

**MINUTES OF HASLEMERE VISION STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT THE GEORGIAN HOUSE HOTEL ON WEDNESDAY 5th JUNE 2019**

1. **Attendance* and Apologies (A):** Stewart Brown (Chairman)*, David Simmons*, John Moxon*, Robert Silk*, Cyndy Lancaster (A), Diane Moses*, Lesley Banfield*, Stephen Mulliner (A), Liz Burton*, Crawford Christie (A), Peter Isherwood (A),
Observing: Philippa Guest, Sonja Dullaway, Aine Hall, Farzana Aslam, Jolyon Culbertson, Kirsten Ellis, Susanna Brown

2. Introduce new HTC link Councillors and potential new Steering Group members.

SB welcomed Councillor Kirsten Ellis and, in his absence, long serving HV Steering Group member and town and borough Councillor Peter Isherwood who have been appointed by HTC to be the link councillors for HV for the Neighbourhood Plan. Kirsten Ellis has been a resident of Haslemere for 15 years and was recently elected to the Town Council for the first time, standing as an independent.

SB then welcomed five potential new Steering Group members, who introduced themselves as follows:

Philippa Guest has been on the Neighbourhood Plan team with responsibility for the environmental policies and the sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment. She has lived in Haslemere for 22 years and is an independent consultant in sustainable agriculture.

Sonja Dullaway has lived in Haslemere for 5 years. She is on the planning committee for Haslemere Society.

Aine Hall has lived in Haslemere for 20 years. She has been involved in several projects in the local area in the last 10 years. Most recently in campaigning against the de-regulation of the Fairground site. She has worked as election agent to Nikki Barton and been involved with HV during the development of the Neighbourhood plan.

Farzana Aslam moved to the area recently after living in Hong Kong for 18 years. She has two children, is a qualified lawyer and now works in executive coaching.

Jolyon Culbertson moved to Haslemere 3 years ago. A chartered surveyor, he was born in Liphook but worked in Hong Kong for 35 years. He has experience in property development and management and is particularly interested in addressing the lack of the affordable housing.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th March 2019 were approved.

4. Matters Arising.

It was agreed that all matters arising would be dealt with in the course of the main agenda.

5. Discuss and consider proposals for the future of Haslemere Vision as outlined in the notes of the meeting held on 14th May 2019.

SB explained that when it was formed HV's principle aim was to work with HTC to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. Now that the Neighbourhood Plan has been approved by the council and is "in their hands" it is time to determine the future of HV. A meeting was held on 14th May with some of the steering group members plus Aine Hall, Sonja Dullaway, Nikki Barton and Matthew Bowcock to discuss the future of HV (refer to briefing note and meeting notes).

At that meeting two projects were identified as worth pursuing now by HV; mainly because there are sources of funding for them. These are the Fairground Development which could access funding available from Homes England for feasibility work and a Sustainable Transport Network project which the Community Rail Partnership hope to obtain funding for from South Western Railways.

It was noted that many of the other community organisations in the town are currently re-focusing and/or initiating large projects:

- Haslemere Society recently had a change of leadership and is seeking a proactive new role
- The Chamber of Commerce is working on an initiative to attract commerce to the town
- The Haslemere Health Group is formulating plans for the future of the hospital.

It is hoped that HV can act as a catalyst cum convenor and work with other organisations in the town to align what they are doing. Also, through the Neighbourhood Plan process, HV has built up excellent community engagement and consultation skills which could be replicated to benefit future community projects. Access to most grant funding requires demonstrable efforts in community engagement.

LBa stated that the Localism Act has many provisions beyond Neighbourhood Planning which enables action by communities. She confirmed that the Expression of Interest for feasibility study funding for the Fairground site was submitted. Given the significant changes in the Town and Borough Council there is an opportunity to convince councillors that more can be done with the site than just using it indefinitely for car parking. In addition, she suggested that HV's terms of reference should be revisited and if necessary revised. FA suggested that now is the time to review the mission statement and future strategy of HV. She offered to facilitate a workshop for the Steering Group to explore this. SB and others thanked her for this generous offer.

- FA to organise HV strategy workshop
- DM and L Ba to initiate review of terms of reference following the workshop

There was further discussion about the "new" HV. Items to be considered going forward are:

- Revamp the website
- Develop use of other social media (Facebook, twitter)
- Publicity around SB stepping down as chairman
- Advertise the AGM widely to encourage members of the public to attend
- Use of Neighbourhood plan consultation to promote HV's future role/celebrate its past achievements
- Importantly find ways to expand paid up membership (a one off £1 fee) of HV
- Community engagement a major focus

All steering group members agreed that HV should pursue the Fairground and Sustainable Transport projects. It was agreed that LBa and DM will convene the Fairground team and L Bu and DS will convene the Sustainable Transport project. L Bu mentioned that the train line has recently been registered as the Surrey Hills to South Downs Line. The Community Rail Partnership has £2k of funding available already for the transport project and will meet next week to formalise which transportation ideas could form part of this project.

