

Benson Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee Meeting

31st August 2016

Minutes

Present: Jon Fowler (JF), Dave Rushton (DR), Michael Winton (MW), Edel McGurk (EM), Martyn Spence (MS), Philip Murray (PM), Catherine Murray (CM)

SC = Steering Committee; NP = Neighbourhood Plan

EM took minutes.

1 Apologies: Lorna Denby; Andrew Ashcroft (AA); Frank Farquharson (FF)

2 Actions from Meeting of 10 August (updates only included on actions not fully discharged, and matters not already on the agenda):

2.1 JF has written again to Gayle Wootton and received another response that is unsatisfactory. The SC discussed options for dealing with this, one being to propose fixing on an increase of 10% (150) houses.

Actions:

JF to raise verbally with Gayle Wootton at their next meeting

MW to send his email correspondence on this matter with Paula Fox of SODC - Complete.

2.2 Consultation Statement. Several SC members have sent Lorna a contribution.

Action: JF to check on progress with Lorna

2.3 PM has attempted to contact Mark Gray but has not made much progress. DR suggested we stay focused on the main objective, with the most important meeting being the strategic discussion with John Howell.

Action: PM to check with Mark Gray at next parish surgery.

2.4 Permissive path to Preston Crowmarsh: EM and DR reported back on their discussion. DR feels we may encounter difficulties converting this path to a formal right of way, due to insurance/liability concerns about the low clearance caused by the pipe under the bridge. Conclusion was that formalising the path should remain an aspiration to be pursued by the Parish Council in due course.

Action: JF to approach Parish Council via the Clerk and the Rec and Lands Committee to flag the aspiration and discuss.

2.5 Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre: EM has had an email exchange with TVERC, in which they have indicated a willingness to negotiate on price, but a telephone call is needed to discuss. EM has not had time to follow this up yet. TVERC (or other consultancy) help may only be needed if we propose to allocate sites that appear to have biodiversity interest. The action was carried forward.

Action - EM to consider further and pursue if necessary.

3. Other sites

3.1 The SC discussed v4 of the 'Other Sites' paper circulated by JF on 14 August.

- a) Bertie West's Field - Agreed this should be a Playground, with maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity interest. The type of play would be envisaged to be informal/natural rather than provision of 'swings and slides' equipment.
- b) Land at Brook Street opp The Cedars- SC decided to defer a decision on this whilst CM's green buffers paper is under consideration. Some debate about whether the owner of the site is interested in developing the site.
- c) Churchfield Road - there is now a firm proposal which will come to the parish council planning committee, probably before we have completed the Neighbourhood Plan. There are concerns about whether the scale proposed (in order to be a viable care home business) is appropriate for the site. The SC agreed that our role is to set parameters for development to help people determine what sort of development might be suitable eg height taking into account constraints such as the proximity to the North Wessex Downs AONB or Flood Zone - There is a question about whether the SEA can consider sites (other than Ben 1 to Ben 8).

Action CM to draft a sentence on site constraints

Action PM to talk to SODC about the SEA process to understand whether other sites can be considered

- d) Littleworth Road - The youth facilities provision at Ben 1 needs to remain on here for certainty.
- e) The Meer - no change to wording on paper.
- f) Littleworth Road derelict house - remove from list
- g) Golf course - remove as it is not within our control.
- h) Sunnyside - DR is interested in understanding whether FF and the Community Facilities group might be considering recommendations that would have implications for our thinking on how Sunnyside is used.

Action FF to advise at next meeting

- i) The Paddock - no change - burial ground and allotments
- j) Salt Store - proposed dual purpose of car park/biodiversity site. EM queried the rationale for allocating this site as a car-park given the distance from the marina cafe. Will it get sufficient use? JF suggested that the Parish Council would welcome a steer on allocation from the SC. Steps could be taken to encourage marina customers to make use of a car park if one was provided. Whilst the Parish does not own or control the land, a situation that the PC is attempting to rectify. If a lease is agreed, we will need to have some proper surveys, including ecological.

k) Warwick Spinney - DR reported that discussions with OCC about a replacement or extension for the library have not been productive, so there is little value in considering this site for a library or heritage centre. Furthermore, the site is not in the parish so is out of scope for the NP in any case.

l) A4074 triangles at the end of Church Rd - car parking.

m) Path to Preston Crowmarsh by brook under A4074 – remove from list

n) Land with Scout hut - donated by Mrs Miller in 1924. To be held in trust for the good of the Benson troop. There are constraints at this site. Remove from the list.

Action JF to update and issue V6.

4. Map production

Several members of the SC had provided suggestions to EM but these haven't yet been taken to Alice to discussion.

