

EWHURST AND ELLENS GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

MINUTES OF STEERING GROUP MEETING – 29th September 2014 at Sayers Croft

Present: Tim Bloomfield, Allan Webber, Valerie Henry, Bob Arnold , Paddy Geoghegan, David Allen , David Quoroll

Also present: Jan Allen – Publicity and Communication for the Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes recorded by AW

1. TB welcomed Jan to the meeting and said he was very pleased that with her expertise and experience , she had agreed to act as the person responsible for publicity and communication for the Neighbourhood Plan. Properly communicating and engaging with the local community is a vital task.
2. The Minutes of the 26th August meeting were agreed without further alteration. A question was asked about the need for detailed minutes. It was agreed that this was rightly done for those minutes for they may have to go on the web site and act as part of the “communication” to the community about the Neighbourhood Plan although this would not happen immediately until other items for the web site, like the “communication plan” and the Project Plan were ready. It was also agreed that future minutes may not need to be so detailed and could probably concentrate upon decisions only and that a volunteer to act as clerk/minute taker could be sought at the public meeting.
3. There was a brief debate about the implications of the decision to refuse the Thakeham Homes decision on density and numbers grounds and not policy, prematurity or objection grounds. It was agreed that in all likelihood the proposal was not dead – the applicants may appeal or re-submit with fewer numbers. Both could mean that a decision on this development outside the existing settlement boundary could pre-empt the NPs identification of acceptable sites. The question was raised about whether this would constitute a windfall site (i.e. an unallocated site which does not count towards what Ewhurst has to provide) or an allocation which has to go into the NP. This question was also raised about whether the Hurtwood Park proposal if given consent , would also be a windfall.
TB agreed that he would seek clear answers to these questions out of Waverley planners.
4. It was agreed that whatever the answer, work on the Neighbourhood Plan should continue at an urgent pace for it was the only way the local community could gain a measure of control over other unanticipated development proposals. Some proposals could be rushed through in an attempt to pre-empt Neighbourhood Plan decisions.
5. The revised wording of the first public notice/flyer publicising the work on a Neighbourhood Plan, the dates etc. of the first community meetings and the appeal for assistance with the work was agreed. The notice/flyer will be published immediately and distributed to every household in the Parish in the October edition of Ewhurst and Ellens Green News. The dates for the meetings were 26th November and 6th December.

6. It was provisionally agreed that the first meetings would be: (i) to inform the community about Neighbourhood Plans and the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Ewhurst and Ellens Green Parish; (ii) to start building community capacity for and commitment to preparing a NP including recruiting people to work on various tasks and projects and (iii) to start getting community feedback on or input to the aims, objectives and tasks for the NP.
7. It was agreed that the programme and content of presentations for the first meetings should be sorted out at the next Steering Group meeting. TB suggested that there should be several presenters (and not just himself) to emphasise to the meetings that preparing a NP is “ a whole of the community” task and not just something for the Parish Council.
8. It was also agreed that in due course there should be a community questionnaire testing opinions on needs, issues and tasks for the NP AND possibly the development site options. However when this could and should be done will depend upon decisions in the Project Plan.
9. David Allen agreed to act as “Project Leader” for the Statistical and Evidence Base Research. DA did stress however that he will require the assistance of other project leaders in identifying what statistics etc. are required.
10. AW tendered his analysis of the responses to Cllr Chris Lyth’s Consultation on a Village Plan. It was agreed that although this was not a proper Neighbourhood Plan, the responses received could be very useful in showing the direction a Neighbourhood Plan should be taking on various issues. In essence it could be treated as Pre-plan Consultation. In due course it could be included in the NP’s evidence base (and therefore go on the web-site). However it was also agreed that this should not happen until after the first public meeting.
11. AW pointed out that the responses could be useful for planning what to say and present at the first public meeting.
12. There was a dual discussion about assembling a Project Plan for preparing the NP and securing a budget/the funds for the work. In simple terms a Project Plan would be needed before a budget and Parish Council precept could be secured AND any application for funding support from say “Locality” could be made. It was agreed that the Loxwood NP Project Plan was not useable for EEG NP for a variety of reasons.
13. It was agreed that (i) AW, DA and BA should start work on drawing up a draft Project Plan and that we should attempt to source suitable Project Plans from other areas which might be used as at least a template. It was also agreed that as well as an overall Project Plan there will probably be a need in due course for individual Project Plans for different tasks and projects.

14. The web-site and plan logo was agreed as the third down on the left of the sample sheet but with the lower case *plan* used on the 4th down. It was also agreed that the block colour should be green and that there should be no ' in Ellens Green.
15. There was a short discussion of the various tasks or projects needed for assembling the required evidence base. The meeting noted the draft briefs prepared for a number of the already suggested projects. AW indicated that these tasks or projects will need to be programmed in the Project Plan. DA mentioned that others may be identified in due course, for instance at the first public meeting and that some briefs may need development and refinement by those undertaking the projects. The first public meeting would also be the time to secure assistance from within the community to undertaking some of the work.
16. In discussion it was also identified that at some time two of the other projects which will need to be undertaken are (i) Fulfilling SEA and Other Compliance Requirements and (ii) Development Site Option Assessment. It was identified that the SEA etc Project could be an onerous, specialised yet vital task given that it appeared at least one other NP had come unstuck on this matter. AW agreed that he should investigate with some of his planning contacts what was required. TB said he would ask if Waverley planners were prepared and able to do what was needed for SEA etc.
17. It was agreed that the next Steering Group meeting should be scheduled for Monday 27th October. (TB to advise on the venue.)