

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CRANBROOK & SISSINGHURST
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP HELD ON 28th
OCTOBER 2019

PRESENT: Cllr. Warne (in the Chair) and Cllrs. Smith, and Pethurst, Annie Hopper, June Bell, Marion Cranmer, Liz Daley, Marcus Boret, Jeremy Boxall and Tally Wade

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Hatcher, Laura Rowland and Matt Warne

Cllr. Warne read out the following statement:

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

Cllr. Warne declared an interest under the site assessments regarding site 122 which had been put forward by a relative.

Cllr. Warne, Annie Hopper, and June Bell declared a personal interest as members of the CVLT (Crane Valley Land Trust). Tally Wade declared an interest as a board member of the CVLT. Members of the various Advisory Groups declared an interest as necessary.

1. Response to TWBC Draft Local Plan:

Cllr. Warne reported that at the October Full Council Meeting it had been agreed to employ Richard Eastham, FERIA Urbanism Consultant to help produce a concise response to the Draft Local Plan on behalf of the NDP/Parish Council. This meeting will take place this Friday and everyone in attendance had been invited to attend.

Annie Hopper commented that the NDP Group should do their own response and the Parish Council their own to the Draft Local Plan. Cllr. Warne explained that any response would be joint as the NDP Group are acting on behalf of the Parish Council and all comments would need to be ratified by the Full Parish Council meeting to be held on 14th November 2019. Cllr. Smith agreed to lobby Parish Councillors on the importance of approving the response at the Full Council meeting.

General discussion then took place on various issues within the Draft Local Plan and possible responses. It was agreed that all present should supply Cllr. Pethurst with bullet points of key issues which he would forward them on to Richard Eastham. There were several internal contradictions within the DLP which need to be highlighted, also the process, lack of support for NDP and policies to be challenged.

Liz Daley agreed to forward an email trail which highlighted the lack of response from support by TWBC Planning Department to the NDP Steering Group as evidence to be forwarded to Richard Eastham.

Cllr. Warne explained that the NDP had looked to engage with the call for sites process and now she felt Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council were being punished for this, as more land owners had put their sites forward to be included in the call for sites.

2. Neighbourhood Plan – The Way Forward:

Cllr. Warne read out correspondence received from Cllr. Hatcher who was unable to attend the meeting.

Firstly, he asked members of the NDP Group to forward any comments responding to Benenden Local Plan to him by 31st October.

One point of view he had received is that it is now too late to bring our NDP forward. We have been ‘gazumped’ by TWBC and their lack of joined up thinking as far as NDPs are concerned. This person feels that the local plan consultation is a purely box ticking exercise for TWBC and any objections we may be able to raise would be overridden in the name of housing numbers and strategic development.’ We should abandon the NDP now and concentrate on possibly creating something for the next ‘cycle’ i.e. between this draft TWBC plan and the next.

Cllr. Hatcher’s point of view was to push forward with the NDP, potentially with a few amendments. The amendments we could make are to remove any sites from our plan that are not included in the draft local plan. Instead our other policies should be used to ensure any developments we are not supporting, that none the less do get built are built to the highest standards possible.

June Bell agreed with Cllr. Hatcher that the NDP should go ahead and include site assessments where they are in agreement with TWBC. However, our numbers would be much lower and she was not sure how this left the NDP. Garry Pethurst replied that if the NDP went ahead with a lower allocation housing number this would only be valid until the DLP is adopted. He suggested the NDP should go ahead taking the policies forward without allocations.

A great deal of debate then ensued on the way forward for the NDP. Cllr. Warne agreed to seek an agenda item for the next TWBC Planning Committee on the role of the NDPs and how they are considered in the decision making of the Committee and how they fit in the Local Plan.

Cllr. Warne proposed to continue to develop the NDP to get it to Reg. 14 Draft seconded by Liz Daley and agreed.

Cllr. Warne would notify Richard Eastham our Planning Consultant from Feria Urbanism that the NDP Steering Group had decided to continue with the NDP, although they have not yet decided whether or not to include allocations as part of it.

3. Stakeholder Engagement:

Brick Kiln Advisory Group – Liz Daley gave a brief update and the Landscape Environmental Management Plan.

Turnden Advisory Group – Liz Daley reported that the group were meeting with Berkeley Homes on Thursday morning. It had been made very clear to Berkeley Homes that the group were objecting very strongly and this is not a site anyone thinks acceptable, which had been minuted. Cllr. Warne and members of the NDP Steering Group were of the opinion that it was better to liaise and talk with developers even if you did not agree, as demonstrated so well by Liz Daley. Liz Daley informed the Committee that she had agreed to send copies of the Advisory Group Notes to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council so that they could be included in any planning file.

Discussion then took place on Section 106 projects which the community would benefit from. A list of projects had already been compiled by the NDP Steering Group.

Hartley Cluster Advisory Group – Cllr. Pethurst reported on a meeting held on 7th October and explained that Fernham Homes were not acting for the entire cluster as there was another site on the other side the road which they did not see the need to master plan with. He had also spoken with the owner of Bull Farm site who had no wish at the moment to master plan with Fernham Homes. Cllr. Pethurst stated that Fernham Homes were happy to provide playground space/green lung in to the development, also pedestrian access.

Hartley Residents Group – Liz Daley had attended a recent meeting purely as an information sharing event and had not represented any particular group. She had taken this opportunity to impress upon those in attendance the importance to responding to the Draft Local Plan.

5. Items for Information:

Nothing to report.

Next Meeting – 25th November 2019 7.30pm