



Minutes of the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Meeting held on 6 September 2011

PRESENT

Members of the Steering Group

Howard Horsley
Bob May
Vivien Bellamy
Liz Thomas
Tish Farrell
Cllr. Lesley Durbin
Cllr. Robert Stuart
Cllr. David Turner
Cllr. Mike Grace
Cllr. Matthew Green

REPRESENTING

Community
Community
Community
Community
Community
Much Wenlock Town Council
Much Wenlock Town Council
Much Wenlock Town Council
Much Wenlock Town Council
Much Wenlock Town Council

IN ATTENDANCE

Sharon Clayton – Town Clerk Much Wenlock Town Council

1) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr. Mike Grace welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that the Steering Group is of the community and not the Town Council, and therefore, although he had been elected as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, there was no expectation that he should be Chairman of the Steering Group. He asked those present to elect a Chairman and, since there was no desire from other members to take on the chairmanship it was unanimously **AGREED** that Cllr. Mike Grace be elected as Chairman of the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

2) APOLOGIES

APOLOGIES

Jake Berriman
Mark Plummer
Adam Barnett

REPRESENTING

Shropshire Council
DCLG
DCLG

3) INTRODUCTIONS

Members of the Steering Group had been chosen by the Neighbourhood Plan Committee at its inaugural meeting. Whilst everyone knew each other they all gave a verbal brief of their expertise, attributes and background which they feel will assist with the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4) GETTING UP TO SPEED

Members had been issued with background information about the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan, its governance structure and the role of the Steering Group.

The Chairman explained that the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Committee has delegated authority to oversee the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and if anyone had any concerns about the Plan they could express their concerns through the Committee as it is a democratically elected body. Members were also informed that the Committee has delegated authority to spend money and has approval to spend up to £5,000 in the current financial year.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee had approved the membership of the Steering Group and the Committee's Terms of Reference had been approved by the Town Council at its meeting on 1 September 2011. The responsibility of the Committee is "To drive forward the development of the Neighbourhood Plan for Much Wenlock and work with Shropshire Council and the DCLG, as the other governmental bodies, to help ensure that the whole community has real opportunities to engage in the creation of the Plan".

Members agreed that Shropshire Council (through Jake Berriman), should be invited to attend Steering Group meetings since it would be beneficial to share knowledge and advice. It was also acknowledged that DCLG officers had expressed an interest in the development of the Plan and had asked to be informed of future meeting dates so that they could attend if possible and report back to the DCLG.

It was **AGREED** that:

- I. Shropshire Council (through Jake Berriman) should be invited to attend future Steering Group meetings.
- II. Cllr. Milner Whiteman, as the Shropshire Councillor for Much Wenlock, should also be invited to attend future meetings.
- III. In the spirit of openness members of the public would be able to attend Steering Group meetings if they wished.

5) COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPARENCY

At a previous meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group a Communication Working Group had been established whose members are Mary Jacobs (volunteer), Bob May (volunteer) Kerry Rogers (Shropshire Council), Cllr. Lesley Durbin and Cllr. David Turner.

Cllr. David Turner informed members about the Working Group's discussions which had centred around the promotion of the Plan, use of a website and other tools, sharing information, engaging key audiences and declarations of interest.

The Group considered how volunteers could be recruited to help with the Plan's development. Media reports had been released and a limited response had resulted. The various methods of communication had been discussed,

such as gateway posters intended to alert those entering and leaving the town, although a negative response had been achieved from Shropshire Council when details of planning permission had been sought.

A 'brand' has been developed ('Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan' in white letters on a red background) designed to be instantly recognisable and connect with the Plan. It was suggested that a shop window could be used to communicate the Plan's development.

The key audience needs to be identified and consideration given on how the hard to reach can be reached.

It was **AGREED** that Shropshire Council should be asked if leaflets with information on the Neighbourhood Plan could be distributed with council tax notices.