6. Discuss and agree interim leadership arrangements pending selection and appointment of new chair.

SB will step down as Chairman at the next AGM which will be held in July. As yet a new chairperson has not been identified, however LBa and DM have offered to act as vice-chairs for a short time while a new chairperson is sought if no one else wishes to step forward at this time.

- All to consider if they know a suitable person to act as a meetings secretary to take the minutes at HV meetings.

7. Review next steps re the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and the organisation of the final statutory consultation.

KE explained that the HTC NP working party had met last week and wish to co-opt three members of HV onto that group. It was decided that SB, LBU and DM will be the HV representatives. HTC are in the process of planning the consultation for the NP which should run for 8 weeks from mid-July until mid-September. HV will provide active support with both planning and execution.

8. A.O.B:

SB reported that, with great regret, he had accepted Cyndy Lancaster's resignation from the Steering Group after seven years of sterling service. Cyndy as Mayor of Haslemere when HV was established had played a key role in supporting its formation and had been a tireless volunteer ever since. She would be sorely missed but SB was sure she would continue to take a keen interest in HV in the future. The meeting voted unanimously to pass sincerest thanks to Cyndy for all she has done for HV over those seven years.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm

9. Dates for future meetings:

The date of the next meeting which will be the HV strategy workshop to be determined.

Briefing Note for Haslemere Vision Future discussion
8:00pm Tuesday May 14th 2019

History: Haslemere Vision (HV) was launched in April 2013 as a volunteer lead community body (a Company Limited by Guarantee) to develop a vision and draft a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the area lying within the Haslemere Town Council boundary. It's articles also enabled HV to initiate and undertake projects on behalf of the community. Under the terms of the Localism Act, when the NP is drafted for an area defined by a town (parish) boundary the "responsible body" is the town council so a memorandum of understanding was signed setting out the terms under which HTC delegated the task of consulting the public and drafting the NP to HV.

Where we are today? : After six (and for the founding members 7!) years of community consultation, policy development and plan drafting HV submitted the draft plan to HTC in March and, at a meeting on the 21st March, HTC voted unanimously to adopt the draft prior to organising a final, statutory, public consultation. There are several more steps in the process before the NP becomes law but this vote marked the point where HTC took ownership of the plan and, advised by HV, will guide it through its final stages of external scrutiny until WBC submit it to a local referendum (probably in Q1 2020). (A link to the draft NP can be found on the home page of our website <http://www.haslemerevision.org.uk>.)

What next? : It is proposed that, while a small HV working party comprising, principally, Diane Moses, Liz Burton, Philippa Guest, John Moxon and myself will provide support to HTC during the remaining stages of the NP process, the HV steering group, refreshed by a new chair and a number of new members, should turn its attention to the other two strands of its objects namely, the undertaking of community and the continued validation and updating the long term vision for future development of the town.

The Opportunity: The present steering group recommends that, whilst not losing sight of the need, in due course, to update the vision, the immediate priority should be to focus on making some of the community projects suggested in the plan happen. It is proposed that the first project that HV may seek to initiate is the development of a professionally prepared and costed feasibility study for a mixed development (including parking and public space) on the Fairground site (but a newly constituted steering group might well decide on a different priority). Whichever of the "opportunities" is chosen it is envisaged that HV should play a lead convenor/catalyst role working with, but independent of, HTC to align key local and external stakeholder organisations in support of the project(s) in question.

The Challenges:

