

Neighbourhood Plan Project Management Group

Notes of the Meeting: Friends (Quaker) Meeting House, 7.30pm

Wednesday July 2nd 2014

Apologies:

Apologies received from Edwina and Trevor.

Declarations of interest:

As always, it was stressed that any potential conflicts of interest should be declared, particularly in terms of policy proposals later on in the process.

Correspondence received:

When Nicki Upton placed her article regarding traffic issues in the Ditchling Dialogue, she requested that responses should be sent to the Neighbourhood Plan email address. As well as several replies in the Dialogue, there were 15 responses received by email.. These were mainly from Hassocks residents, feeling that her suggestions were simply offloading our traffic problems onto them. Tom has replied to all, explaining that the article wasn't endorsed by the Project Management Group, but that the responses could be usefully applied as evidence concerning the traffic through the village. Hassocks Parish Council has requested joint action, and this may open a dialogue within our 'duty to cooperate'.

Sallie fed back responses from the stall at the Fair. There was a great deal of good engagement, with lots of interest expressed in the Plan, and the key topic that everyone wanted to discuss was the traffic. The majority wanted Beacon Road closed, with some referencing the Ditchling Dialogue articles and the idea of closing the B2112, and the suggestion of a by-pass. A variety of direct actions were also put forward.

It was noted by the PMG that although traffic is not a key issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, it is clearly a key issue for villagers - who may feel that the Neighbourhood Plan is not representing them.

Apart from traffic, there was also discussion at the stall re. the field on Keymer Road. There were no positive exchanges about the proposed car park there, and the feeling was that should it be developed it would set a precedent.

There was also some passionate talk at the stall about fracking and the current issues in Balcombe. Their council is on the case. Recent legislation was discussed and the desire to set up a focus group was expressed.

ACTION: Craig to scan and send round an ESCC document on fracking.

Tom had received a call from the South Downs National Park Authority re. our submission for a screening opinion. Apparently Natural England and English Heritage are requesting sustainability appraisals, and the SDNPA are currently seeking legal advice as to whether they are essential.

Joint Meetings arranged (SDNPA; Wivelsfield; Plumpton):

Plumpton - Paul Nicholson has yet to arrange a date. Tony to attend.

Wivelsfield - there is to be a meeting on July 17th, attended by Paul, with Don, James and Richard.

No response from Burgess Hill or Haywards Heath Councils re. B2112 and traffic.

ACTION: Tom to write again to encourage a dialogue re. duty to cooperate.

A meeting with the SDNPA has been arranged for July 10th to discuss traffic. This comes out of the previous meeting with both East and West Sussex Highways Authorities. The questions needing to be addressed regarding traffic are:

- What power and influence does the SDNPA have?
- Could the three parishes be considered as a special entity?
- Could we be used as a case study because of our unique position between East and West Sussex?

Progress on questionnaires: delivery coverage; numbers returned; reactions received; questions posed; need for more publicity:

The feedback on the meeting with the street reps. was very positive.

1200 questionnaires were printed and distributed, but 100 more were needed. These have been ordered and will be distributed when they are received.

90+ completed questionnaires have been returned so far, either through the Post Office collection box or by post. Some interest has been expressed to various PMG members, but the question of whether they will be completed and returned remains to be seen.

In Streat, no response has been recorded, either positive or negative.

The SDNPA has given the questionnaire their approval, but there was some criticism of it not being available online. This is to be rectified now, although it wasn't initially implemented because of fears that the ageing population may well not have internet access.

ACTION: Sallie to contact Don and set up with him a downloadable questionnaire PDF that can then be emailed as an attachment.

Village organisations and clubs to be contacted with a request to encourage their members to complete their questionnaires. PMG members and the advisory team also to write to residents through their personal email lists and encourage completion.

Street reps to put postcard reminders through doors.

ACTION: Edwina has designed these and will add a web link to the PDF. They will be prepared for collection by street reps.

Boards and banners were discussed to advertise the questionnaire.

Costs for printing etc. have been met by the grant.

ACTION: Tom to circulate his financial report to the grant-giving authority, requesting additional funding since Westmeston and Streat are now part of the plan.

Need for supplementary questionnaires:

This can't be decided until all the responses are in. Then it should be possible to see what isn't being covered and what people want.

Meetings with special interest groups:

Tom is to give a presentation to the Monday Meeting, and other possible groups need to be approached. The feedback from these should be captured through notes and documented as evidence. Special interest groups may be set up by answering a question about aspirations for the group over the next 15 years.

ACTION: Tom and Sallie to ask societies to encourage their members to complete their questionnaires, and to let them know that the PMG will be coming back to them subsequently for further input.

Business groups may need to be split up regarding specific areas of interest - feedback from the questionnaires will guide the next steps.

A.O.B.: There was feedback on the SDNPA workshop that Tony, Trevor and Philip attended on formulating policies. They felt that the first half of the session was way above the heads of 95% of the participants - basically they seemed to be saying that professionals would be doing most of the work. The key information that was gleaned was that the number of policies should be kept to a minimum, and that they should be succinct.