



Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan

Notes from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting: 21st February 2018 held at 6.30 pm

Attendees: Carol Butler; Cllr J Carroll; Neil Fearn; David Gibbons; Cllr Susan Goodchild; Cllr T McMahon; T Plunkett; A Winter.

Also present: Martin Small (Neighbourhood Plan Consultant); Debbie Marsh (Corporate Services Manager).

- 1) **Apologies** were received from Cllr M Kennedy; C Clavey; Cllr K Wattingham.
- 2) **Notes from the previous meeting held on the 24th January 2018:** Members noted that an error had been made under minute number 5 and that Education is now TP as lead, and not TMcM as stated. Following this amendment the minutes were agreed.

Matters arising: None

3) **Reports from the Task & Finish groups:**

Town Centre:

DG – It was anticipated that a meeting could be held next week. Individual conversation had been had but finding a date for a meeting was proving difficult.

MS – reminded the group to keep a list of the people who are spoken to, including how many one to one meetings had taken place. The group were advised to keep track as it would help with the consultation summary.

DG - reported that he had not heard anything back from anyone and suggested to the group that if the momentum wasn't kept up that it would be easy for it to wane.

MS – Advised the group that the Town Councils response to Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Plan Pre-Submission document had been sent.

Debbie to send a copy of this document to DG.

DG – There is a question as to whether or not the town centre can still be a town centre. What else could be done regarding the town centre? Café culture? Town Centre needs somewhere for people to gather and celebrate and to market.

NF – Not just day time but evening as well.

DG – For example, there is nowhere to hold the Mayor's Christmas event, it has to be held in Dunstable. Focus building? cafes open in the evening? Rather than clothes shop's or shoe shop's.

JC – HRN1 have a High Street named within their masterplan. It was proposed that this would be retail, now something different.

NF – Not co-ordinated HRN1, HRN2 and Kingsland.

DG – Town with smaller shops dotted around. We need a heart of the town.

CB – My age group are not into coffee shops. What do people of my age do?

DG – What would get people out? U3A group? Would that bring people out?

NF – I know that if football teams need a meeting this has to happen around someone's house.

Open Spaces:

NF – Not held a meeting yet. Struggling to find a venue.

DG – Jewels would most probably be available.

AW – Suggested contacting Dunstable tennis club as some members may be residents of Houghton Regis.

TMcM – Opens spaces not just sports?

NF – Yes.

TMcM – Top loaded more towards sport rather than outdoors.

NF – I come from a football background so would welcome any contact details the group may have for other groups. Please send them to me.

Heritage:

TMcM – There has been a consultation, from CBC, requesting proposals to boundary changes. People feel strongly that heritage is important to them but they don't know. I will be taking the questionnaire to the next meeting of the Heritage Society.

MS – Where is the conversation about boundary change? CBC local plan did not propose housing on the eastern edge (Sewell), not that this couldn't happen following a review. Maidenbower is a heritage asset. There could be a Neighbourhood Plan green network of footpaths towards and across A5 to Maidenbower.

Education:

TP – Completed the SWOT analysis forms. Working with focus groups (children). Intending to have cluster groups with Headteachers to encourage completion of the form. Easter egg hunt.

Housing:

JC – Met with Youth Council. Been invited to next meeting. The intention would be that they then move towards other youth groups i.e. youth club.

4) Communication/Publicity/Public Involvement

DG – The survey has been up for a week and a half and already had 79 responses. Can download answers and will email round.

NF – It would be useful to know.

DG – Nothing hugely surprising. Suggest an A4 poster for noticeboards to include a QR code for ease.

TMcM – Not just Facebook. Twitter and Instagram as well.

MS – This process takes time. It would be good to produce a summary sheet on A3 based on the town council's 2020 Visions format. Work on focus groups getting together.

5) Funding grant application: MS is supporting the town council in its grant application.

6) Date of next meeting: Date of the next meeting to be held at the council offices on Wednesday 21st March 2018 at 6.30pm.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm