



Our plan – Our future

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

11th June 2012, 5.00pm to 7.00pm, Guildhall

PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Members of the Steering Group

Bob May	Community
Liz Thomas	Community
Cllr. Mike Grace (Chair)	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. Robert Stuart	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. David Turner	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. Milner Whiteman	Much Wenlock Town Council

In Attendance

Mary Jacobs	Community
Simon Ross	Community
Charles Teaney	Community
Rachel Walmsley	Community
Gill Jones	Shropshire Council

Minute Taker

Robert Toft

1. Chairman's Welcome

Mike Grace welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Tim Coleshaw	Community
Cllr. Lesley Durbin	Much Wenlock Town Council
Jake Berriman	Shropshire Council

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

The following amendments were noted to the draft minutes of the meeting of 28th May:

Item 5 (1st Para, Lines 3 & 4): Replace "circulated in St Mary's Lane and she would inform CSC" with "delivered to St Mary's Lane and she would inform CCS";

Item 6 (under “Design and Agree Activity to Develop the Scope and Content of the Plan”, 1st Para, Line 4): Replace “extent” with “extend”;

Item 6 (under “Design and Agree Activity to Develop the Scope and Content of the Plan”, 2nd Para, Line 4): Replace “put and the Place Plan could be” with “put forward and the Place Plan could then be”;

Item 6 (under “Design and Agree Activity to Develop the Scope and Content of the Plan”, 11th Para, Line 1): Replace “going to” with “going too”;

Item 6 (under “Design and Agree Activity to Develop the Scope and Content of the Plan”, 13th Para, Line 4): Replace “work be volunteers” with “work with volunteers”.

Subject to these points, the minutes were **approved**.

5. Progress on Residents and Business Surveys

Business Survey

David Turner noted that invitations and survey questionnaires had been sent to just under 220 business addresses. The survey would be completed on-line with paper completion only in exceptional cases. 12 on-line responses had so far been received. The deadline for receiving responses was 20th June.

Bob May noted that it would not be possible to formulate options for the “Jobs and the local economy” theme until the survey results were available. David Turner said that headline results should be available shortly after 21st June, possibly the following day, but that the transcription of narrative comments would take longer.

Residents’ Survey

Bob May was concerned about the true number of responses since there seemed to be slightly different totals suggested in the initial analysis. Mike Grace noted the need to be confident in the data and to ask Community Council of Shropshire (CCS) about its validity. Mary Jacobs said that CCS had not reported any exceptions such as wholly unanswered questions or more than three responses per household.

Mike Grace asked the meeting to look at the initial analyses and to pick out the headline findings.

(Minute Taker’s Note: The references here are to the questions in the survey and the points noted are not attributed to a speaker except where a discussion ensued.)

Paper Responses - 63% of responses were on paper, 37% online;

A1 – 84% supported allocation of land for affordable housing;

A3 – Substantial preference for small sites with only 9% supporting schemes with over 50 houses;

A5 – Very little support for large scale home building before 2026;

A6 – Fairly even split between siting of new houses within development boundary and outside;

B1 – High support for tourism/leisure/crafts (74%) and retail (58%). Little support for transport/storage/distribution (13%);

B2- Strong support (67%) for allocation of land for employment;

B3 – Existing sites strongly favoured;

B4 – Strong support (77%) for employment land in town;

B6 – Very strong support for encouraging home working (90%);

B7 – 32% likely to seek employment in next five years. After discussion of demographic profile of town and availability of employment, agreed that this was quite high;

B8 – Notable that 74% thought better broadband would encourage new business to locate in the town. Gill Jones agreed to inform the Connecting Shropshire project of this finding;

C1 – Not surprising that 98% favoured future development in keeping with the town’s character;

C2 – Surprisingly low support (42%) for minimum living space standards;

C3 – High support for protection of historical and natural features (86%) and flood prevention (78%);

D1 - Most support for better parking (67%), public toilets (62%), broadband (59%), public transport (58%) and facilities for young people (57%);

D2 – Preferred toilet locations were Gaskell Field (65%) and car parks (63%);

D3 – High support for improved transport services to Telford (79%);

