

**Minutes of the BATTLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP (BNPSG)
meeting held on WEDNESDAY 9TH MAY 2018 at The Almonry, High Street
Battle at 7.00pm**

In Attendance: Cllr Alan Russell (AR), Cllr Andrew Brown (AB), Cllr Margaret Howell (MH), Paul Whymark (PW), Cate Sullivan (CS), Sue Best (SJB), Emma Hale (EH), Sue Burton (SB), Bev Marks (BM), Cllr Dale Wheeler (DW).

(Note: CS and PW arrived at approximately 7.30pm after the meeting had started).

Cllr Andrew Brown opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for absence – George Kiloh, Vanessa Boon.

2. Disclosures of interest – No disclosures were made.

3. Approval of previous minutes – the minutes of the Battle Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on the 19th April 2018 were agreed without comment.

4. Matters arising:

- The Parish Assembly (held on the 24th April 2018) was discussed. The presentation given by Cllr AR had been well received, and the NP stand staffed by EH and SJB had been visited by numerous people on the night. Another positive outcome to the night was that Vanessa Boon offered to join the BNPSG as a volunteer.
- The issue of whether the development sites at Blackfriars (if it goes ahead) and Lilybank Farm were to be counted towards the total number of homes required for the Parish had been investigated by AR after being brought up at the BNPSG meeting of the 19th April. Communication with David Marlowe at Rother District Council clarified that these developments would contribute towards the numbers for Battle, and that the required number would be further reduced by the approval for 63 dwellings at Tollgates, leaving the number to be allocated at 92 dwellings (155 minus 63). Furthermore, the April 2016 position had 50 dwellings listed as completions, small site commitments

or small site windfalls; this number increased to 64 dwellings by 01/10/17 (an increase of 14 dwellings).

Therefore, taking this additional 14 dwellings off the requirement of 92 leaves a balance of 78 dwellings, subject to the final numbers at Blackfriars.

Netherfield is to be considered separately, but there is now a permission (subject to a section 106 agreement) for 25 dwellings at Darvel Down, reducing the requirement for Netherfield to 23 dwellings.

In summary, 78 dwellings are currently needed for Battle, and 23 for Netherfield.

- The North Trade Road development was brought up in discussion, and the fact that local residents are raising objections to it.
- DW was introduced to the BNPSG, having been employed to help with the collation of information relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- BM was welcomed back to the group in the capacity of advisor to the Steering Group.

5. Update from Dale Wheeler regarding the collation of documents:

- DW gave all the BNPSG members a copy of his task list, detailing what has been completed, timescales etc. He outlined the work he has been doing towards completing the Parish Analysis started by Maurice Holmes. He is yet to begin work on the Character Appraisal Document, also started by Maurice Holmes.
- DW stated that he needs to source certain statistics for the documents he is working on, and there is material that he still needs to collect from the Almonry Office. DW also has some specific questions that he will put to the group as a whole via a 'round robin' email.
- It was decided between the group and DW that he will continue to work on the Parish Analysis and Character Appraisal for the next 6 weeks, and

will have both documents ready for the group to review by the end of June **ACTION: DW**

6. Updates on Parish Analysis Study/Character Appraisal:

Covered under previous Point 5.

7. Updates on Historic Environmental Report:

- AR checked that the Steering Group had all received the updated Historic Report written by Sarah and Adrian Hall which he had circulated via email.
- AR explained the concept of the Local Heritage Listing, a part of Heritage Policy, but separate to the existing Listed Buildings grading system, as an additional designation for buildings or sites that may be important in some other way than from a purely architectural perspective, for example culturally. AR anticipated that the Local Heritage Listing may form an appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan Documentation.
- CS gave an update on the Archaeological section of the Historic Environmental Report, identified by AR as the final piece needed to complete this document. She is going to contact The East Sussex Records Office to obtain a list of archaeological sites within the Parish **ACTION: CS.**

8. Updates on Open Spaces and Trees Study:

- EH informed the group of the recent areas of the parish that she had surveyed and identified the large scale of the work involved in completing the surveying of green spaces, trees and hedges across the whole parish. To complete this task within a sensible timeframe it was agreed that other members of the group may be able to assist in carrying out surveys in their localities. To move forward with this EH will email a list of areas in need of surveying to the group as a whole, allowing members to choose areas that they are familiar with to survey **ACTION: EH.**

- EH also expressed concerns about the extent of work going into the green environment study, without having the benefit of a definite brief to work from. It was decided unanimously by the group that the document as it stands should be sent to Donna Moles for review before continuing with the work, to check that it is progressing along the right lines. **ACTION: EH.**

