

**Minutes of the Meeting of Ashton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on
Thursday April 20th 2017 at 7.30pm at Ashton Primary School.**

Present: J.Roychoudhury, S. Lemon, C. Johnson, G. Otto, P. Joyce.

M. Wellock (of Kirkwells Planners).

5 members of the public

37. Approval of Apologies for absence:

L. Godfrey

38. Declarations of interest:

P. Joyce, J Lee. A Humphries

39. Approval of the Minutes of previous meeting:

The Group resolved to approve the Minutes of the meeting of March 16th 2017.

40. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting:

These are to be discussed during M. Wellock's presentation.

41. Michael Wellock's Presentation.

M.W. led a discussion on the next stages of preparing Ashton's Neighbourhood Plan, offering his advice where appropriate. There is a need to identify the overall aim of the plan, it's key issues and objectives.

Overall Aim:- to shape future development,

to protect key assets and features e.g. green spaces, The Old Crown public house, community facilities, natural assets/features and the environment.

to consider the population balance of Ashton

Key Issues:- Ashton's population balance was discussed, with the ideal of a balanced age profile

Ashton's local businesses offering local employment were discussed including stabling.

Level of growth of housing stock:- this is generally found to be the most important aspect of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan will need to comply with sustainable development policy as per national and local planning policies. M.W. pointed out that 'sustainable' has no workable definition in this planning context but is hugely important. He gave the example of an isolated dwelling in open countryside – this is not considered to be sustainable.

The recent Harpole examiner's report was discussed as an example of how robustly examiners assess plans currently. A successful plan will need to be evidence-based.

The fact that Little Ashton (that part of Ashton east of the railway line on Hartwell Road) currently lies outside Ashton's planning confines was debated. One member of the public claims to have evidence that Little Ashton did at one time lie within the confines of Ashton and he is willing to allow the group to use this if needed. Altering the confines to include Little Ashton would have to be discussed and agreed with SNC and would require evidence. Any alteration would have to meet SNC's guidance requirements (JR has a copy). Examples of the type of evidence needed would include showing that Little Ashton functions as part of the village;- also that there is public support to change the confines.

Traffic, speeding and the impact of Roade's expansion on traffic through Ashton:-

These were discussed. MW advised that these issues are not planning matters (at neighbourhood level).

Population Balance:- The group felt that a mix of houses is important. The WNJCS already has policies covering this. MW advised that it is not easy for small schemes such as Ashton's to dictate housing mix e.g. affordable housing.

Local Business/Employment:- we could identify these to protect/expand.

Agriculture Development:- MW advised that Neighbourhood Plans are not effective here as agriculture is covered separately.

Open Spaces:- e.g. Stoke Road Green and the playing field south of The Old Crown. MW suggests we identify those which we would like to protect. These can be designated as *local green spaces*, on which SNC have a policy. It must be possible to demonstrate that these local green spaces are special and close to the community. They must not be extensive. The two fields owned by the village that lie along Hartwell Road were mentioned at this point.

Community Facilities:- These could be identified for protection (in planning terms). The example of Ashton's pub was discussed ; there could be a policy limiting it's change of use.

Environmental Assets:- We may identify ecological features, landscape features and design policy.

Level of Housing Growth:- MW advised that Ashton's plan be compatible with SNC policy with the corresponding level of housing growth.

42. Update on Grant Application

The secretary has been informed verbally that the next tranche of funds are due mid-April. The funds have not yet arrived in the bank.

43. Actions before next Meeting.

MW to prepare a working draft. He will send this to us 7 days before our next meeting with him (by 23rd May).

The steering group are to prepare a list of local businesses, including details of their function and size. Also to prepare a *Vision* for the plan, possibly using examples from recent NBH plans elsewhere. The group are to identify local green spaces and community facilities for the plan:- here we could use Roade's list as a guide/example. The group are to write a 'pen-picture' description of Ashton, approx. 2 sides of A4.

45. Date of next Meeting.

Tuesday 30th May at 7.30p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.00p.m.

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