

Neighbourhood Plan Project Management Group

Friends (Quaker) Meeting House, 7.30pm

Wednesday May 21st 2014

Notes from the meeting

James Standing, a Chartered Surveyor and Ditchling resident, was introduced. He has been invited to join the group particularly to help Craig with his work with local businesses.

David Proud, a Ditchling resident from the Lewes Road, was attending as an observer.

Apologies had been received from Sallie, Andrew Triggs, Trevor and Tony.

As always, the importance of this was stressed. Registers of Interest have been received and are on the website.

All Parishes that are adjacent to ours have been contacted in order that they understand that we have embarked on a plan to give them the opportunity to raise anything that may impact upon them and vice versa.

Wivelsfield and Plumpton are both keen to meet up with us, Plumpton having already launched out on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed that a small group should meet with them, and report back to the larger group.

Action: Don, James, Richard , Paul and Tom to attend if possible and Tom to organise a date.

Traffic meeting with ESCC & WSCC & follow up

Mike, Trevor, Tom Jones, Paul and Tom attended this specially convened meeting, the purpose of which was to see how the area's 'traffic issue' could be encompassed within our Plan. It was successful insofar as both Highway Authorities were brought together, but the outcome was disappointing. There is no expectation that our traffic issues will be addressed in any significant way, as financial resources are slender and money will only be put behind projects that are seen to carry County wide and/or National economic benefit. The 2009 LATS is in effect 'embalmed', so nothing more is likely to come of it.

It was pointed out that the volume of through traffic on the B2112 & Spatham Lane is already severely threatening the economic sustainability of Ditchling village centre as a service centre for the neighbourhood plan area and if nothing of any significance can be done to reduce it it will eventually leave it without any facilities and services to offer. Visitors to the National Park are deterred from visiting the village in any numbers because of the through traffic so no economic benefit is derived from being in the Park.

It was pointed out to the two bodies that traffic problems have been and will continue to be caused by the incremental growth in housing development outside the area let alone future major developments planned for the east sides of Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath.

It was suggested that the ESCC should explore the potential to install relatively low cost, but high return measures to address the issues of through traffic, speed and HGVs.

For example, multi-lingual signs at the far ends of the B2112 & 2116 to deter HGVs; turning the Beacon Road into a no through road; and new 20 or 30mph zones, particularly in Spatham Lane. ESCC was not prepared to pursue these suggestions – the exception being the idea of 'shared space' at the Ditchling crossroads, equalising the relationship between pedestrians and traffic which it is prepared to pursue.

Traffic matters can only be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan in the form of aspirations.

ESCC & WSCC have only just begun work with the SDNPA, so hopefully SDNPA's traffic and transport policies may start to carry weight, although ESCC retains strategic authority for the highway network. There was a suggestion that we could become a ESCC/SDNPA case study for and that this may prove to be a way to alter current perspectives.

Action: Tom, Mike, Paul, Tom J and Trevor to meet up with Andy Beattie, People and Places Manager of SDNPA to discuss its traffic policies.

Action: Tom to write to the Ambulance and Fire Services to be obtain data on the effects of congestion on the B2112 and their views.

Action: Minutes of the Traffic Meeting to be sent to the ES & WSCC members who attended for their confirmation.

Richard and Tom have drawn up a letter to the SDNP & Lewes District, 'vetted' by Andrew Triggs, requesting a screening opinion. Two more pieces of information were awaited:

- * Tony Gedge is to talk to the Medical Centre re. an influx of people - will they be able to cope with increased numbers?

- * David Rudling has been asked to supply a list of local sites of archaeological interest. Large scale Land Contamination Maps have been acquired for all three parishes.

Action: Tom to send the letter to SPNPA and Lewes District to await their input and to clarify what environmental assessments/sustainability appraisals are needed.. It was considered very important to keep communication channels open with these authorities.

Craig and James have reviewed the general questionnaire with respect to the questions posed in it on the topic of business/economic development in the area. The follow up from completed questionnaires will look at how businesses and job opportunities can develop and expand within the locality – how to assist economic development, and how it will benefit the parishes – for example through increased through tourism. A focus group may be formed out of responses to the questionnaire

Final sign off

All members have read and approved it.

- * some of the questions are rather leading, particularly re. The Post Office
- * some wording needed to be changed
- * some numbering needed to be altered

There was some discussion regarding 'road testing' the questionnaire before issuing. All were in agreement finally that this wasn't necessary. It was pointed out that the SDNPAs 'vetting' of the drafts had been critical as responses to the questionnaire would form a critical part of the evidence on which the Plan policies would be based which the SDNPA would ultimately be asked to approve.

There was discussion as to whether there should be an online version and it was agreed that for technical, practical and 'social' reasons this was not appropriate.

Publicity

Printing costs to be met by PMG funds.

Action: Edwina to finalise the questionnaire and get it printed in sufficient numbers for all households. Also to post an article in the Ditchling Dialogue and display info. on village notice boards.

Information will be available on the Parish Council stall at Ditchling Fair.

Street Reps Meeting and distribution date

It was agreed that the scheduled PMG meeting for 11th June would be used for a Street Reps meeting. Participants will be updated, given the background to the questionnaire, and copies will be handed out for distribution.

Action: Mike to compile a Power Point presentation for the meeting.

Incentives to respond

Incentives would be offered to maximise responses to the questionnaire.

Mike Roberts had very kindly offered some Ridgeview wine.

Action:

Tom to check quantity with Ridgeview and also to see whether The Bull and The White Horse pubs could offer incentives.

Response to queries raised

Street Meeting has requested a desire to issue a supplementary questionnaire with questions specific to Street. Tom had pointed out that any new questionnaire in the cause of the neighbourhood plan needed to have the approval of the PMG.

It was felt that the general questionnaire was capable of being used to address the issues and questions that Streat wanted to raise and that others were too specific. The implication that the content of the general questionnaire applied chiefly to Ditchling parish residents was a mistaken view of it. Because Ditchling village centre provides a 'service centre' for the whole neighbourhood plan area there are inevitable references to facilities and services located in the village. In that context St George's Park and Westmeston residents are in the same position as Streat residents. It would be very confusing if a separate questionnaire was issued at the same time as the general questionnaire.

Action: Tom to respond to Tony Gedge

Latest Return Date and Collection

It was agreed that completed questionnaires should be returned before the end of July.