

# SHERFIELD ON LODDON PARISH COUNCIL



## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM

Minutes of Neighbourhood Plan Forum held on 26th June 2014

**Present** - John Darker (Chairman), Alan Ball, Ivan Gosden, Sandy Johnston, Bruce Batting, Natalie Lerner, Bryan Jenkins, Steve Levin, Ian Wilson, Oliver Bartrum, Mary O'Connor, Venetia Rowland, Polly Rymer, Vanessa Atwood, John Atwood, Margaret Smith, Norman Smith, Ken Clark, Peta Alvares and Peter Hayes (Minutes).

### **1. Introduction**

JD welcomed everyone to this first meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Forum. He explained that its purpose was to give parishioners progress on the Plan and for them to raise questions and concerns.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Rhydian Vaughan, Kym Greener, Kathleen Gaiger and Eleanor Burt.

### **3. Minutes of last (Committee) meeting (20/03/14)**

The Minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

### **4. Matters arising not on the agenda**

SL queried the partitioning of the NP designated area in the light of the governance review: where would the borderline be (between the village and Taylor's Farm)? JD replied that this was not included in the governance review and there was a need for a meeting with BDBC to agree a way forward regarding any re-designation of the original area.

### **5. Update on new Neighbourhood Plan structure**

JD (reporting for Alan Ball, Chairman of the Parish Council) said that the new Sub-Committee reported to the PC Planning Committee and acted as the interface between the PC and the Forum. The erstwhile Committee (up to 20/3/14) has become the Forum and it would be good to get more people involved in the detailed work. The rationale for the change is to do with public money being involved and attendant accountability viz. PC grant; 2 grants including fees for consultants; de-facto advice from Planning Aid England. In the ensuing discussion it was suggested that there was not a clear audit trail to the PC and the Forum, and the independence of the Sub-Committee was queried; JD re-iterated that the Sub-Committee had to agree expenditure with the PC in advance.

### **6. Feedback on the Questionnaire results**

#### i) Power Point presentation by BJ (attached as a PDF to the Minutes)

BJ explained that the response rate to the Questionnaire was 16% of those of voting age in the parish: this was deemed by the PAE consultant to be good. Results were presented in histogram format, with responses from the village and TF separately analysed for particular questions; where there were more extended answers added eg Qs 3, 4, 5 and 6,



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these had been summarised and categorised into Word files. Q9 – Additional views - had 100 (out of 233) responses from the village and BJ summed up the most frequent topics. A comment was made that some responses could be fluid eg there was now an issue of tree felling on Dixon Road (TF) which was not known about at the time the Questionnaire was out.

### ii) Ideas for dissemination

JD said that a decision was needed on how to disseminate information from the Questionnaire and how its findings are used in the vision statement and policies for the Plan. BJ asked how the text questions might be published and received by those without e-mail access.

Discussion followed around the logistics of dissemination through the LVL. In response to a query about the purpose of the dissemination, JD said that we have a duty to people in the parish to provide them with access to the report. Within the next steps the residents' views can be incorporated into the vision statement and policies eg 'the view on green spaces is that....'

### **Agreed action points**

- The full report will be will be uploaded to the website in PDF format
- There will be a summary/snapshot of key findings in the next edition of the LVL (August); these should be on issues, commonly shared, which help to unite the parish
- The LVL will include an invitation to request a hard copy of the report – this will give an indication of how many copies to print. They will be available in the Shop and HouseTwenty8

JD thanked BJ for the all the time and effort he had put into the Questionnaire and its analysis.

### **7. Feedback on meetings with consultants**

JD reported that the consultants would be helping with the main substance of the Plan. A need had been identified to meet with BDBC re the governance review; also 'The Triangle' Development and whether this would count towards Sherfield's contribution over the next 15 years. The Local Plan has indicated 150 houses across 10 parishes, of which Sherfield is one. There was discussion of what defined a 'small development'. If it's less than 10 it doesn't count towards the 150 contribution: there is no specific housing requirement allocated to Sherfield.

### **8. The future of 'The Triangle'**

There would be a presentation by Sentinel Housing at the next PC meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July. There is no formal planning application as yet.

### **9. The Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area**

JD explained that this area include heath land habitats and covers some of the parish – not Taylor's Farm. If more than 50 houses are built within this area there are very stringent criteria to replace lost habitat. This regulation has not yet been put to the test.

### **10. Comments and questions from the floor**



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JD said that at the PC Planning Committee (25<sup>th</sup> June) a proposal had been raised to stop the Neighbourhood Plan. It arose from concern that the village doesn't want one; that not enough people take an interest; that it should not be imposed on people who don't want it; and it is causing upset, division and animosity. A decision would be made on the Plan's future at the next PC meeting (9<sup>th</sup> July). *Subsequently the timing of this decision has been deferred.*

JD put two questions: 'Does the Forum think that we should continue?'; 'How do we get more non-PC people involved in future plans?'

Discussion followed with the following points raised:

- Apathy doesn't mean that people are necessarily against it
- A large apathetic group and opposition could mean it won't be approved anyway
- If we abandon it there could be more 'danger' to the parish (from developers)
- Open Days (February 2014) had caused a stir as certain sites seemed to be at risk
- We need a say in what happens and therefore we need a NP
- Can you run a NP without the PC? There would be financial issues
- Money already spent would be wasted/ paid back
- Responses from the Questionnaire gave clear and positive statements – a lack of information for people was the problem.

A show of hands indicated that no one would abandon the Plan; 12 were in favour of it. PA and VR (with conditions) offered help.

Cllr Ball reported on there being lots of negative vibes picked up by the PC; there was rumour and speculation and a waste of resources, including the Clerk's time. He admitted that it had been a mistake to specify sites. There was discussion about the need to inform the parish about a possible stop to the Plan. It was agreed that people could email or write (via letter box) to PH.

An issue of greater transparency around membership of the Sub-Committee, with the involvement of more non-PC members was raised.

**Date of next Forum meeting:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August, 7.30pm.