

Minutes of Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Meeting – Tuesday 28th May 2019 held at Ixworth Village Hall

Present – Tessa Stonehouse (Vice-Chair), Ally Balaam, Penny Dinwiddy, Sarah Pentony

In Attendance – Ben Lord (PC Chair), Roger Spiller, Sue Spiller, Steve Wilson (NP Clerk)

1. Introductions/Apologies for Absence

The Clerk had received apologies from Debra Reay, Mike Jones and Nick Laughton. Ben Lord attended to give an update on current planning matters. Roger and Sue Spiller were new Ixworth residents; Sue had recently been appointed Ixworth's History Recorder.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2019 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

3. Matters Arising

MP's Mailshot. Communications with Matt Hancock's office had been somewhat difficult. The Group's suggested text had been shown to the local District Councillor who had apparently amended it based on inaccurate information. The Clerk had endeavoured to correct this error in a telephone conversation and the final content of the message remained unknown. Distribution of the mailshot had begun during the afternoon of the meeting.

4. Chair's Report

Consultant's Workshop Report. Following the Workshop events the Consultant had produced a detailed report. This contained the specific feedback given by participants as well as some early policy ideas. The Consultant had described it as a 'build-it-up' document and it could be considered, in effect, the start of the Plan. The report had been made available at recent engagement events and had been posted on the PC website and deposited, in hard copy, in the Library.

Feedback on Engagement Events. A 'catch-up' event had been held in the Library on 18 May. A large-scale copy of the Consultant's report had been on display as well as folders containing project work by the Year 3 pupils of the Primary School. The project had followed a visit to the school by the Chair and Vice-Chair, the subject being 'Green Space.' The pupils had all submitted designs for the enhancement of the Playing Field, which they had decided was being underused. The Vice-Chair had also presented an annual report to the Annual Parish Meeting on 22 May; the Consultant's report and the project folders had been displayed on this occasion too.

Ixworth Schools' Involvement. Both the village schools had become engaged with the NP and this was directly as a result of the Drop-in sessions and Workshops. The involvement of Mike Jones, with his experience of youth engagement, had been key. Mike had already been in contact with the School Council at the Free School but, with school holidays in

prospect, it was now important for the NP Chair to consult with Mike on how to proceed and on what timetable.

Action: Chair

5. Future Actions

Site Allocation. The next step in the progress of the Plan would be Site Allocation. This would begin with a 'call for sites' which would involve a notice in the local press and, possibly, letters to local landowners, in order to identify sites available for development. Such sites would then be assessed using the expertise of the Consultant. The newly-established West Suffolk Council had delayed its delivery of a new Local Plan to 2023 and this heightened the risk of speculative developments coming forward in places not formerly envisaged in official planning. The village of Ixworth was perhaps not so much at risk of this as it had few sites not already under consideration for development but it was hoped that Site Allocation would offer some degree of protection.

It was likely that this process would bring more public attention to the NPWG as residents realised that actual building work might be about to affect their lives. Pigeon had already approached the PC with initial ideas for the development of the Langridge site and rumours were likely to start circulating. It was felt to be essential that the PC and the NPWG work together more closely, including the sharing of information from developers, going forward.

Ben Lord informed the Group that he had begun to post development information on the old Village Facebook page; this had already generated strong interest locally.

Further engagement event. It was felt that, in the absence of new information, there would be no need for the Group to hold another public engagement event until approximately early November. By that time there should be data available from the Local Housing Needs Survey and more information regarding actual developments. In the meantime there would be a need to keep residents up-to-date via the Ixworth Newsletter and social media.

Public engagement meetings by developers or potential developers were thought to be highly desirable however.

6. Local Housing Needs Survey

Publicity. Posters explaining the importance of the LHNS had been put up around the villages on 18 May and the same content had been submitted to the Newsletter/Magazine for 3 successive editions. Once the surveys had been sent out a poster would be placed at the bottom of the High Street encouraging people to respond. The Clerk would modify his hi-vis vest and litter-trolley in order to become a walking advert in his other role as Village Cleaning Operative.

Distribution. Thanks were due to those Group members who had helped with the stuffing of envelopes for the Survey. The Clerk had boxed the surveys and had printed lists of addresses ready to send out to the distributors. It was important for distributors to report

back accurately on numbers of surveys delivered and any obviously empty properties so that the percentage return rate was not unnecessarily diluted.

Action: Clerk, Distributors

7. Budget Matters

The Vice-Chair was in the process of completing the grant application for the new Financial Year, the deadline for which was imminent. The form was very complex and outside help and advice were proving necessary to its completion; unfortunately, the process was much changed from previous years and so advice was likely to be difficult to find. It had become obvious that there would be a need for the NPWG to draw on the reserve fund set aside by the PC before the end of 2019 although the amounts were not yet known.

8. Any Other Business

Planning update. Ben Lord had attended the meeting at short notice because there had been fresh developments on the planning front. The Persimmon development had come forward for consideration by the PC for the third time and this would take place at the PC meeting on 12 June. This plan had been re-submitted for 77 houses, still with no affordable housing included, and still with certain elements of the plan being disputed by the West Suffolk Planners. There had also been an application for change of use at the Fordham's Garage site from car sales to retail in the form of a convenience store. The exact nature of the store was not known as this was an application 'in principle' with the aim of attracting a tenant or buyer. Two small-scale applications had been received for building in Stow Road and Beeches Close.

Meeting start time. The start time of NPWG meetings had been moved from 7pm to 7.30pm in an effort to increase attendance by members; this had been a total failure. It was suggested, and agreed, that future meetings return to a start time of 7pm.

Next NPWG meeting Tuesday 9 July 2019, 7pm, Ixworth Village Hall (Bar Area)

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Signed, NP Chair – Debra Reay

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Date