

Minutes of Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Meeting – Tuesday 11th December 2018 held at Ixworth Village Hall

Present - Debra Reay (Chair), Tessa Stonehouse (V Chair), Nick Laughton (PC), Ally Balaam (Ix Thorpe), Penny Dinwiddy, Trina Godfrey, Sophia Wilson (PC Ix Thorpe), Richard Courtneil, Ben Birrell (PC), Adrian Harmer.

In attendance - Cllr Joanne Spicer, Steve Wilson, Alf Percival (NP Clerk)

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held 30.10.2018 and signed by Chair. Correction noted, section 5, paragraph 2 replace “next NPWG meeting” with, “next Parish Newsletter”.

Action NP Clerk

2. Apologies: John Rowe.

3. Matters Arising

Questionnaire. TS reported on low number of returns to date and decision to extend deadline to 18th Dec. Majority of returns so far are from people aged over 50 so sample is not wholly representative. However the exercise is identifying issues and yielding useful information for the initial report. Tessa will compile the report over Christmas in time for the next Newsletter deadline of 15th January. The report will be circulated to all NPWG members in advance of next meeting.

Action: TS, NP Clerk

Meeting discussed ideas for addressing the low return and for encouraging views from a wider age range in future. Direct contact with local organisations, door-to-door visits, school gates chatting and improved social media presence were highlighted.

Allocations. DR sought clarification on the previous minute. The Consultant will be asked to provide a paper to the PC for decision, setting out pros and cons of including an allocations policy in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Action: DR, Navigus

Local Housing Needs Survey (LHNS); Following revised advice from Anne-Marie Howell (West Suffolk Planning) DR has advised the PC that we will not be seeking to commission a LHNS at this point as it may duplicate research which WS are preparing to undertake. This is in the light of new advice from Central Government. She also reported that Sunila Osborne of Community Action Suffolk (CAS) the agency who would undertake any LHNS, has reiterated that the LHNS will provide a full and detailed view of Ixworth residents housing needs, whilst the WS research will focus on the affordable housing need across the district. Lavenham and Debenham were highlighted as towns where the LHNS has proved to be an important component of the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was agreed that the need for a LHNS would be revisited in the New Year, and CAS should be invited to provide more information to help inform the decision.

Action NP Clerk

Website and Social Media update. Ben Birrell reported that NP Facebook page is now set up. The objective now is to get people 'liking' the postings and sharing the content. Message has already been put up about completing the Ixworth Questionnaire and extension of deadline for submission. BB requested ideas for content from the NPWG.

Not currently pursuing other Social Media (Instagram, Twitter) as difficult to see how these could effectively contribute to the NP. Alf Percival (Clerk) said that he would like and share the NP Facebook content with the followers on the Ixworth Village Hall Facebook page and other Facebook users will do same.

Action: NP Clerk, All

4. Cllr Joanna Spicer

DR (Chair) welcomed Cllr Spicer. Cllr Spicer began by pointing out the distinction between the roles of Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council (Borough Council) in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan, highlighting that West Suffolk has the remit for planning.

The County Council roles include: Education/LEA (Location of Schools, Allocation of Pupils/Facilities, School Transport, SEN); Transport/Highway Authority (Rights of Way, Accessibility, Road Safety); Fire & Rescue Authority; Strategic Planning/Development; Public Transport (Bus Subsidy); Library Authority; Community Safety/Anti-Social Behaviour (not Police); Social Care (Adult & Community Services – care of the old and vulnerable); Children & Young People Services (early years provision).

West Suffolk is the local Planning Authority and also deals with Environment.

Cllr Spicer noted the challenges and issues for Ixworth/Ixworth Thorpe identified in the Parish Plan of 2005 and the current Vision 2031 document. She noted that relatively little housing development had been delivered in Ixworth. The Crown Lane development, on the cards in 2005, is still at planning application stage. In the same period Stanton has grown considerably.

