

Notes of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting, Monday 29th February, 16.00.

Present: Liz Sanders, Frank Payne, Paul Dowse, Christopher Clark, John Nowell, Michael Hinman, Oliver Bird, Maureen Burns-Jones, David Salkeld, Ann Lewis

Apologies: Alf Dewis, Michael Haley

1. The group expressed their satisfaction with the positive local press releases, having had front page coverage and headlines in the 'The Rutland Mercury', and inside coverage in 'The Rutland Times'.

Liz has spoken to Rutland Radio who responded favourably and agreed to give the air time we would like - four 'plugs' for four days prior to an event - cost £40. 29th March is the closing date for the consultation of our NP submission, so we expect to hear the outcome after that. The outcome of Barleythorpe's submission for its own Forum and NP is also awaited.

2. Website demo: Paul showed the group his Wix website design and demonstrated how user-friendly and accessible it is in terms of updating and amending design and information. He wanted a practical layout which is not too busy, simple fonts which look clean etc. The home page needs an attractive, eye-catching and appropriate illustration which could be photographs or a design by a school/college. A NP logo, separate from the TC logo, was discussed briefly and this, too, needs some thought - again, a school/college may design this. The group was impressed, not only by Paul's hard work but also the information available and the overall appearance of the website. However, modifications are required and we were urged to consider these. Frank suggested that a questionnaire ought to be available on the website for 'Your Views' (Survey Monkey) to allow residents to share areas of concern/suggestions. Alf, Michael and Oliver suggested that Martin Brookes could be given the role of NP photographer.

The cost is likely to be a very reasonable £8 a month for the first year. The Town Council will need to approve the website. It was agreed that it would be ideal if it could go live by 29th March in readiness for the submission being approved.

3. Communications Update. Something omitted from the last meetings' notes was our mission statement to do with Communication and Engagement Strategy. We need to agree our overall aim and then start to scope out the actual activity, cost and logistics plan for implementation.

As a Strategy starter for ten, by way of an example, it could be, 'Everybody who lives and works in the community is aware, within the plan, of their Neighbourhood Plan and how they can influence its development'.

In terms of how we do this, it would be good to come up with a few key rules for engagement i.e. 'As a Steering group, our communications always start from a position of engagement; we endeavour to use all forms of communications to encourage two-way dialogue with the community; we use clear and accessible language'.

Frank suggested that a week after we gain approval, on Saturday, April 9th, we should aim to have our first public meeting, a rolling programme in the Victoria Hall from 10.00 until 16.00. Oliver suggested that morning presentations may be more productive, say at 10.00 and 13.00. Between now and then, a period of six weeks, we need to have three press releases: the first to build understanding, explaining what the NP is and why; a second, focusing on issues and themes; and a third on the Steering Group, its function and ways of communicating.

The local press and radio, our website and Facebook are our chosen ways. Liz and Michael Haley are to front communications at this stage and the line on Barleythorpe, which could prove a negative distraction, is that we want to be inclusive and positive, involving them in the town. Conflict and confrontation must be avoided. The NP is for the benefit of all who reside and work in Oakham and the focus must be on this.

We agreed that on Saturday, April 9th we need outward-facing, upbeat advertising - in the Market Place with music, someone with a sandwich board, perhaps? Certainly, schools, colleges, Oakham Town Partnership, retail premises, small businesses etc. need to be aware of what is happening, or even be a presence in the Victoria Hall. Special invitations could be issued to certain individuals or organisations to encourage attendance. Representatives from Oakham Castle, the Town Partnership could be on hand to meet people. Post-it notes could be provided for the public to stick their suggestions on a board. There could be questionnaires to find out what people think. (It was suggested that when the castle opens, it would be a great venue for a NP presentation.) Members were urged to think about structure for this day.

4. Consultation list review and action: Liz reminded us that the contact list, circulated some time ago, needs to be filled in. The list is now available on Google Drive and should be filled in accordingly.

5 . Google Drive: Paul assured everyone that Google Drive is a secure, private system for sharing documents or receiving an email. Documents and press releases can be viewed and edited, folders set up for whatever we may want. Costs are minimal - £8 a year for 100 gigabytes.

6. AOB: Liz suggested 1 hour 30 minutes for our next meeting as there is much to discuss.

Oliver pointed out that a resource which will be helpful is the Rutland Area Capacity Assessment, carried out for RCC by a professional company, looking at retail in the town centre. He will obtain copies of this for us. Liz and Michael Haley are to attend a brainstorming session at RCC about the town centre (not yet in public domain) - a design consultancy is being employed to look at Oakham town centre. However, as Oliver and Frank pointed out, for all this, our NP will take precedence when decisions are made. Oliver also explained that a Call for Sites is taking place in the next two weeks. Every five years local land owners are asked if they would like their land to be part of the local development plan. Decisions will be made about what might be suitable land for development. We need to be aware of this.

David, who had been talking to young Barleythorpe residents, felt that young people need to be approached about their views but the fact that they are at work makes communication difficult.

The date of the next meeting is **Wednesday 16th March, 16.00- 17.30**. Paul and Christopher offered apologies in advance.

The meeting ended at 17.23.