

Minutes of the Meeting of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
held in the Bowls Club
on Tuesday 12th April 2016, at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Ian Hunt, Cllr Ian Devonshire, Martin Adams, Michael Byrne, Neil Clarke, Bill O'Neill, Hugh Labram, Mari Fleming, Mark Ashwell, Lynne Mills.

Action

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

LM was proposed as acting secretary by IH and seconded by MAd.

IH thanked ID for his deputising at the last meeting which resulted in work done on the Vision and Objectives and the project timetable.

He also reported that at the last PC meeting an agent from Strutt and Parker for Chaldean Estates proposed 4 possible sites for residential housing. The agent appreciated that a Neighbourhood Plan was in progress and presented the sites as an exploratory exercise. He also said the local landscape would be respected and that Chaldean Estates wanted to be a good neighbour and would fully engage with the PC. However, it is apparent that all the sites are in open countryside and thus unwelcome as being outside the village boundary, as well as posing questions as to their sustainability.

IH also stated that there would be an election on 5th May to elect 3 parish councillors from 6 candidates and urged people to vote in this important election.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Penny Taylor and Ken Howlett.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 8th March were accepted as an accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that IH would write to Gordon Morrison, Chaldean Estates thanking him for his offer of financial support but that NPSG would not be taking it up.

IH

To clarify, the project imperative would be an internal statement for the group. The Vision would be a statement for the public.

6. TIMETABLE

MAd reported that he, HL and MF had considered the consultation process. There could be a series of consultations which could possibly result in the public growing weary of the process. They had decided that three, well structured events would be more productive. The first consultation would be to get the Vision correct, but also opinions about land options, village development boundary etc. The second event would verify land options, boundary and policy statements and the third would be a well-developed plan, effectively the first draft of the NP. The plan could then be revised, ready for the examiner. It was noted that the EHC plan has

been rescheduled and it would impact on our timing. ID pointed out that after submission the examiner could take up to four months to process. MF and MAd to consult further.

MF/
MAd

MF reported that there had been a further hack into gmail and would be looking into it. The NP data is still secure. Also the website should be ready next week and she would circulate the URL.

MF

7. THE LOCAL PLAN

ID noted that the next EHC Planning Exec meeting would be on the 24th May and would be open to all. At the meeting on 7th April with Isabel Hadow, she said she would be leaving and that Laura Pattison, also present, would be taking her place. The day of the meeting, EHC had published a discussion paper for the villages, which was still being absorbed.

In the paper it was suggested that the Group 1 villages were taking most of the burden for housing and that the boundaries should be made more fluid as fixed boundaries were too restrictive. Development within villages would still be commensurate with the village size and open countryside would still be protected, but each application would be considered separately.

The pros were that development would be more spread over the villages, and clusters of villages sharing facilities could support small development proposals. Cons were the possible cumulative impact of lots of small sites, no village development boundary meant a loss of clarity, possibly less chance of affordable housing and less funding for further infrastructure.

IH provided the group with a strawman response and stated that EHC wanted reaction from NP groups at a meeting on 5th May, and that he would be grateful for all thoughts by 3rd May when he would be meeting with the PC. It was generally felt that it was useful to have the discussion paper now rather than further down the line. It was also pointed out that the village boundary remains the same, it is the development boundary that will be less restricted.

The question of sustainability is still unclear and ID suggested we could develop our own interpretation.

It was felt that small developments and infill were far more preferable to large developments and as villages could possibly impact on MH, perhaps we should be talking to Widford and Hunsdon.

IH pointed out that we should be careful about cumulative developments piggy-backing off each other to extend further into open countryside and that an upper limit on development numbers – possibly 15% - could be suggested.

8. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

HL and MAd circulated their first draft. The Vision statement would effectively be the core of the first consultation. It was felt that we still needed some idea re sustainability. IH wondered if we were structured for the discussion or whether we should buy in expertise.

9. CONSULTATION EVENT

It was considered that holding the event on 27th May would probably not be a good idea as we would be restricted to the Green Room and would be vying with the parish annual meeting. It was suggested a small display could be organised at the parish meeting to start to focus minds.

BO'N/
MB

10. RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

A resident was worried that it was illogical not to have a definition of what sustainability meant. Another wondered why we were considered a Group 1 village and Hunsdon Group 2. A further resident stated that if the village development boundary were to be abolished then the NP should consider Green Tye and Perry Green for potential development sites. Another said that a map at future events would be useful.

11. POLICY LEADERS UPDATES

MB stated that finding development land was not going to be easy. Foxleys land was almost entirely outside the development boundary. Perhaps some sort of arrangement could be made to move the allotments. He hadn't been able to speak to the owner of the Barn School but it was felt she would consider selling. Perhaps another approach would be for land owners to be encouraged to come forward. BO'N pointed out that affordable housing tended to be smaller dwellings and more cars would need to be borne in mind. ID pointed out that St Elizabeth's has land which may be suitable and that as the second biggest employer in East Herts they may consider building affordable housing for employees that could be included in the housing quota. HL pointed out that we need to give some consideration as to what constitutes affordable housing.

12. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

The first consultation event – we need to focus on the plan.

13. CLOSING COMMENTS

IH noted that we need more documentation at these meetings for the public – agenda, maps etc.

PT/LM

He also pointed out that Walkern's public consultation event on Saturday is a result of two years' work. And that Buntingford has been in the process for four years. So progress has been made but perhaps we should be thinking about buying in consultants. Also would the group make more effort to read the reports that are sent to them and give feedback to the originators.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of next meeting will be 10th May at the Green Tye Mission Hall.

10th May - Green Tye Mission Hall

14th June

12th July

9th August

13th September

11th October

8th November

13th December

