

MINUTES OF HASLEMERE VISION'S STEERING GROUP MEETING
HELD AT HASLEMERE TOWN HALL ON WEDNESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2019

Attendance* and Apologies (A): Lesley Banfield* (chair), Liz Burton (A), Diane Moses*, Stewart Brown*, Cyndy Lancaster (A) John Moxon (A), Peter Isherwood (A), Farzana Aslam*, Sonja Dullaway (A), Philippa Guest*, Aine Hall*, David Simmons*, Kirsten Ellis (A), Claire Matthes (A)

Observing: Alastair Bayliss, Sam Wild,

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th June 2019 were approved.

2. Matters Arising.

All dealt with below

3. Updates on progress since last meeting:

LBa explained that we have identified the groups to take our selected initial projects forward.

Fairground

The Fairground site in Wey Hill could be a significant site in the town for a mixed development including affordable housing and parking. The site was common land. WBC own the site and deregistered it in early 2019 to enable them to resurface it in order to improve the parking and thus implement charges for parking. There is concern that they will not develop the site for many years. Because it was previously common land, it is seen as morally in the ownership of the community.

HV asked the community about their views of the site during the housing consultation in 2015 and ran a workshop to gather the community's views on the use of the site. There is thus a mandate from the community to act. Housing on the site could include affordable housing held by the CLT.

LBa recently approached WBC to see if they are willing to work with HV. HV plans to obtain funding for a feasibility study for the site. They seemed receptive to HV's approach and the community's wishes for the site. Waverley councillor, Peter Nicholson and the new finance portfolio holder at Waverley, Mark Merryweather, agreed to review what will happen with the Fairground and tasked seniors officers to work on it.

LBa will convene the FG group. She has approached the Homes England Community Led housing department about funding. Government timescales are an issue. There is money available but it needs to be spent by March 2020. HV submitted an expression of interest for funding in the summer. A formal application will need to be prepared soon as it takes a couple of months for local authorities to tender for consultants and the consultant's work will take a few months.

SB noted that the council lacks resources to commission the work to formulate a plan for the site and it is currently a low priority. The site has complexities and there have been arguments about whether it is impossible to develop, so funding may be needed for assessing the state of the site as well.

HTC has reconvened their Fairground working party which met 6 weeks ago for a preliminary meeting and then planned a meeting with HV, Haslemere Society and the Chamber of Commerce. SB spoke to David Round and there is intent to have another meeting soon.

- LBa to talk to Peter Isherwood and Kirsten Ellis about the Town Council Fairground Working Party.
- LBa to find out when next Waverley budget will be done and also the timing for the car park resurfacing contracts.
- LBa to speak with Mark Merryweather about appointing consultants to do a feasibility study for the site.

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AH suggested that we could make Jeremy Hunt aware of our intended involvement with the Fairground site. After discussion it was decided to delay on this for now.

- AH to identify the best time to speak with Jeremy Hunt about the Fairground site.

AH, SB, LBa, and DM will work on this project

- LBa to develop a plan of work for this project

Neighbourhood Plan

SB updated the group as follows:

We are waiting on a response from statutory bodies on the screening opinion as to whether a Strategic environmental assessment is required for the neighbourhood plan. Matthew Ellis, Waverley Principal Planning Officer, responded last week that the statutory bodies had until the end of last week to respond but that the Environment Agency had sent a standard response stating that they may need more time. When the responses have all been received Waverley will determine it formally.

It is therefore expected that the pre-submission consultation (Regulation 14 - lasting at least 6 weeks) will not start now until October. Following that consultation, any necessary changes will be made and then the plan will be formally submitted to Waverley who will check the plan and ensure there is sufficient evidence, publicise the plan (Regulation 16 - for a period of 6 weeks) and then submit it for independent examination and then referendum.

The project group comprising SB, LBU, PG and DM are still working with HTC and attending regular meetings. Work on the Basic Conditions statement and consultation statement continues. Susanna Brown has checked the whole plan through to identify typos, issues with grammar, punctuation and style.

