

**Notes of Meeting of
Lindfield Neighbourhood Plan Joint Working Party
held in King Edward Hall on 13 December 2012 at 20.00hrs.**

Present:

Alan Gomme (Chairman), Andy Spooner (Deputy Chairman) (AS) John Dumbleton (JD), Will Blunden (WB), Ray Jones (RJ) and Ron Plass (RP)
LPC Clerk Christine Irwin (CI) LRPC Clerk Di Morgan (DM)
LPC Deputy Clerk Iain McLean (IM)

Stephanie Cooper (SC), John Jesson (JJ), Gil Kennedy (GK), Colin Tyler (CT), Roy Marshall (RM) Cllr Chris Snowling (CS), Cllr Val Upton (VU), Cllr Michael Aylmore (MA), Cllr Mike Allen (Mal)

- 1. The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone attending.**
- 2. Apologies** were received from Cllrs. Christopher and Margaret Hersey, Paul Thompson and Stuart Kirbell.
- 3. There were no declarations of interest relating to the agenda.**
- 4. The Notes of the meeting of the NP JWP held on 1 November 2012 were confirmed.**
- 5. Tom Warder (TW) of Action in rural Sussex (AirS) gave a presentation on the analysis of the recent questionnaire survey carried out by the NP JWP.** The main points were as follows:

- 533 responses received – 10.8% return
- 98% in favour of a NP and 97.7% in favour of the 2 parishes working together on the NP
- Strong desire to preserve heritage and identity of area – 98%
- 71% highlighted a need for new community facilities – TW pointed out that if development came to the area this could be supported by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- A significant number were in favour of local businesses.
- Under Housing & Development, 92% said that design should be in keeping with existing buildings and there was a preference (87%) for small scale, incremental development using brownfield sites where possible (94%). 60% of responses disagreed with development beyond current boundaries, 61% were in favour of social housing and 94% wanted to maintain strategic gaps. 97% felt that future development should not compromise heritage of the area. TW explained that these views were useful to feed into the final NP and would be used to influence design, nature and scale of development for the future.

In response to questions TW explained that an in-depth analysis had not been done by AirS and recommended that JWP members looked more closely at the responses to the open questions at the end of the questionnaire. These would give more information about residents' views and aspirations for the area, some of which were relevant to the NP and others which were more appropriate to other levels of local government. TW said that this was the first stage and that further work would be required to develop a robust evidence base that would support the NP.

TW then went on to describe the services that AirS could offer the JWP in developing the NP. He explained that AirS is a charity established in 1931. It is a rural community council, part of a national network, championing the needs of rural communities with a wide range of activities including community-led planning. Previously funding was received from local authorities and grants but increasingly its income results from fee-paying services. A paper was presented outlining the key features of the services provided by AirS which included community engagement, completion and

analysis of an information base resulting in a State of the Parish Report. Following this a draft of the NP would be prepared and then finally a Plan submitted. The aim is to present a robust plan, supported by the community and acceptable to the local Authority and in practice this poses a real challenge.

Timescales were discussed, and the view of the meeting was that a draft Plan should be available for the Annual Parish Meetings in April 2013. TW confirmed that this was feasible and also mentioned that the National Planning Policy Framework comes into force from 1 April 2013 and this takes preference for planning purposes unless a NP is in place or emerging. In the meantime applications for development may come in anticipating and pre-empting the NP.

The cost of AirS' services was likely to be in the region of £15k, depending on how much had already been achieved locally. Both PCs had budgeted for expenditure in this area and it was considered that without a NP the Parishes would be subject to large numbers of applications, and so it was owed to future generations to ensure that development was appropriate.

6. General discussion on the analysis.

It was noted that community involvement would be a critical success factor for the Neighbourhood Plan and everyone agreed that efforts must be made to encourage people with talent and expertise to join the group.

Expenditure on the plan had been relatively low so far, and it was considered that the cost of engaging AirS could be covered from existing budgets. Both Councils were proposing that additional sums for Neighbourhood Planning should be included in 2013/14 budgets to cover professional surveys and services in view of the importance of the task.

7. Discussion on progress of the Draft Plan and sustainability appraisal stage. How best can AirS assist?

It was proposed and agreed that negotiations with AirS should go ahead and the Clerks were given authority to negotiate the best price without compromising on quality.

It was agreed that the State of the Parish Report should be produced in time for presentation to residents at the Annual Parish Meetings in April 2013.

8. Volunteers and focus groups

Currently this was a weak area for the JWP in terms of resources and it was hoped that those attending this meeting would be willing to continue, and that additional volunteers could be approached. Initial suggestions for focus groups included affordable homes / rural exception sites / downsizing for senior residents and issues for young parents and families.

9. Feedback from Planning Aid

John Alcock's summary from the exhibition / open days indicated that residents were anti development of green areas. Much of the rural parish is included in the Ashdown Forest planning gap which could have an impact. Planning Aid was viewed as a useful ally and John Alcock's request to be kept informed was helpful.

10. Wates – proposed development – to consider the recent meeting with J Ashton held on 28 November.

Members were reminded to be cautious in expressing views prior to an application being made. MSDC has a contractual obligation to consider an application from Wates in January. Development would be located in LRPC but would have implications for LPC as well. Were the application to be approved it would be important that any monies associated with it be handled carefully.

11. Timetable planning and issues.

It was likely that the revocation of the SE Plan would take place by Easter and this would affect the numbers of housing required for MSDC.

Members were unclear as to when MSDC would be consolidating their housing figures and whether the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan would take precedence. It was agreed that Claire Tester from MSDC should be invited to the next meeting of the JWP to answer this point.

12. Any Other Business

It was agreed that the results of the survey questionnaire should be published on the parish websites, and following circulation to members the minutes of this meeting should be added.

Further action to attract people to the focus groups was agreed as follows:

Will Blunden to identify organisations and groups that could be approached to join.

Andy Spooner to approach the Sustainability Group in Scaynes Hill again to identify potential volunteer(s).

Alan Gomme to approach John Alcock regarding ideas for themes for focus groups

13. Date of next meeting.

24 January 2013 at Scaynes Hill Millennium Village Centre, Lewes Road, Scaynes Hill at 8pm