

Neighbourhood Plan Project Management Group

Meeting: Friends (Quaker) Meeting House 7.30pm, East Gardens, Ditchling

Wednesday October 14th 2015

Notes of Meeting

Present: Mike Burr, Tom Dufty (Chair), Don McBeth, Richard Flack, Phil Smith, James Standing, Todd Ford, Mark Clark, Edwina Rowling, Paul Farrands

1. Advance Apologies: Amy Tyler-Jones, Tony Gedge, Trevor Kirby

2. Declarations of interest: none at this stage

3. Correspondence received/pending: Tom mentioned the circulated email from Amy in which she referred to the web link highlighting the key points on affordable housing, inter alia, in the Government's Housing and Planning Bill. Her email also gave answers to the query raised at the Streat meeting the previous night as to the electorate basis for the ultimate referendum – answer, the LDC Electoral Register.

4. The 'highlights' referred to the Government's 'deal' with the Housing Associations with regard to its right to buy policy. It was felt that this referred to the HAs ability to use its housing stock to raise funds for replacement building.

5. CIL Meeting with ESCC: Mike reported that despite undertakings to do so ESCC's Traffic Engineer Mark Valleley had yet to come up with a proposed dates(s). (NB he has since done so).

6. Ditchling Post Office: Tom reported that many residents had received letters from the constituency MP confirming that she had met with Post Office officials and that they had told her that the Post Office had been given Community status. This to was welcomed although it was not thought that David Holmes had yet received written confirmation. Tom reminded the meeting that the PMG had written in support.

7. Streat meeting: Tom reported that he had given a talk the previous evening to the Streat Meeting. Apart from the referendum question (see above) he had been asked two others to which he couldn't give definitive answers.

7.1) would it be possible for the Open day posters to be posted online for residents who couldn't get to the Open Day venue? Edwina conformed that all the material would be posted on the website, but that she would have to give consideration as to how feedback could be captured online

7. 2) Can local people be given priority for occupancy of new affordable housing? James said that it was in the hands of the Housing Association that builds them. They have the discretion to build local tenancy into their letting conditions.

8. Action: Tom to tell Streat Meeting

9. Development Sites Landowners' meetings: Tom said that he had an interest to declare. He had asked Edwina and James to consider the land on the northern side of his Common Lane property as a potential development site for one house and to assess it using the same criteria as applied to all other sites. Tom said that in view of the emerging policy regarding sites to be included (or not) in the plan he had now withdrawn it.

10. Tom reported that he, Edwina and James (two out of three) had conducted four site visits in the last few days and expected to visit another two the following day. A standard list of questions had been posed to each owner. He outlined the sites concerned. Most of the sites are outside the settlement boundary, which is in place partly to prevent urban sprawl. The PMG has the power to recommend extensions of the boundary.

11. The Housing Focus Group would be making its assessment of the sites and recommending those that should be included in the plan. Emerging policy would suggest that it would not be recommending extensions to the settlement boundary unless a greater community benefit was to be obtained in the form of more provision of low cost purchase and/or affordable houses for rent. A site for one private house outside the existing settlement boundary was unlikely to be sufficient justification to extend the boundary and inclusion in the plan. However it was to be noted that nothing stopped a landowner from attempting to get planning permission.

12. Action: James & Edwina and the Housing Group

13. James & Edwina to contact Gordon Bain re use of his drones

14. Focus Groups progress:

15. Richard reported that the Conservation Group had met that morning. It had completed a Landscape Character Assessment and all but finished its draft policies (12 in all).

16. Phil reported that the Community Infrastructure Group had had further meetings and was now close to finalising its report. (6 policies in all)

17. Mike reported that he was standing in for Craig as leader of the Local Economy group and had joined the Visit Ditchling Business Consortium which numbered most of the Traders and businesses in the area and had posed them questions. The S M Tidy Industrial Estate was a gap in the special interest group consultation process

18. Action: Tom to contact S M Tidy management

19. James, Housing, reported that there could be overlap between housing and conservation policies. He expected circa 6 policies

20. Public Open Day Exhibition November 14th:

21. Edwina said that the publicity leaflets would be available the next week and she had started to mock up posters. She was working on the feedback format. She envisaged that there would be an area dedicated to each focus group displaying posters and that there would be a few copies of each full draft report available for perusal.

22. Action: Tom and all to locate provision of free-standing display boards