9. Updates on the BNP Website:

- PW confirmed that the minutes of the meeting of the 19th April will go on the website today, having been approved, but wanted to clarify which meetings were official, and which were not; this was subsequent to the meeting of the 11th April, deemed to be unofficial due to the resignation of the then Chairman, Maurice Holmes on the night, and past meetings that were aborted on the night due to unforeseen absences.
- The group decided that where there were gaps in the calendar where meetings had not taken place, this should be stated on the website to aid transparency.
- AR proposed that to give the public confidence in the transparency of the process, all minutes should be published on the website as soon as possible in draft form and approved subsequently. The group agreed with this unanimously.
- CS enquired whether draft minutes could be included in press releases, or only after approval. The group decided unanimously that it was acceptable to include minutes in press releases in draft form.
- PW highlighted that the individual Declaration of Interests Forms that have been filled in by all the members of the BNPSG should be available for the public to view on the NP Website. CS pointed out a potential problem with personal data protection by showing an actual signature, so it was decided by the group that an actual signature would not be necessary, the group member simply printing their name instead.

PW is to re-circulate the Declaration of Interests Form to the members of the BNPSG for them to fill in again, to ensure the information held is up to date. **ACTION: PW**

10. Updates on National and District Policy:

- SJB has received the template for this document from Donna Moles but has experienced problems editing it due to compatibility with her computer. SJB to send the document to PW to see if he can assist her in resolving the editing issue, and thereby allowing her to make progress with this document. **ACTION: PW/SJB**

11. Updates on call for sites:

- AR brought up the issue of the criteria used to assess development sites for suitability during the site visits carried out in the initial stages of the NP process. He circulated a copy of the initial Site Assessment Appraisal form used to compile a shortlist of potential sites but identified that there was no fixed list of criteria used from this point onwards, although judgement was undoubtedly used to inform the list. SJB pointed out that as there are so many new members of the BNPSG that have joined since these initial site assessments were carried out, those new members could not realistically stand by the judgements made, not having played any part in them.

The lack of a definitive checklist of criteria to assess the sites by and given that Donna Moles made the precise recommendation that definite criteria, along with a scoring system, should be used to inform decisions made during any site assessment it was decided unanimously by the group that the sites should be reassessed (and more recently offered sites included in the assessment) to a definite list of comprehensive criteria to be compiled by CS and sent to Donna Moles for approval before commencing any site assessments.

ACTION CS

- The group decided that dates for carrying out the site assessments would be decided upon at the next meeting.

- It was also decided by the group that following the example of the Sedlescombe NP it would be a good idea to hold an exhibition of sites subsequent to the assessment, to allow developers and other interested parties to attend and give feedback on the conclusions reached via the site assessments.
- A general discussion was had by the group about recently offered development sites. A site submitted via the NP email during the recent extension period for the Call for Sites was mentioned; CS reminded the group that as the land in question belongs to herself and her partner she was not able to participate in any discussions regarding this particular site.

12. Publicity Officer's Report:

- The group discussed whether MH could cover the information included in press releases (currently dealt with by CS) in her column in the Battle Observer. The importance of including information such as resignations and changes to the committee was also discussed. The group decided unanimously that information currently included in press releases should now be included in MH's column instead, but that MH should send her column to AB and CS before publication for them to check that no information has been omitted. **ACTION MH**
- The possibility of starting a Facebook page for the NP was discussed by the group, who concluded that there was currently no real need for it and managing the page would add considerably to the group's workload, therefore the idea would not be pursued at the moment.

13. Treasurer's Reports:

- AB passed on a report from the acting treasurer, Carol Harris which read as follows; 'the Council approved a budget for the year 2018 – 2019 of £2500. There is an ear-marked reserve carried forward from last year (2017-18) of £3,415.13.

The total balance for 2018-19 is therefore £5,915.13'.

14. AOB:

- The group discussed an email from Stephen Hardy regarding the CPRE Sussex Press Release which has raised concerns about footnote 9 of paragraph 14 of the proposed revised National Planning Policy Framework, which could potentially limit the lifespan of NPs to just 2 years.

It was decided by the group to take the advice of CPRE Sussex and object to the wording of the footnote by the rather short deadline of Thursday May 10th. **ACTION AB**

- Sue Burton gave her resignation from the BNPSG, however as the group places such high value on her input and knowledge about Active Transport she has agreed to continue to act as an adviser to the group on this subject.
- The group was made aware of some recent correspondence received through the Battle NP enquiries email account, currently monitored by EH and PW.

15. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 13th June at 7pm at The Almonry, High Street, Battle.

There being no other business, the meeting closed just after 9pm.

Emma Hale, 14th May 2018