steering Group meetings:**

- Tuesday 2 April 2024
- Tuesday 14 May 2024
- Tuesday 4 June 2024
- Tuesday 9 July 2024
- Tuesday 3 September 2024
- Tuesday 5 November 2024
- Tuesday 7 January 2025
- Tuesday 4 March 2025

*There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.40 pm*

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....