- **Convincing HTC and the community that there is a continued need for HV.**
- **Maintaining HV's Independence:** If HV is to be effective leader of community projects it is important that it maintains its independence and political neutrality.
- **Achieving the right relationship with HTC:** Many would argue that HTC, as our elected body, should play the role now proposed for HV but not only is it open to dominance by one or other political party it is also, due to its pitifully limited budget, the annual changes of mayor and changes of councillors every two years (four years?), unable to provide either the continuity of focus or the resources required to progress longer term projects effectively. That said the support of HTC for such projects will be important and keeping the right balance between independence of and effective collaboration with HTC will be critical to HV's success. The recent change in the mix of elected councillors will make the next few months particularly interesting!
- **Maintaining HV's democratic legitimacy:** If it is to be sufficiently independent of HTC but have a legitimate right to play the leader/convenor role with HTC and other organisations it is important that it carefully maintains its non-political stance and also its democratic legitimacy. This means that HV will have to resume a more active community engagement programme than of late and that any project it champions is pursued only after demonstrable and adequate community engagement and consultation.
- **Does the project leadership role really fit with the think tank/ maintainer of the vision role?** Which is more important? Should we separate them?
- **Funding:** Finding funding for HV will not be easy. Nikki Barton's success in securing the support of both HTC and other community organisations for HCRP gives an inspirational example of how a community partnership can succeed but the HCRP has a critical advantage over HV. One of the key partners, the rail franchisee, has the motive and budget to provide a significant measure of core funding (and in this case premises) for the project. This is not the case for HV. The nearest equivalent might be HTC but not only is it important for HV to maintain independence from HTC, it is very unlikely that HTC will have the budget to provide significant ongoing funding. So where is it to come from?
- **Refreshing and reinvigorating the leadership of HV:** Fortunately, a small but very capable team is committed to taking HV forward but we need an infusion of new blood and expertise and a new chair to refocus and reinvigorate the steering group for these new challenges.

Much to discuss and I look forward to a lively discussion.

Stewart Brown

10/05/19

Meeting Note of Haslemere Vision "future" discussion 8:00pm Tuesday May 14th 2019

Present: Stewart Brown, Philippa Guest, Lesley Banfield, Nikki Barton, Matthew Bowcock, Sonja Dullaway, Diane Moses, Aine Hall.

Following discussion of points raised in the briefing note it was agreed that:

- There is a need /opportunity for HV to act as catalyst and convenor for the pursuit of community projects
- HV cannot do this on its own and it will be necessary build partnerships with organisations such as Haslemere Society, The Chamber of Trade and HTC on a project by project basis.
- To do this HV must build strong evidence of community support with social media, workshops and consultation on a project by project basis

- It will be vital to select projects that the community can “latch on to” and that can build a “sense of community spirit”. This might be achieved under the umbrella of promoting Haslemere as a “Green Town”.
- Projects that qualify to attract funding from established grant programmes should take priority. Demonstrable community engagement will be a prerequisite for securing funding such funding

Preferred project opportunities identified from those listed in the Neighbourhood Plan were:

1. Improving provision for sustainable transport including extended walking/cycling routes within the town.
2. A community-led mixed development for the Fairground.
3. A development brief for the whole town centre.

Referring to Project 1, NB explained that Haslemere Community Rail Partnership is on the verge of applying for funding to South Western Railways who have a Communities and Customer Innovation Fund available. NB suggested that the Rail Partnership and Vision could build a joint application for a project which could combine the opportunities listed in the Neighbourhood Plan that relate to improved access for sustainable forms of transport to and from the station, the High Street and Wey Hill and the countryside beyond.

⇒ **NB** will compile the information needed for an application for funding for the next steering group meeting.

With reference to Project 2, LB reminded the group that a development of the Fairground has already drawn much local interest especially during the consultation on de-registration. Having lost control of the site as common land it is likely Haslemere residents will be even more strongly motivated to see some community benefit emerge from its development including the provision of social and affordable housing. LB explained that there is currently government funding (Homes England – Community Housing Fund) available for pre-development costs for community-led housing but, to be considered in the current funding which runs to 31 March 2020, an expression of interest must be made by 31 May 2019.

It was suggested that HV could submit an expression of interest for a feasibility study for the Fairground site. The revenue fund will meet professional fees through to submitting a planning application. This will be a good opportunity since Waverley and the Town council currently have no plans to do this work though Waverley’s support will be needed to get the funding.

⇒ **LB** to complete an expression of interest for Homes England funding and forward to SB for signature.

It was concluded that Project 3 is probably too ambitious at this stage and would be much more difficult to fund.

Potential sources of non-project specific funding mentioned include the Haslemere Challice Community Fund and the Community Foundation for Surrey and, if we develop a good working relationship with the newly elected HTC, the HTC Small Grants fund and the Haslemere Penny Ha’Penny Trust.

It was suggested that, as there are many new councillors on HTC following the recent election, a presentation to the Town Council would be a good opportunity to update them on our work and also build relationships. The presentation should include a brief

explanation of where we are in the Neighbourhood Plan process, our expertise in consulting with the community in the past and the value of such work and a summary of the next projects that HV wishes to take forward.

⇒ **NB** and **SB** will seek to set up a presentation at the July meeting of HTC.

Note: It was also suggested that, in due course, a presentation to Waverley Borough Councillors should be considered.

17/05/2019