

SHEPTON MALLET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

STEERING GROUP MEETING

Friday, 6th December, 2013

MINUTES

1. **Present:** Matt Day, John Parham, Jeff Curtis, Gill Kettle, Greta Marsh
Apologies: Anna Blackburn. John welcomed Gill to the Meeting.
2. **Minutes from the last meeting** (1st November) were approved.
3. **Matters Arising:**
 - a) Matt had set up a meeting with Whitstone school. Jeff and Matt then discussed the meeting.
 - b) Prison proposal – No further progress.
- 4) **Steering Group Membership:**
New members approved were Gill Kettle, Richard Varley (residents) and Brian Blinman (resident & business). John also mentioned that Neil Shearn should be coming on the Committee as the second member from the Town Council.
- 5) **Town Council re-commitment to NP & Ctte structure changes**
Town Council had now been restructured – Sub Ctte’s rather than Portfolio Holders. The Town Council voted to re-commit to delivering the NP in Nov with 9 votes for and 3 abstentions.
- 6) **Meeting with English Heritage:**
Matt gave an update on the meeting with English Heritage regarding the Prison, the Anglo and other issues in the Neighbourhood Plan. David Stuart (the main contact) suggested that a policy on the prison should be included in the Plan (as a certain m2 to be for community use). He suggested a separate body should be set up with a variety of skills to carry this forward. Discussion then took place on this point. **Action: Matt**

Greta then advised the SG that the Shepton Mallet Heritage Society (previously known as the Museum Society) was a registered Charity but was not operating as the Museum had had to close due to a lack of amenities. This might prove useful for any management/operating group if a Heritage Centre was set up in the Prison at some point in the future.

Anglo – the consensus was that nothing further was likely to happen until Haskins and Brothers’ Drinks made a decision on the site regards ownership (it may be difficult to develop the site with two owners and their differing needs). Significant funds will be needed to stabilise and convert the main building for offices or live/work units; less so if used for storage. Suggestions were put forward to try and move this project forward – using the side buildings as covered parking could be an answer to the lack of parking on-site. A general policy supporting employment use could be included in the Plan.

7) **Identifying Buildings and Sites:**

Sites identified:

Prison - A possibility – proposal created, Claire Sully forming group to lead on community use aspect of any development

BT Building - Not selling

Amulet - Not interested in non-commercial use

Police Station - might be for sale soon

Registry Office - might be for sale following review by SCC

Discussion took place on the feasibility of these sites and other possibilities were suggested;

Gas works - needs to be looked into (currently owned by DP heating)

Scout Hut / Tennis Court – on edge of town but has lots of space. Would require significant partnership building to deliver a multi-use community hall that benefits all current users of site. Several years ago MDC had commenced initial enquiries as to how West Shepton playing fields can be enhanced as a sport and leisure venue.

8) **Housing:**

Matt advised the Local Plan2 (smaller housing allocations) was to be started after the LP1 inquiry decision, and read a report from Anna Blackburn indicating the shortfall in housing numbers for Shepton in the LP would be delivered by using brownfield sites.

Discussion took place on this - one such site is Commercial Rd & Little Ostry.

9) **Employment:**

Draft LP mentions employment sites will be identified for the fringes of Shepton. Anna has advised that a 'call for sites' would be made by MDC for landowners to put forward land for different forms of development in the New Year and maybe that info could be shared with the NP. There'll definitely be a need for some greenfield land for employment purposes alongside the potential redevelopment of town centre sites.

John mentioned idea is being developed by MDC for an Innovation Centre to be set up in Shepton. This would be a mix of offices, possibly some flexible workspace and business support services.

10) **Workshop:**

14th January – shoppers and business people to attend – currently 26. Matt had a workshop plan. John mentioned the progress which had been made on enhancements to the Town Centre already. Matt and John to encourage more businesses to attend. Discussion took place on what was needed to bring more life into the Town, and details of the workshop. **Action: Matt to send reminders**

11) **Young People's workshop:**

A food and drink budget was discussed and also a budget for prizes. Jeff has produced leaflets, posters and a press release.

Action: Jeff

12) **Town Design Guide/Statement:**

Matt mentioned it was important to include this in the Neighbourhood Plan to improve design quality of new developments in the Town – this was felt to be the best way to address the issues raised by Cowl St & Hillmead residents. John asked everyone to think about what areas should be included.

Action: All Committee Members

13) **Planning Advice:**

Matt had made a start on the actual Plan document and one showing the options that have been explored.

Matt told the SG that his brief was to work on the community consultation stage and coordinate the production of the plan, and he had made it clear at the start that planning expertise would be needed later in the process, esp on writing policies. Matt had been recommended Stuart Todd, a planning consultant based in Taunton who is also an adviser for Locality (who are supporting NP groups with direct support and grants). Stuart has advised Matt on a hourly rate, and will review progress and what needs to be done to get to a draft Plan that will stand up to Examination.

Matt has gained a part-time job which from January 2014 will reduce his time available for Neighbourhood Plan work. He hopes to stay involved in coordination, esp PR and these meetings, but some more time from volunteers would be useful.

He has drafted a list of issues for the Whitstone meeting and also on cycling-related issues. Also contact had been received from Darshill & Bowlish conversation area, the Local History Group.

14) **Any Other Business:** None.

15) **The next meeting** will be on **Friday, 7th February at 5.00pm**, in the Town Council offices.

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