She highlighted some assets and issues for Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe.

The village has two schools (Primary and Free School) both are run by trusts and are independent of the LEA (SCC). The Primary has very limited space for expansion but SCC has earmarked a potential new site north of Crown Lane. There is no early years provision and the pre-school closed 2 years ago.

Ben Birrell asked what would happen to the old primary school site? Cllr Spicer said most likely to be for housing development. BB asked who would benefit from the sale. Cllr Spicer said that she would endeavour to find out and report back.

Ixworth is boxed in by the river and two primary roads; it is also remarkable for the lack of public green space within the Village.

It is a local 'hub' providing a base for an Area Fire Station, Library, Doctors' Surgery and Pharmacy. Ixworth has a regular bus service (this is not same for Ixworth Thorpe). There are three care homes of various descriptions within the Village and we have very low unemployment.

Cllr Spicer expressed her personal interest in improving access to public footpaths and identified that there are particular challenges to this for Ixworth. She also expressed interest in promoting healthier lives with more facilities for sport and fitness.

Cllr Spicer reported on some potential new initiatives in the offing. Following discussion with local MP and Health Secretary, Matthew Hancock, ideas for a local Health Campaign have been discussed. Money could be made available to set up new activities including fun-runs etc.

An initiative to pursue the implementation of permissive/licensed paths around Ixworth as a means of improving the opportunity for safe walking routes, this is under review by the County and Parish Councils.

JS noted the possible installation of a foot & cycle bridge over the bypass promoted by the PC, which could be funded by developer contributions from the Persimmon development.

The Government has called on local authorities to review housing plans and will be issuing revised housing figures. Locally this process will be led by West Suffolk and could have a bearing on plans for Ixworth. There are currently three key sites. The Crown Lane Development, the first phase of which is the subject of a contested planning application by Persimmon Homes for 90 homes. Further phases of this development could add a further 200 units in subsequent phases. Two other sites are currently being worked on. The developer Pigeon is bringing forward a plan for land at the top of the High Street. The other is a proposal for development at Dairy Farm. Cllr Spicer suggested that best information on these would be through West Suffolk Council and Planning Officer, Ann-Marie Howell.

A question was asked of Cllr Spicer, what does it take to get development in Ixworth Thorpe? Ixworth Thorpe has lost ground over the past 30 years, having lost the shop, pub and bus service. JS recommended conversation with West Suffolk planners.

In conclusion, Cllr Spicer asked to be kept informed of progress with the Neighbourhood Plan and promised to help and support where she could.

DR thanked Cllr Spicer for her contribution.

5. Chair's Report Update

TS provided information regarding current financing and grants: we do not need to reapply for current grant and have 3k remaining of initial 6k award.

£900.00 is allocated for consultant's fees, leaving approximately 2k for new website development. We will need to spend all the initial award before end March 2019 or return the balance. We can then apply for a new grant of up to 9k from end March 2019.

Mandy Adlington (PC Clerk) holds the budget and will provide regular reports on spending.

Action PC Clerk

Notification of resignation of Dawn Dowds from NPWG. AP (NP Clerk) to send thanks to DD from the NPWG for her contributions to the NP.

Action NP Clerk

7. Reviewing Aims and Objectives

An action plan for consulting results of the questionnaire is now required. Some suggestions were:

Parent Mail from the school

1-to-1 door knocking – taking one street at a time

Meeting parents at the school gate

Holding events at the Village Hall or other venues (e.g. Pykkerell Room)

Postcard invitations to all residents to attend consultation meetings regarding aspects of the questionnaire results

TG and DR to explore ideas for communication with the local community.

Action: DR, TG

8. Any Other Business

Ben Birrell asked for NPWG meetings to start at 7.30pm, this was unanimously agreed.

Next NPWG meeting Tuesday 22nd January 2019, 7.30pm Ixworth Village Hall (Bar Area).

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Signed, NP Chair – Debra Reay

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Date