



Notes on the Ditchling Neighbourhood Plan meeting 05/08/2013

A neighbourhood plan is intended to be a Parish lead project, whereby the ideas and inspiration come from a wide section of the people of Ditchling Village, and the village in this context is known as the “Qualifying body”.

The meeting was mainly about a presentation by Jed Griffiths on behalf of Trevor Roberts Associates, explaining the rationale behind neighbourhood plans. At the meeting Tom Dufty was proposed as Chair of the project, and Don McBeth proposed as Scribe.

The notes of what Jed Griffiths said can be found at a website called **Ditchling to 2013 Neighbourhood Plan**. These lecture notes can be found at <http://www.dnp.net84.net/>. The lecture was interspersed with comments and questions, as indicated below.

A neighbourhood plan must be part of a three tier system:-

- 1) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 2) The South Downs National Park Core Strategy
- 3) The Neighbourhood Plan itself

The Neighbourhood plan cannot be used to override the District wide Core Strategy; it is simply an addendum to it, which if approved, will direct village planning to the year 2030 on the web site is in fact the Lewes District Core Strategy, which is currently out for public inspection and comment. The fact that Ditchling comes under both Lewes District and The South Downs National Park as joint planning authorities is unusual, but should not cause a problem. However the SDNP core strategy is not expected for a couple of years, and this may be a stumbling block for Ditchling. There is however a notion called “prematurity”, which if observed by the inspectorate, should mean that they take into account planning matters that are proposed within a future SDNP core strategy document.

Lewes District Core Strategy states that just 15 new build properties are required by the Village by 2030. Compare this with 4000+ at Burgess Hill. The Neighbourhood plan, should ensure that the number of 15 stays in perpetuity throughout the life of the plan. Without the plan we do not know what future developers may request to impose upon us. We should consider within the plan both the location and Ditchling vernacular design, to ensure conformity within the village. Once the plan is submitted and authorised, the allocation of 15 becomes an immutable part of planning policy.

A neighbourhood plan is “Evidence based” and a review of existing evidence should be undertaken. This may include things like the Local Development Framework (Core Strategy), Other local authority plans and strategies, Socio-economic data for district/ward (census etc.), Technical reports Transport studies, Public transport data, Conservation area appraisals, Statutory list (listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments), Plans from other public bodies or statutory undertakers, Existing plans for an area, such as a community plan or parish plan, Details of other



environmental protection designations, such as tree preservation orders and sites of special scientific interest, and a whole lot more. This process must involve the whole community. Recent neighbourhood plans such as Dawlish have failed inspection, because not enough people in the community were involved in its drafting. An example Ditchling neighbourhood plan is shown on the website above.

We must make ourselves aware of neighbouring parishes and towns planning proposals which may well affect our own community. Some Neighbourhood Plans such as Upper Eden and Slaugham Parish Council, are joint plans, with several parishes involved. It has been suggested that the Ditchling plan should involve Westmeston, and perhaps other local parishes, as a single submission.

The neighbourhood Plan when submitted to the inspector must include two things. The first is a written submission, and secondly a "Proposals Map". This will be a map showing boundaries and details of all proposals made within the Plan.

Published details of the following proposed and accepted Neighbourhood Plans are shown on the web site mentioned above:-

Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan
Hamsey Neighbourhood Plan
Newick Neighbourhood Plan
Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan
Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan
St James Neighbourhood Plan
Thame Neighbourhood Plan
Upper Eden Neighbourhood Plan

The last three here are plans that have now been inspected, voted on and approved. A detailed examination of how these plans have been crafted should be a pointer to us, to indicate the structure of our own plan.

Lastly it was suggested that some people in the village thought that they may not be able to contribute as much others. It is most important that when drafting the plan, we listen to and involve as many people as possible, even though the steering committee itself should be limited in numbers for practical reasons.

Don McBeth
11/08/2013