

**Notes of Meeting of  
Lindfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  
held at the Millennium Centre, Scaynes Hill  
on 24 January 2013 at 8.00 p.m.**

**Present:**

Alan Gomme (Chairman), Andy Spooner (Vice-Chairman) (AS), Will Blunden (WB),  
Simon Hodgson (SH), Ray Jones (RJ), Ron Plass (RP), John Dumbleton (JD),  
LPC Clerk Christine Irwin (CI) LRPC Clerk Di Morgan (DM)  
LPC Deputy Clerk Iain McLean (IM)  
Claire Tester (MSDC)  
Emma Shuttleworth (MSDC)  
Approx. 32 members of the public

**1. Opening:** AG opened the meeting, and welcomed all those present. He then gave a brief statement regarding the journey of the Neighbourhood Plan so far, and what the meeting hoped to achieve this evening.

**2. Apologies:** Martin Higgins (volunteer for one of the Focus Groups).

**3. Declarations of Interest:** None.

**4. Notes of Meeting held on 13 December 2012**

The Notes of the Meeting held on 13 December 2012 were noted and approved.

**5. Presentation by Claire Tester (Head of Economic Promotion & Planning – MSDC)**

CT set the scene against which Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared. She reiterated the importance of the South East Plan (Regional Strategy) being dropped as soon as possible. This Plan had an expectation of over 17,000 houses for the Mid Sussex area. It was hoped that this might be abolished around Easter 2013. She referred to the more realistic numbers anticipated by the draft District Plan of some 10,600 houses. Already, 500 have been built in the last year. 4,000 were expected in Burgess Hill now incorporated in the draft District Plan. She confirmed that 19 Parishes have taken up the challenge of preparing NPs, and she was looking to some 2000 houses being allocated through those plans. It would be very important in the scrutiny and inspection process of the DP to be able to demonstrate how these will be delivered over the 20 years. She confirmed that the full back position had to be that if the Parishes are not able to deliver, then MSDC would have to come up with its own allocations document. It was noted that the current Wates application would have to be decided well before the NP was in place.

A question and answer session followed. These included concern at the Wates application being decided before the NP process was complete. Funding issues – CT confirmed that this was being routed through District Councils. Most will be used up for independent examination and referendum, which the DCs are responsible for. There may be some more front runner funding available to the 8 Parishes who currently have it – LPC and LPRC are not one of them. But watch out for further Government announcements. A question on the differences between the NP and the Village Design Statement was asked. It was noted that the former is a statutory plan, whereas the latter is not.

**6. Presentation by Emma Shuttleworth (Housing Enabling Manager – MSDC)**

Emma reported on the high cost of housing in rural areas. Local people on lower incomes were being priced out of their villages. Much social housing has been lost to the Right to Buy, and there has been

little replacement housing development in the area. It would need to be part of the Neighbourhood Planning process to address the issue of affordable housing. Emma reported on the current schemes available, such as shared ownership, low cost rents, etc. She referred to rural exception sites (where development would not normally be permitted, but which would be allowed to meet local housing needs), where housing priority would be given to local people in perpetuity. She referred to MSDC's policies on affordable housing on all development - being 30% over 15 units (see the draft District Plan). These units can be delivered through Community Land Trusts and the community right to build (part of the Localism Agenda). Her Department worked closely with AiRS, and it may be that a Rural Housing needs survey would need to be undertaken by a Parish, if going down the rural exception sites route. Housing Associations would need to be involved and the Development Managers of various HAs are keen to talk to Parishes about their needs. The Homes and Community Agency is a key partner, especially for funding. The aim is to make rural areas sustainable.

A question and answer session followed. These included the difference between the Right to buy and the Right to Acquire. The latter scheme is much less generous and so not as appealing (there has been a low take up so far). It was noted that the Housing Register included 195 in Lindfield with a local connection and 55 in Lindfield Rural. How can the local connection issue be preserved? ES said that this is done through first lettings and then by reference to the Housing Register. It was noted that generally affordable rents are up to 80% higher now under the new product from central Government.

