

Tilehurst Parish Council - Neighbourhood Plan

Meeting Minutes

21/09/2016, 19:30, Calcot Centre.

1. **Agenda**

- Representation from members of the public
- Apologies for absence
- Agree minutes of previous meeting
 - Discuss matters arising from previous meeting minutes
- Steering Group membership review
 - Unless we hear otherwise before the meeting, we will assume any member not present no longer wishes to play an active part as a member of the Steering Group. Everyone is welcome to participate in working groups and other voluntary tasks. New volunteers will be invited to take up the places vacated. As a reminder, the constitution sets a maximum of 10 Steering Group members.
- Review progress with the working groups
- Share reviews of other published Neighbourhood Plans
- Peter to share updated plan and budget

2. **Present**

Lynda Chater
Peter Cross
Julia Gentle
Keith Hester
Joan Lawrie
Jacky Major (Clerk, Tilehurst Parish)
Kevin Page (Chairperson)
Clive Taylor (Parish Councillor, Birch Copse Ward)
Fred Williams

3. **Apologies for absence**

Jenny Allen (is unable to attend meetings but is willing to be involved in performing background research tasks and, as such, will not be a member of the Steering Group)

Ian Germer & Rebecca Swainston (wish to make known that they will be dropping out due to other commitments but are keen to help when the need arises)

Tony O'Connor

Janet Haines (has previously indicated that she wishes to be a member of the Steering Group)

4. Agree minutes of previous meeting

- There were no comments on the previous meetings' minutes and they were agreed
- Kevin noted that the name of Jacky Major, Clerk of Tilehurst Parish, appears in the minutes so he took the opportunity to introduce Jacky, who was in attendance, to the other attendees

5. Representations from members of the public

- There were no representations at this meeting

6. Review status of action items from previous meetings

- The status of action items was not undertaken
- The current list of actions can be found on the web site (www.tilehurstpcnp.org.uk)
- The list should be looked at between meetings and updated particularly if items are assigned to named committee members (updates to be emailed to Fred)

7. Steering Group membership review

Kevin explained that at the previous meeting it had been discussed whether we should continue with the Neighbourhood Plan. The overwhelming response was that it should continue and that this meeting be used to determine, by their presence (or apology for absence), who would be formally be a member of the Steering Group.

Keith Hester, who was attending for the first time, asked what the Steering Group was and Kevin explained its' purpose and the function of the various working groups to him. He indicated that he would prefer to be involved as a researcher for a working group.

Kevin asked, by going around the table, who was interested in being a member of the Steering Group.

The following seven people confirmed their interest:

- Lynda Chater
- Julia Gentle
- Peter Cross (Vice Chairperson)
- Joan Lawrie (Vice Chairperson)
- Kevin Page (Chairperson)
- Clive Taylor
- Fred Williams

The following four people have, whilst not being present at the meeting, previously expressed their interest in becoming members and will have to confirm their continued interest to Kevin:

- Tony O'Connor
- Iain Jones
- Janet Haines
- Peter Wood

If three of the above four people confirm that they wish to join the Steering Group, then it has reached its' maximum number of members.

The following people have expressed interest in helping the working groups:

- Jenny Allen
- Nigel & Sue Rowland
- Ian Germer & Rebecca Swainston
- Keith Hester

It is anticipated that the list of helpers will increase as the working groups make progress.

8. Review progress of the working groups

The current working groups, with responsible Steering Group member, were listed as follows:

- Business & Economy - Not yet assigned
- Amenities (including Green Spaces, Sports, Leisure, Libraries ...) - Not yet assigned
- Education (Joan & Julia)
- Health - Not yet assigned but it is hoped that Peter Wood will take on the role
- Infrastructure – Fred & Peter
- Transport (including Parking, Public Transport, Cycling ...) – Peter
- Relationships with other Authorities (West Berkshire Council, Reading Borough Council, North Wessex Area of Natural Beauty ...) – Fred & Kevin
- Environment (including Flood Risk, Wildlife, tree Protection Orders ...) – Not yet assigned
- Security & Policing (including Fire Prevention ...) – Not yet assigned
- Future Development Sites – Tony O'Connor

It was noted that the above list is a long list so it was decided to focus initially on the following four working groups:

- Transport
- Education
- Future Development Sites
- Relationships

A discussion took place about whether “Health” should be added to the shortlist but it was agreed that it should only be added if a Steering Group member could be named as it’s representative. It was suggested that Peter Wood be contacted.