Declarations of interest were discussed and how they can be communicated in a positive manner so that people do not get the wrong impression that Steering Group members have their own agenda.

The Working Group had considered the development of a separate, dedicated website with information about the Neighbourhood Plan. Social media could be the best way to communicate with the younger audience and would provide an opportunity to reach people who do not use other communication channels, such as local newspapers and notice boards.

Members agreed that statements should be consistent, and Tish Farrell volunteered to join the Communication Working Group since her expertise as a writer would ensure understandable and interesting reading.

It was **AGREED** that the Working Group should come back with a simple straightforward method of how to communicate with the community.

Members were invited to communicate any further ideas to the Working Group.

6) CONTEXT

The Town and Parish Plan for Much Wenlock, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Shropshire Core Strategy would all play a part in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Members considered how the Design Statement for Much Wenlock would play its part in the Neighbourhood Plan, whether it should be updated, and whether its content is still relevant today. Members were informed that the Town Council's Planning & Environment Committee had agreed that the Design Statement is relevant at present.

It was agreed that the documents which ought to be absorbed into the Plan should be identified. All Local Plans have now been superseded by the Core Strategy although there are areas in the Bridgnorth Local Plan which may still be relevant and could be extracted. The SAMdev defines development land. Boundaries need to be identified so that the baseline of the Plan conforms with the Core Strategy (national policy), and the Plan can become adopted policy. The Plan will not need to conform with the SAMdev since the Neighbourhood Plan will take precedence over this. However, the Neighbourhood Plan must be sufficiently robust to pass a referendum and independent inquiry prior to its adoption as local policy.

There was agreement that the Steering Group needs to achieve its own objectives whilst maintaining a harmonious relationship with Shropshire Council.

It was agreed that a conversation needs to be had with Shropshire Council to discuss housing allocation/numbers and development so that future challenges are identified and a strategy developed to meet those challenges. The Steering Group will need to demonstrate that certain policies do not apply to Much Wenlock if they differ from current Shropshire Council policies.

7) DEVELOPING THE CONTENT OF THE PLAN

It is important to engage all members of the community to consider their interests. There are special interest groups in the town e.g. land owners, who can help with the development of the Plan.

The Chairman said he had spoken to Mark Sackett, who represents Wenlock Estates, and assured him that the development of the Plan would be inclusive and open. The community needs to build its vision and then enter into a dialogue with landowners to see how that vision can be achieved. Mr. Sackett has been asked if he would like to join a group of other landowners so that each is aware of each other's interests.

The scale of development and where it should be are the key questions for consideration and it was **AGREED** that a matrix should to be developed for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. The matrix should identify all land within the parish.

It was **AGREED** that there are pockets of land within the parish whose ownership needs to be identified. Cllr. Mathew Green agreed to develop a matrix that would identify undeveloped land. It was also **AGREED** that any costs associated with land registry searches would be paid for from funds allocated to the Neighbourhood Plan.

There is already information to hand, such as information about flooding, which can be fed into the Plan.

The following themes were identified to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan:

Green environment, including green issues and conservation – Sustainable Wenlock has agreed to deal with this topic [and extended an invitation to Simon Ross to join the next meeting of the NPSG]

Economic development – employment and commercial/business matters – Robert Stuart agreed to consider further

Built environment– the Civic Society will be asked to consider dealing with this topic. *

Housing - Cllr. Lesley Durbin agreed to look at identification of housing need with Howard Horsley and Matthew Green collaboration

Infrastructure – Mike Grace to review

Concern was expressed about what people expected from the Plan. Its development has to be a two way process with the community, noting the difference from the town and parish plan, since it includes a process of controlling and enabling development.

Shropshire Council is looking at updating the Place Plans and has asked for comments by December 2011. However, the deadline for comments is too soon for the Neighbourhood Plan to inform.

8) DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting would take place at 5 p.m. on Monday 19 September 2011 at the Guildhall.