- SB to convene a meeting LB,SB,PG, DM, JM

Environment

PG gave the background for this project. There are a wealth of biodiversity assets across the Neighbourhood Plan area - a number of sites protected at national and international level such as the Wealden Heaths phase II site, two sites of Special Scientific Interest, 20 sites of National Conservation Interest, two conservation verges, 84 areas of ancient woodland that all have statutory protection and contain rare and protected species. It is thus equally important to maintain green corridors between these sites so that wildlife can move across and between them. Identifying the wildlife corridors and stepping stones is therefore important. The Neighbourhood Plan contains a policy that aims to protect these corridors and stepping stones but to enable the policy to be fully enforced it will be necessary to identify the wildlife corridors and stepping stones.

Surrey Wildlife Trust prepared a biodiversity report for the Neighbourhood Plan area in 2016 which we can build off. Many other local groups are interested. The National Trust are doing a similar project on the land they own. Haslemere Natural History society has a lot of information on animals and species that are prevalent in our area. Surrey Wildlife Trust and Sussex and Hampshire Wildlife Trust will have useful resources and CPRE and the Haslemere Society are keen to be involved. DS suggested that Waverley may be a further source for information as they have wardens who monitor the wildlife at various sites across the borough.

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A similar project was carried out in Effingham (located north of Guildford) a couple of years ago with Natural England which has established a methodology and format.

PG explained that a project leader who is an ecologist or biologist will be needed to manage the data collection for the project. It will therefore be necessary to identify funding to support such a leader on a part-time basis. FA suggested collaborating with local universities. PG agreed and believes Reading and Imperial Universities may have PhD students who may be interested in being involved.

PG added that from a public relations point of view this project should be a win win for HV and the community. DEFRA is putting together its 25 Year Environment Plan and biodiversity will be a hot topic. It is likely there will be funding for this type of project from government and others. The project should also have wide appeal including school children and youth groups.

- PG to prepare project brief including scope and objectives
- PG to identify potential partners
- PG and LBU to prepare communication to recruit volunteers

AH will assist this group with communications. She noted that twitter will be a great tool for promoting this project but also potentially for gathering data.

- PG to convene project group comprising LBA, AH, SD

Communications Group

LBU will lead the communications group. Their first tasks will be to update the website content and use determine ways to publicise the new projects being undertaken alongside the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.

AH will act as an advisor to this group for twitter and Facebook campaigns. FA also expressed an interest in working with this group on an ad hoc basis. She highlighted the importance of community engagement for all of the projects in order to raise the profile and get people involved.

Sustainable Transport

FA will lead this group. SW, AB and DS will all work on this project. SW and AB will bring their knowledge of cycling within the town they have already been part of a cycling group that has identified potential issues within the town which could be addressed to improve the cycling experience. DS researched many of the transport issues in the town for the neighbourhood plan including carrying out footpath surveys across the town and is a member of the Community Rail Partnership. The primary purpose of the project will be to enhance the experience of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The main stakeholders are South Western Railways, the Community Rail Partnership and Surrey County Council.

- FA to meet with Nikki Barton about the project
- FA to convene the group.
- Group to set priorities and develop objectives to achieve
- SB to send Peter Hampson's contact details to LBA/FA as he may wish to be involved

LBA mentioned that Tom Lancaster from Farnham is part of the Waverley Cycling Forum. Haslemere has no representative on that group.

- FA, LBA and AB to attend next Waverley Cycling Forum.

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It was suggested that this group may want to develop policy on CIL, S106 and new homes bonus monies since once the NP has been adopted the Town Council will get a higher percentage of CIL and this money could be directed to transport issues.

- DM to send transport policies from NP to FA.

The CRP are bidding for funding from SWR to improve access around the station and have used the evidence from the NP consultation in their bid. There is also an application being made to SCC for improvements to the existing footpath 19 to change it to a cycleway. Some pedestrian groups have objected but LBA sent a letter from HV supporting the proposal

4. Outcomes of Strategic Workshops held on 4th July and 11th September.

FA kindly ran two workshops during the Summer to assist the newly formed steering group to define the new Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Objectives and Principles. The next step is for the project groups to convene and map out their plan for future. This should include:

- How to engage with community.
- How to meet our objectives

5. Any other business

There was none.

6. Date of next meeting

8pm Wednesday 23rd October 2019 at the Town Hall.