Transport & Traffic – Working Group Update (Peter)

Peter reported that there had been little progress since the last meeting and that there had been no further communication with Reading Buses. Peter felt that further contact with them be delayed until he had specific items to discuss with them.

Peter noted that the two open days didn’t bring up any issues with the current services provided by Reading Buses, in fact most comments stated that the services were good.

A general discussion took place about individual bus routes and schedules, particularly the No. 26 Bus Service to Ikea.

Peter has also obtained a lot of documents about other areas (cycling etc.) and is studying them.

A general discussion took place about transport, traffic, cycling, cycle paths and parking.

Once a line of communication to West Berkshire Council has been established Peter will be looking to receive information from Paul Goddard (Officer responsible for transport matters).

Fred suggested that, due to overlaps, the “Infrastructure” and “Transport” working groups be merged together and representation shared by himself and Peter. This suggestion was approved.

West Berkshire Housing Policy

The subject of West Berkshire Councils Housing Policy was brought up at this point in the meeting by Joan and, even though it is not part of a Working Group update, was discussed.

During a meeting that she had had with Alok Sharma (MP, Reading West) and Anthony Chadley (Councillor, Finance and Transformation, West Berkshire Council) she noted that Alok had appeared to indicate that there was a view prevailing that it was “not PC” for Government housing allocations to be allocated to all pre-defined areas of a particular planning authority irrespective of the presence of a suitable infrastructure.

Alok seems to be pushing for a new approach where the Governments’ allocation of housing is accepted but that the distribution within West Berkshire Council’s area is not based on the pre-defined, fixed Eastern & Western Urban Areas and allocated, arbitrarily, to all Parishes or Areas by the council. The suggestion is that the parishes should be allowed to put forward their own allocation figures.

This more flexible approach would, it is hoped, meet with less objections. Many Parishes would arrive at the same number of housing allocations as through the current approach,

some would have fewer or no houses allocated, and some would have more houses allocated, at their own request.

It was mentioned that the situation has previously arisen where areas have had less housing allocated to them in the DPD than they, in fact, wanted but they were unable to alter the allocation.

This subject was new to the others present and it was agreed that further information should be gathered from West Berkshire Council.

A short discussion took place about the Neighbourhood Planning Bill that is currently going through Parliament. It appears to focus on compulsory purchase and compensation matters and the simplification of planning applications. It doesn't appear to address the lack of confidence that communities have in the decision making of their local Planning Authorities. (A copy of the Bill will be uploaded to the Library Section of the Tilehurst Neighbourhood Plan website – www.tilehurstpcnp.org.uk).

Education – Working Group Update (Joan)

Two appointments were requested with Little Heath School and Springfield School. Unfortunately, the suggested meeting date with Little Heath School had to be postponed due to time pressures on their side. Springfield School didn't show much interest in a meeting.

Joan will try to set up some meetings over the half-term period and has six schools on her list. A questionnaire has been prepared and will be circulated.

Future Development Sites – Working Group Update (Tony)

Tony was not present so there was no update.

Keith asked what the purpose of this working group was and was informed that part of a Neighbourhood Plan's activities was to suggest where future housing development can take place (brownfield and greenfield sites).

Relationships – Working Group Update (Kevin)

Kevin had little to report as the email to Bryan Lyttle (the nominated contact person at West Berkshire Council) was only sent the day before this meeting.

