



Melksham Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

1 Swift Way, Bowerhill, Melksham

Date: Wednesday, 4 September 2019

Start: 6pm

Present

Steering Group Members

Cllr. Tony Watts (MTC) - Chairman

Cllr. Phil Alford (WC)

Cllr Jon Hubbard (MTC)

Cllr Paul Carter (MWPC)

Officers

Teresa Strange (MWPC)

Linda Roberts (MTC)

Lorraine McRandle (MTC)

ii. Community Representatives

Rolf Brindle (Transport)

Shirley McCarthy (Environment)

Colin Harrison (Chamber)

1. Welcome & apologies:

Apologies had been received from Councillor Richard Wood (MWPC), Councillor Adrienne Westbrook (MTC) and John Glover (MWPC). With Councillor Paul Carter substituting for Councillor Richard Wood and Councillor Jon Hubbard substituting for Councillor Adrienne Westbrook.

Also in attendance were Kate Lea and Vaughan Thompson from Place Studio.

2. Declaration of Interests

There is a standing declaration of interest from Teresa Strange as a Trustee for Young Melksham.

3. Public Participation

One member of public was in attendance who did not wish to speak.

4. Minutes of the last meeting:

a) Agree minutes of meeting held 31 July 2019:

It was noted within the minutes Vaughan Thompson was recorded as Vaughan Smith.

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2019 were proposed by Councillor Tony Watts, seconded by Councillor Paul Carter.

RESOLVED: The minutes were formally approved and signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.

b) Matters Arising:

Whilst having recently paid £74.25 for Wix hosting for the website, Teresa explained it had gone down recently and on investigation whilst the name had been previously registered by one company they had since passed this on to another company who seemed to be no longer trading.

Councillor Hubbard explained the original company could put in an appeal or the group could pick another domain name quite cheaply.

RESOLVED: To delegate to officers to resolve issue.

5. Finance Report

a) Current Budget: Teresa explained she had paid the invoice of £110 for the Heritage Environment Record (HER), which would be split between the 2 councils.

Expenditure to date was £28,162.23 with £15,464.11 being the amount paid between the two councils.

It was noted the change of use on the original grant had been accepted.

6. Place Studios (Katie Lea and Vaughan Thompson)

a) Local Plan Review: Katie explained WC had been contacted on progress with regard to the NP and the emerging Local Plan Review.

Vaughan explained he was disappointed in their response, however, this did not prevent or harm progress on the NDP.

Evidence must be produced at local level to protect and enhance Melksham. As the plan moves forward WC may take a more collaborative approach and what the Steering Group are doing did not prevent questions being asked of them.

Tony asked if this meant strategic elements of the plan needed to be put to one side for

now. Vaughan explained this was not necessarily the case, the group needed to prioritise with the topic headings the group had chosen. These would have significant influence on the LP as it moved forward.

A meeting had been arranged for October to discuss the NP with WC at which it could be suggested then to work in more collaborative way. However, in the interim, Place would push forward with what they need to do.

Councillor Hubbard explained Melksham had not come out positively in the LPR, with Melksham having to take a considerable hit on housing numbers, without the necessary infrastructure being put in place to cope with this.

There was a feeling amongst the group to keep the pressure of Wiltshire to be aware of these concerns.

Vaughan explained with the work being undertaken it was hoped to build up a robust position to respond to their draft emerging plan.

It was agreed that a response on the Local Plan Review would be an agenda item for the September meeting.

Tony explained with regard to the proposed A350 there were various options and asked whether as a group we needed to write objecting to Option A, as this was not actually a by-pass. It was suggested this could be a future agenda item.

b) Review and agree information to be requested from Wiltshire by the Steering Group in relation to the following topic areas: Landscape & key Views; Green Infrastructure; Character & Design and Facilities/Sites

Vaughan explained he felt the original draft plan lacked a real sense of the nature of Melksham & Melksham Without, there needed to be more sense of all communities within the NP area within the front of the plan.

Vaughan went through the various topic headings and gave a brief overview of what could be included:

Landscape and Valued Views from each community. Need to include any valued views within each community. These had to be from publicly accessible view points and linked to public footpath.

Phil asked who the group could manage this if a view would be part of any potential new development. Vaughan explained how this could be managed.

Katie explained toolkits were available to help with info gathering and what information was already available would be looked at, including any evidence from Wiltshire Council and West Wilts District Council to underpin what will be done with the steering group volunteers.

Landscape & Character: Think about River Avon, K & A Canal, Wilts & Berks etc. Place

can map out what they know and the Steering Group can add to this. The group also need to look at protecting heritage sites.

With regard to character the group need to think about design distinctiveness, as the NP can play a primary role in establishing character and design of an area.

It was noted the Housing Group had produced a scoring matrix and one of the criteria was distinctiveness. Teresa agreed to forward the scoring matrix, along with the SHLAA map on to Place.

It was suggested Mallory Place was a good example of good design and maybe this was something to be considered as a design criteria in the plan.

Vaughan explained the evidence base for character could also include cultural not just structural, there could also be a reference to employment heritage in the plan, as well as attributes of certain areas, what makes them different. The group could also consider both positive and negative aspects of various areas and highlight design you would not like to see repeated ie 1960s build.

It was explained Chippenham had undertaken a character area map, which the Steering Group could also do.

Vaughan went on to explain other aspects to include ie green open spaces, especially those important to various communities; buildings ie Church Walk is an example of design that should be preserved and duplicated in that area.

Tony asked whether the plan could demand what percentage was given over to self build to get more individuality within the NP area. It was explained that this could be encouraged within the plan, but could not be insisted on.

c) Review and agree Place Studio's proposed plan of action for progressing NDP work/Stakeholder engagement as the plan progresses and preview of toolkit

Vaughan explained in order to start the information gathering process, it was hoped to hold workshop event(s). This would kick-start the process, with the various topic leads then being able to go out to engage with the community and those with knowledge of certain topics to help collate evidence for inclusion in the plan. It was hoped the information gathering stage would take 4/5 weeks. With the aim to finish this in November, allowing for the first draft plan to be issued in Nov/Dec for refining and going to Reg 14 early next year.

Councillor Hubbard asked if elected members from both the Town Council and parish council could be involved in the process.

It was felt the workshop needed to be for steering group members essential and then once the training had been received and toolkits issued then the topic leads could approach both councils and various other groups for input.

Following a proposal by Councillor Alford, seconded by Councillor Carter and a subsequent

vote, it was:

RESOLVED: To hold a workshop meeting on Saturday, 21 September, venue TBC with steering group members only.

7. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 25 September at 1 Swift Way.