

MUCH HADHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held in the Green Room, Much Hadham Village Hall on Tuesday 10th November 2015, at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Cllr Ian Hunt (Chair), Cllr Alex Young (Acting Secretary), Martin Adams, Mark Ashwell, Michael Byrne, Neil Clarke, Cllr Ian Devonshire, Mari Fleming, Ken Howlett, Hugh Labram, Lynne Mills, and Bill O'Neill

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Ian H welcomed newcomers to the NPSG – Neil Clarke, Bill O'Neil and Hugh Labram. He noted that those who had come forward to take up vacant posts were independent, and did not represent any particular interest group or political faction.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Penny Taylor

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 13th October were accepted as an accurate record.

4a MATTERS ARISING

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest had been duly completed by those members elected to the NPSG in October.

5. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

There were no residents present, beyond the members of the NPSG.

6. CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS

The following people were co-opted as members of the NPSG:

Name	Position	Proposed by	Seconded by	Notes
Lynne Mills	Finance Officer	Martin Adams	Ken Howlett	TBC by the PC
Alex Young	Infrastructure	Mark Ashwell	Mari Fleming	No vote
Neil Clark	Community Groups & Facilities	Ken Howlett	Martin Adams	
Hugh Labram	Health, Education & Public Transport	Lynne Mills	Mari Fleming	
Ian Devonshire	EHC Liaison	Mari Fleming	Lynne Mills	No vote
Mark Ashwell	Business & Employment	Lynne Mills	Bill O'Neill	

Noted that the position of Communications Co-Ordinator remained vacant.

7. LOCALITY ROADMAP GUIDE

Ian H referred to the Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide, which he had previously asked members to study. Particular passages were highlighted and discussed, as below:

P6: The Plan could encompass a wide range of issues, or focus on one or two. Michael noted that “land and housing” are effectively a single issue; but other issues such as social needs and infrastructure could not be ignored. In any event, there was need to be clear and concise when presenting the plan to the public

P7: Ian noted that the commitment to community engagement was of the foremost importance, and that this would inevitably entail considerable work.

Ken asked for clarity on what the minimum housing allocation would mean in practice. If the NP was restricted to the village boundary, perhaps the SG should consider widening that boundary. The village boundary was not the boundary of the NP, as the NP covered the entire parish.

Ian D explained that the minimum requirement was for 49 houses to be built within the village over the next ten years, of which 50% had to be built within five years. The NP could specify when and where houses should be built. It could also stipulate housing standards, such as levels of insulation, and the proportion of affordable housing within developments. However, it also had to be remembered that the houses themselves would only be built if developers chose to do so. If the NP was so restrictive as to deter developers, so that houses were not built within the specified time period, then EHC could over-ride the NP and houses would be built according to EHC’s priorities.

Hugh mentioned that a key consideration should be a vision of the shape of the village in the future. Would housing continue as a ribbon development along the B1004, or should it spread east and west and around a more obvious centre?

P11: The need for inclusivity was noted

P23: Ian D affirmed that support from the EHC could include funding.

P25: The need to publicise the plan was recognised. It was hoped that continuing publicity would encourage residents to participate in shaping the plan.

P26: Neil stressed the need to ensure that widest possible range of stakeholders was identified and brought into the process.

P28: It was agreed that there was a need to engage the community in an early and broad discussion. It was hoped that this would lead to identification of key issues and themes, from which an overall vision would emerge. Similarly, the problems and priorities identified by the various policy groups would contribute to the overall effort.

Martin pointed out that a great deal of enquiry and research had been conducted in connection with the 2011 Parish Plan, which could be usefully drawn upon. He would upload a copy of the Plan to the NPSG drop-box.

P34: Ian H has started gathering census data and other core statistics. He would upload these to the drop-box.

P36-37: It was agreed that the plan, when presented to the public should be concise. Supporting data could be available in appendices. Mari would check the formatting of such data, to ensure clarity and consistency.

8. PROJECT PLAN: DROP-BOX

As project manager, MF was using drop-box and Zoho (a project-planning software too), to act as the “central filing cabinet”. She had already circulated a task-list, and provided members with access to Drop-box and Zoho.

Martin’s proposal that the group should spend half a day jointly working on the project plan had broad support. It was felt that this would encourage members to accept ownership of and commitment to the plan, rather than resent it as a task imposed upon them. It was agreed that this should take place on a Saturday morning. Ian H would revert to members with a proposed date, while Mari would prepare a project plan.

Mari had started work on the group website, and it was expected that it would be operational within three weeks, i.e. by early December.

The group was also connected to the forum “Planning Aid England”.

9. VISIONING FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Michael and Ken had attended an HAPTC training session on developing a vision, but they had felt that it added little to the discussions that had already been held within the group. Michael would forward a copy of the document arising from the session to members.

Ian H asked how we could best involve the community in the development of the plan and accompanying vision. It was generally agreed that we should approach the parish with questionnaire that would encourage residents to state the problems that they saw, the issues that they wanted to be treated as priorities, and their views of the community that they wished to live in.

Their identification of key issues should lead to the formulation of aims and a vision. This, in turn, would lead to the development of policies, and those policies that would again be the subject of consultation with the public.

The questionnaire could be delivered by direct delivery into residents’ homes, and by also by focus groups working on the streets. The questionnaire could be completed by hand, and would also be available for completion online. It was hoped that delivery might be supported by local voluntary groups, such as the W.I. It would also be promoted on Facebook, in the parish magazine, and on the website.

Ian H would start constructing the questionnaire, but he asked each policy leader to contribute at least two questions.

10. FINANCE UPDATE

Lynne reported that the NPSG had spent approximately £600 to date. The £10,000 that had been earmarked from Parish Council might no longer be available in full. However this was not necessarily critical as the average spend on producing an NP was said to be around £13,000; Much Hadham’s plan could cost less than this; and grants should be available from EHC and Locality.

Lynne asked that members inform her of any expenditure.

11. LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS

Ian D noted that the East Herts District Plan currently proposed the construction of 15,000 dwellings over a 20 year period. HCC had identified difficulty with development (including North of Harlow) that relied upon the A414. While the first five years of the plan could be accommodated, after that, further development would lead to the A414 through Hertford becoming untenably congested. EHC were now working with HCC to find a way to resolve this difficulty.

12. PUBLICITY

Ian H noted that a spreadsheet on Drop-box listed communication channels that could be exploited. Members were free to add to or amend this spreadsheet.

13. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

No items were submitted. It was anticipated that they would emerge over the following weeks, and especially at the project-planning session.

14. CLOSING COMMENTS

Ian H pressed upon the need to tackle the tasks in front of them. Individual effort was required, but ideas should be share and communicated. Drop-box was a useful tool that should be exploited. Anyone encountering difficulties in its use should refer to Mari.

AGREED ACTION:

Martin Adams: To upload a copy of the 2011 Parish Plan to Drop-box

Chairman: To upload 2011 census data and other statistics to Drop-box

Mari Fleming: To complete work on the website, so that it would be operational in early December

All: To attend the half-day project-planning exercise, when arranged

All: To submit possible questions for inclusion in the NP questionnaire

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 8th DECEMBER at 7.30pm in GREEN TYE MISSION HALL

The meeting closed at approximately 9.30

AJY – 15/11/15