He explained that the purpose of this working group was to set up only one channel of communication between the Steering Group/Working Groups and West Berkshire Council.

Kevin explained that it is a legal requirement for West Berkshire Council to cooperate with the Neighbourhood Plan team so it is hoped that the suggestion by Nick Carter (Chief Executive Officer) that we contact him if Bryan Lyttle is not being cooperative will not have to be taken up.

Janet Haines has given the Steering Group a contact at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which will help us to understand what can/can not be requested of the council.

9. Budget Update (Peter)

Peter has put together a basic budget spreadsheet after discussions with Jacky.

To-date, a total of £229.80 has been expended, primarily on posters and flyers for the two events held in April.

Outstanding is the amount of £48.94 for the purchase of a Recording Device to be used for the recording of meetings etc.

Some work has been done on forecasting future expenditure and the current budget spreadsheet will be circulated amongst the Steering Group.

Jacky asked if any thoughts have been given to obtaining funding and it was confirmed that the subject has been discussed.

A general discussion took place about the use of consultants in the creation of Neighbourhood Plans. It was noted that consultants have been used, to a greater or lesser extent, by other Neighbourhood Plan teams. Some plans appear to have been drawn up entirely by consultants and others have used the consultants only when putting the final document together.

It was agreed that Peter should contact other Neighbourhood Plan teams to ascertain how much consulting they used and the cost of this resource (Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale, Stratfield Mortimer and Exeter Neighbourhood Plans).

It was suggested that Jenny Allen and Emma Webster may be able to provide insight to the possible areas of involvement for consultants in the creation of the Tilehurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Peter requested information about the period for which a budget has to be prepared.

After a short discussion it was proposed that the budget should cover the period up until March 2018 based on it taking until September 2017 to create the final document and that it will require a further six months for submissions and consultations (this will depend on the draft project plans).

10. Referendum

There is some confusion about the vote % required for the final document to be accepted. This will be confirmed.

11. Communications - Update (Lynda)

Lynda expressed concern that the website was not being regularly updated with new content and, after a brief discussion, it was suggested that efforts will be made to keep it topical and up-to-date.

For example, summarised updates of the Steering Group meetings, useful statistics about the Parish, news about the progress of other Neighbourhood Plans (the good, the bad and the ugly!), photography competition etc.

Lynda suggested that the contents of the current Local Plan and the status of planning applications may be of interest to visitors to the website.

We should continue to remind residents that we are “still here”.

12. External Resources

Fred noted that in previous meetings reference has been made to obtaining support from Reading University and requested an update.

Peter said that he has a contact in the Planning Department and it was suggested that it would be useful if an informal meeting could be set up to ascertain what resources and support may be available.

Lynda will try to contact Ikea to see what support (financial) they might be willing to provide.

13. Share reviews of other published Neighbourhood Plans

It was agreed that much of this agenda item has already come up in earlier discussions. However, it was felt that the Exeter Neighbourhood Plan impressed the most people, particularly its' structure and presentation.

14. Any other items

Clive, whilst not a member of any of the working groups, volunteered his services, on an “as and when” required basis.

Fred suggested that the Amenities working group be merged into the newly merged Infrastructure & Transport working group (see above) and that Clive join this working group.

This was agreed and the list of working groups is now as follows:

- Business & Economy – Not yet assigned
- Education (Joan & Julia)
- Health - Not yet assigned but it is hoped that Peter Wood will take on the role
- Infrastructure, Transport & Amenities – Fred, Peter & Clive

- Relationships with other Authorities (West Berkshire Council, Reading Borough Council, North Wessex Area of Natural Beauty ...) – Fred & Kevin
- Environment (including Flood Risk, Wildlife, tree Protection Orders ...) – Not yet assigned
- Security & Policing (including Fire Prevention ...) – Not yet assigned
- Future Development Sites – Tony O'Connor

The short list of prioritised working groups is now as follows:

- Infrastructure, Transport & Amenities
- Education
- Future Development Sites
- Relationships