

**Neighbourhood Development Plan Witherley Parish  
Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Group 7.30pm Monday 6 January  
2020  
Witherley Parish Rooms**

**Present:** Kay Conway (Chair), Brian Conway, Dayle Flude, Laura Dyer, Helen Bullivant, Maureen Cook, Tony Deeming, Brian Bates, Mark Simpson, Geoff Robinson, Pat Roberts, Denise Bloomer, Roger Laine

**Apologies:** Barry Smith, Rob Flude, Rhiannon Taylor, Samantha Ridgway, Richard Trivett, Julia Deeming.

**Welcome:** KC welcomed all the members from the various theme groups who were attending the meeting. It was agreed that, as we enter the final stages of delivering the neighbourhood plan, all were welcome to attend future Steering Group meetings.

**1. Declaration of interests**

The meeting noted the following interests:

Mark Simpson declared an interest in the land owned by his family farm in Fenny Drayton.

Brian Bates declared that his son has planning permission for a bungalow on Post Office Lane in Witherley

**2. Past Minutes**

Minutes from 16 December were agreed with no amendments.

**Matters Arising**

Derek Ridgway has resigned from the Steering Group due to other commitments.

KC advised that revisions suggested by Gary Kirk to the Community Sustainability chapter had been made. The Atherstone Hunt Kennels situation was changing again.

**3. Financial report**

No changes from the last report which was given at the Steering Group meeting on 16 December 2019. KC asked if there was anyone willing to undertake the role of treasurer. She asked that people contact her outside the meeting. Although LD is doing the notes of the meeting, all the administration is falling on her as Chair. HB offered to help if needed, and KC thanked her for her offer.

**4. Environment Group progress**

TD, Chairman of the group gave an update. He reported that the group is on target, as reported to last Steering Group, to get the data through to John Martin of YourLocale by 15<sup>th</sup> January. All the field data has been gathered, collated and formatted. Some further photos are still needed. MC has received the information from Dave Wilkins, and she has completed a first draft of the

section on sustainable energy which she has sent to John Martin for his review and comments.

#### **5. Update from Housing Group**

The group is meeting again on the 7<sup>th</sup> January so no major progress to report from the update on 16<sup>th</sup> December. HB queried whether the group would select further sites as reserves for development in case the 2 currently preferred sites fell through. Members of the group highlighted that this would only be done if and when the two preferred sites fell through. LD highlighted that Derek Doran had advised that you should exhaust the process for the preferred sites before exploring other options as otherwise this could lead to an overprovision of sites. It was also highlighted that if significant time has elapsed it would be possible to repeat the call for sites process in future revisions of the NDP as other potential sites could have emerged.

#### **6. Update from Community Sustainability group**

Members of the group highlighted some of the outstanding issues being explored including the lack of a village hall in Fenny Drayton. MC highlighted some of the challenges that had been faced previously, when funds of £60,000 had been raised for a village hall there but no viable site could be agreed, and no one was willing to run and maintain it. The funds raised were used to improve the facilities in the church. RL thanked MC for the insight. The group also highlighted that they were looking at provisions around parking for any new developments etc.

#### **7. AOB**

- HB queried whether the remaining budget of £1000 will be enough to get us to the draft stage for consultation. KC reported that Gary Kirk had confirmed this was enough, but KC will ask for written confirmation that this is the case. HB expressed some concern about the amount of work to be done to draft the Environment chapter as, to her knowledge John Martin had not yet drafted any of the text.
- KC informed the group that Gary Kirk has sent through the first opening section of the draft plan. KC to circulate a copy to the whole group. Some issues/actions:
  - Currently the front-page image on the plan is a picture of Witherley – the group to decide if this is appropriate as the Plan covers the whole parish.
  - In our Vision Statement GK has suggested that we change the word “preserve” to “maintain”. His advice is that, in his experience, the word “preserve” could be challenged by the inspector as it could be perceived as us being against any change in our parish. There was broad agreement to this change.
  - DF to provide a page on the history of the parish, also useful to source some old photos for this section.
  - The group discussed whether our Plan would need a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). KC highlighted that the RCC were querying whether we are going to do one. They are contracted by HBBC for screening whether a SEA is necessary or not. The

meeting discussed how we might proceed. There was a general discussion about when a SEA is necessary. Factors referenced included the scale of the development, e.g. when there is a significant number of houses proposed (which is not the case in our Plan), or when a proposed site is seen as sensitive to Historic England (which could be a possibility given the proximity of one of our preferred sites to historic assets). It was agreed that KC should ask the RCC to say why they think we could need a SEA. GK has said he is willing to lead a discussion with the RCC to say why he does not believe our Plan needs a SEA.

- The formal 6-week Regulation 14 consultation could happen alongside the initial community consultation, but the general view of the meeting was that we should hold the 3 informal drop-in sessions first. These sessions are not part of the formal consultation but would give us confidence that the community is supportive of the direction of the Plan.
- The meeting discussed the issue of data, and KC to check whether we can pass to the RCC the contact information of people who said they wanted to be kept informed that was gathered as part of the questionnaire process.
- We need to agree dates for the drop-in events. KC to check RCC availability and how long it takes them to create the displays (if that is what they are going to do)
- HB distributed a list of queries from the Environment group on the site assessments undertaken by the Housing theme group. These particular queries had not been raised at the Steering Group meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November when the assessments were discussed. HB had subsequently sent them to Derek Doran before the assessments were sent out to landowners, but no response had been received by the Group. It was agreed that the Housing Group would review the queries at its meeting on 7th January and respond accordingly.

## **8. Date of next meetings**

Monday 3 February or Wednesday 5 February at 7.30pm depending on the availability of the Parish Room.