## **7. Focus Groups**

AG reported that AiRS had suggested 4 Focus Groups. These were to be Housing, Transport & Traffic, Landscape and Environment, and Community. Faustino Bayo (FB) from AiRS would produce draft Terms of Reference for each Group shortly. It was noted that the Village Design Statement should not be ignored and could be a useful source of ideas. AG confirmed the proposed dates for the inaugural meetings of the FGs. It was noted that MSDC is prepared to source a lot of material in order to aid the work of the FGs. It was noted (i) that the FGs would meet at least 3 or 4 times, but that this should be very much left to them to decide (ii) They would report back to meetings of the SG (iii) The Parish Councils would support their work in terms of booking venues, providing paper copies of materials, etc. (iv) as much material as possible would be put on the Council's websites (v) that FB, and one member of the SG would try and attend the first meeting of each Group. Forms for any further volunteers would be made available at the end of the meeting.

The Steering Group unanimously agreed to the above approach.

## **8. Sustainability**

AS referred to the Scaynes Hill Sustainability Group already in existence. The suggestion was that although this would not be a separate FG for the purposes of NP, it would be sensible for membership as far as possible to be spread across the Groups so as to input the various aspects of their work as appropriate. The local view will be very important – hence the need to involve all communities as far as possible. Any previous barriers need to be broken down. There is a need to consider e.g. the use of village events, the Arts Festival, etc. AS will look into what events in LRPC can be tapped into. There would need to be on-going publications in e.g. Lindfield Life. Consider use of websites, such as Community 21 (though AiRS) as being useful tools for community involvement, see also even the Scaynes Hill face book. It will be important to consult specifically (i) local traders (ii) local societies and charities. SG needs to be able to demonstrate their involvement also.

## **9. AiRS Agreement**

Di Morgan updated the meeting on the AiRS's role. The original fee quoted had been £15,200 + VAT. However, the scoping document had now been revised in view of the work that the Parishes had already carried out themselves. The Clerks had previously been authorised to re-negotiate the terms of

engagement. Di went through the various stages of the work that AiRS will now do, and the timetable. The cost had therefore reduced slightly to £14,450 + VAT.

*It was agreed to accept the new terms and to make the appropriate recommendations to each Parish Council accordingly.*

#### **10. Wates – proposed development**

JD outlined the process that will be followed. He referred to the 3 planning applications, and the need for responses to be received by MSDC by 12<sup>th</sup> February. He referred to the public meeting being held at the KEH, Lindfield, on 31<sup>st</sup> January at 8.00 p.m. Flyers would be going out. He mentioned the two special meetings of each Parish Council thereafter in order for the responses to be finalised and agreed. The Council's planning consultant would be attending that meeting, albeit in a listening brief capacity. He urged as many people to attend the meeting as possible.

#### **11. Donation to Planning Aid**

AS gave the background, and confirmed how valuable Planning Aid had been, particularly at the two Exhibitions held in September 2012. AG supported the principle that a donation should be made. Their people are volunteers and in some case travel quite far distances to come to Lindfield.

*It was agreed that Planning Aid should receive a donation of £500 along the lines of the agreed costs split between the two Parishes, and that the appropriate recommendations would be made to each Council accordingly.*

#### **12. Future meetings at Scaynes Hill**

In view of the difficulties (competing events), it was agreed to move these meetings in the future to a Monday evening if possible, though the March one would still be aimed at Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March. Otherwise, this would be towards the end of March 2013.

Action: Clerks

#### **13. Any other business**

There was none.

#### **14 Date of next meeting**

21<sup>st</sup> February 2013 (KEH) at 8.00 p.m.

*Iain McLean*

Iain McLean  
Deputy Parish Clerk  
Lindfield PC

484115

*Di Morgan*

Di Morgan  
Parish Clerk  
Lindfield RPC

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