Action: EM to follow up with Alice and get an understanding about what is feasible.

5. Update on Timeline

JF has calculated that the plan can be completed by January, but before finalising the timeline, he wanted to understand whether the SC is committed to a fast track plan. There is a compromise between coverage/quality and speed of production, but there are risks in a longer timeline - it leaves the village exposed to planning decisions that are not plan-led. Issues to consider:

- There is a need for further community engagement, especially as the plan may need to propose more development than that already consented at Ben 1.
- If a relief road were to be possible, this would likely require additional housing to be approved in Ben 2, 3 & 4. We'd need to put that to the community to assess reaction. Prior to this, we would need to establish feasibility.
- The other option is to pull up the drawbridge, stating that 241 houses as Littleworth Road fulfills our obligation.

JF believes we should allow a little more time than January, but we need to leave a buffer so that we are confident our plan will be in place before March 2017. We need to understand the critical path for getting the complete plan through the inspection and referendum stages. We need to identify the furthest date that gives us flexibility to cover the areas we want to cover, and explore the relief road option.

Action JF to check dates with AA, and update the timeline.

6. DWH Meeting

6.1 Minutes of the meeting were circulated. DWH have sought our help to communicate with the community via our volunteer distribution lists. The SC concluded that this should not be supported. DWH should make their own arrangements for communicating their proposals.

[The next item on the agenda 'Housing sites' appeared to be a duplication of the related item 'Other Sites'].

7. Housing density.

7.1 The SC queried AA's recent written advice; looking at NPPF, para 45, which appears to allow us to set appropriate densities. JF reminded the SC that SODC will probably have a standard density for towns and rural areas. PM advised that we need to reflect variation within sites eg phasing different densities through a development. We may need to temper modern (urban) densities with what is appropriate for a place like Benson which is 'flatter' and more spread out in line with village character. Helene and Martin Donegan have indicated they would be happy to help with number crunching.

Action PM to seek Gayle Wootton's advice on SODC's expected housing density.

Action EM to add Helene Donegan to distribution list for minutes.

8. Plan Structure

8.1 EM asked the SC whether we intend to structure the plan along the lines of the work streams we have been developing or whether we want to develop a more integrated structure. PM suggested the generic policies may be presented within the themes we have been working on, but site specific aspects will be where the integration is needed.

8.2 JF explained that one of AA's roles is to draw the plan together - at that point, we will be able to spot gaps and duplication. PM suggested operating a 'red team' approach to editing the plan - this would consist of a small team of people to act as a fresh pair of eyes.

8.3 DR needs advice on how much info is required for Appendices. Eg should road survey information be included. We need AA's advice on this.

Action JF to seek AA advice

8.4 On presentation, JF envisages a glossy professionally produced plan rather than a basic printed document.

9. AOB

9.1 DR flagged up the need for a 'public good' policy which might influence the allocation of CIL money and offered to draft a policy. The SC agreed.

9.2 This led to a discussion about whether we need to consider the wider Parish needs including consideration of the rural parts of the parish. Most of the land is currently agricultural with scattered settlement; EM and CM believe that we would not want to seek or

encourage residential development there. EM queried whether we should be talking to the larger commercial businesses sited in the parish about their views eg Grundon and Agrivert. DR and JF have concerns that this will take too long. EM explained she may need to consider their views because the Green Infrastructure theme needs to take account of all the GI assets in the parish - several of the patches of 'priority habitat' from which we might build out are located in the south-east corner of the parish.

9.3 CM flagged questions about how we deal with Conservation areas including Preston Crowmarsh. JF suggested we need a generic policy for infill development. CM has drafted one for Benson but Preston Crowmarsh may need a separate approach.

Action all to respond to CM's buffer paper.

9.4 Update on meeting with John Howell - JF and PM met John Howell. Outcome is that he is happy to chair a meeting with OCC, Highways, the landowners and John Cotton (this now sits with the latter to set up.) B4009 in December there will be new weight limit reinforcement signs being installed at J6 of M40, which may help with the volume of heavy traffic routing through Benson village. John Howell explained that traffic flow and the road infrastructure (M40, A4074, A329 and A4009) are a known problem, and he is clear that the Chalgrove site consideration must be informed by traffic modelling and surveys and that the infrastructure for such a development must be considered at an early stage.

9.5 CM suggested we all need to undertake a Site assessment against the themes we are leading for each of Ben 1- 8, and proposed that we do a write around of views for each site. MS to hold the ring on this.

Action - all to consider Ben 1 -8 against their workstream needs, and share the outputs. All to send the results to MS for collation.

10. Date of next meeting: 12 September 7pm Parish Hall