

**MINUTES
BECKINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
STEERING GROUP MEETING
CLIFFORD HOUSE
DECEMBER 7th 2023**

Present: Sarah Ball (SB), Debs Byrne (DB), Paula Fox (PF), Jo Hole (JH), Sue Shipley (SS), Stuart Todd (ST), Jennie Tyler (JT), Andrew Tyler (AT), Mel Usher (MU), Clive Winterbourne (CW), Sue Wonnacott (SW).

Apologies: Alex Richards (AR), Ben Richards (BR).

1. Minutes of last meeting

PF had circulated draft minutes of the previous meeting via the steering group (SG) WhatsApp which she had produced that morning. Some attendees may not have had the opportunity to read. No amendments were raised at the meeting. PF noted how difficult it had been to transcribe from a recording with significant background noise. She also advised that it would also not be feasible for the parish clerk to produce minutes of future neighbourhood plan (NP) meetings. PF suggested that a minute taker should be agreed at the start of each meeting. JT advised that BR was willing to take all future meeting minutes. It was agreed that recordings should continue for archiving purposes and to support the minute taker. SS agreed to take minutes of this meeting in BR's absence.

2. Introductions

DB introduced Mel Usher (MU) who will join the NPSG having recently moved to Beckington. MU qualified as a planner, has been a consultant to local authorities and government, led the NP for Frome, and is currently a town councillor in Frome. At MU's request those present introduced themselves and shared their experience:

JH - actress and theatrical agent

DB - caterer

SB - former business career, now artist

CW - farmer, local businessman and member of parish council

PF - business experience in consumer sector both client side and as a consultant

SW - biochemist and emeritus Professor at Bath University

SS - retired retail executive, management and recruitment consultant

JT - HR lead for a local charity

AT - former marine environmental scientist, now NED to multiple businesses

ST - planning consultant appointed by the parish council to advise the NPSG

3. Funding

MU asked if the SG had funding in place to support the development of the NP, including the cost of a consultant. PF confirmed that a grant of £10k had been secured by the Parish Council. ST advised that further funding and technical skills support or packages, some free, are available via Locality.org, a government backed organisation which supports community groups with specialist advice, including for neighbourhood planning purposes. He recommended starting with identifying housing needs based

on population data trends for the neighbourhood. The government also encourages NPSGs to append a design guide or set of principles to their NP to which architects, developers and planners can refer. This could include specifying the preferred look and feel of any development proposed within the neighbourhood. PF advised that applications to Locality.org for funding or support should be routed via the parish clerk.

Other technical packages available from Locality.org include how to develop a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which is similar to an Environmental Impact Assessment often needed for planning applications. ST advised that once we have our draft neighbourhood plan we should write to Somerset Council to see if a SEA is required .

ST also advised that we cannot specify fewer houses in our neighbourhood than the figure indicated in the Local Plan. We should instead develop an understanding of what our community does and doesn't want via our survey and reflect what they request or suggest in our NP. This information should also inform our design guide. The location of any future development should be addressed at the end of the process, without mapping out specific locations.

4. **Survey**

Housing development led to a discussion about other topics for inclusion in the survey. These will likely include transport, environment and amenities such as parking, playgrounds, surgeries, shops, a post office etc. ST advised that any constraints which may exist for development, including listed buildings and designated green spaces, should be identified before undertaking the survey.

It was agreed that residents should be able to participate in the survey both online or via a postal hard copy, which will be distributed to households with the parish magazine by members of the NPSG who can explain the purpose and encourage participation. A launch event should take place before the survey is issued to brief the community on why the plan is being developed and what is its scope. A notice detailing how to complete the survey should also go out to residents including dates and venues for Q&A meetings which should take place during the four-week window for completion of the survey questionnaire.

ST has already supplied examples of other surveys and recommended no more than four to five questions per topic. Questions should be both open and neutral and designed to inform the NP. PF raised concerns about fraudulent responses, having spoken to WPP, an agency with expertise in consumer surveys. . It was agreed that responses from outside the neighbourhood or multiple responses from the same household, are unlikely to be significant, but that we should take measures to minimise the scope for fraud. AT proposed allocating a reference number, as well as the postcode, per address for each questionnaire. This would permit identification of each household which would have the option to respond by post or online quoting this numeric reference. This will also enable us to monitor any themes or issues that emerge in a particular location. The option to provide personal data should also allow

us to monitor any issues that are more pertinent to a gender or age range. Regardless of the approach adopted in the survey, we must comply GDPR guidance in protecting personal data.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

SS asked if we were planning to appoint a Chair and fill other roles within the group before the next SG meeting. PF referred the group to the sample Terms of Reference previously distributed, which detailed the roles that other NPSGs had adopted. After much discussion the following roles and responsibilities were agreed:

Chair Sue Shipley

Vice Chair Sue Wonnacott

Secretary, Internal Communications and Website Alex & Ben Richards

Project Planning Mel Usher, Sarah Ball, Stuart Todd

External Communications and Survey Production Jennie Tyler, Paula Fox, Jo Hole, Debs Byrne, Clive Winterbourne

Treasurer and Liaison with Parish Clerk Andy Tyler

6. Project Plan

Having agreed roles, the project plan produced by ST was reviewed. Dates for completion of each task in Stage 1 and subsequent stages of the plan need to be revised by the planning sub-group to reflect progress to date.

Action ST/MU/SB to update plan actions and timings

7. Terms of Reference

The first draft of our proposed terms of reference had been corrupted so should be recirculated.

Action JH to circulate new draft Terms of Reference for approval by the group incorporating the roles agreed above.

8. Website

An online presence is required urgently for the NSPG. This should include inter alia:

A landing page with background to the NP

Stages of the plan

Minutes from meetings

Bios of the NPSG members

Action AR to liaise with ST re best practice in the production and content of NP websites.

9. Consultation and Engagement Plan

This will be led by the external communications group.

Action JT/DB/PF/JH to meet and draft a plan for circulation to the group for approval.

10. Local and Strategic Stakeholders

JT had already identified a list of local stakeholders which has been shared on WhatsApp for others to add to. This includes schools, businesses etc who will also be included in our consultation process.

Action JT to identify key contacts and addresses for local stakeholders identified to date.

Action AT to produce a list of strategic stakeholders including statutory consultees, interest groups, service providers etc. (Somerset Council and former Mendip Council contact to help in this.)

11. Internal Communications

To ensure all members are aware of any new and important documents posted in Google Drive, an alert should be produced, notably when a response or input from NSPG is required.

Action AR to set up alerts for key documents.

Action AR to add MU to WhatsApp group.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday January 16th 2023 at 6pm.

Venue: Clifford House, Beckington.