E1 – Substantial support for renewable energy from farm slurry (60%) but little from wind power (19% domestic, 24% commercial);

E2/E3 – Hard to draw conclusions about traffic issues yet but notable that there were 505 responses possibly indicating areas where attention was required;

E6 – Very strong support (86%) for allocating land to encourage local food production;

Section F – Charles Teaney was concerned that the numbers of people not completing this section (324, 45%) seemed high;

F3 – Milner Whiteman thought that although the absolute number of those indicating that there were residents who were unable to obtain their own homes was quite low (34), this was likely to considerably underestimate the true number since many of those in this group might not have completed the questionnaire. Charles Teaney noted the need to take other evidence into account. Gill Jones thought that even 34 represented a substantial number in need;

F4 – Noted that the 63 likely to want a home in the next five years represented a substantial further need.

Mike Grace thought that there was not a major headline which had emerged so far from the survey data and that it would be necessary to check with information from Shropshire Council. He noted that the main messages so far included support for growth if of the right type, particularly employment creation (including home working) and affordable housing; support for small scale housing development in or around the town; using existing or brownfield rather than greenfield sites; strong support for preserving the character of the town and local area, especially its historical character; support for sustainable development, for attention to traffic problems and flood prevention and for producing local food. Rachel Walmsley thought that the level of returns and the high number of comments showed that there was a great deal of interest in the Plan.

Agreed that a summary of findings from the survey results should be communicated to the press and local media at the end of the week and that this would also be available on the website.

ACTION: David Turner to draft press release and media articles and to circulate with comments to be returned to him by 15th June.

Charles Teaney wondered if the proportions of survey responses were similar to the actual demographics of the population. Mike Grace thought that the raw results should be published in some form, albeit “heavily” commented, on the website and be made available to the press. He believed that this would demonstrate transparency and minimise the problem of disputes as to the actual results. Bob May thought that this was acceptable but that the minor anomalies in numbers of responses needed to be resolved first. Gill Jones agreed to check this with Gill Porter at CCS.

Agreed that no circulation of results should be made before the press release but to look further at publishing the raw results and to make them available at the volunteers meeting on 19th June.

Bob May queried when and at what time further results might be available. David Turner thought that CCS did not have sufficient resources to do the further work quickly. Mike Grace wondered if analyses of comments would be provided or whether the text alone would be available. David Turner thought that the literal responses would be provided but was uncertain as to whether there would be an overview.

ACTION: Gill Jones to ask Gill Porter (CCS) about numbers of responses, likely timescales and whether an overview analysis of narrative comments would be provided.

6. Developing the Scope and Content of the Plan and the Themes

Programme for Volunteers Event on 19th June

Mike Grace noted that Mary Jacobs had drafted the invitation for the volunteers' event. Any comments on the draft would need to be sent to Mary quickly. Mary Jacobs noted that Robert Toft had produced a consolidated volunteers list but that not everyone on the list had an email address.

ACTION: Robert Toft to send out invitation to all volunteers, including hard copies to those without email addresses.

It was noted that not all theme leaders would be available on 19th June. Simon Ross agreed to approach Andy Jukes about leading on the "Creating a sustainable environment theme". Mike Grace agreed to cover "Jobs and the local economy" if necessary.

Mike Grace queried what might be needed for the meeting and noted a likely need for photocopying on the 18th and 19th. Mary Jacobs agreed to produce a covering note.

Rob Stuart queried whether there would be a common theme. Simon Ross thought that the meeting should seek to summarise what had been found, making linkages between the findings and exploring any tensions between them. Mary Jacobs emphasised that the meeting should not get involved in objective setting but should focus on thanking volunteers and seeking to maintain their enthusiasm.

Mike Grace thought that the programme should include a welcome and thank you, context setting (in plain language), feedback of results and progress, putting the findings into context, discussing future engagement and picking themes and looking at the next steps and methodology (led by Rachel Walmsley).

Rachel Walmsley wondered whether more information on the themes should be available to enthuse the volunteers. Mike Grace thought that this should be included in the overall narrative.

Robert Stuart stressed the importance of maintaining the enthusiasm of volunteers and not getting too bogged down by details. Charles Teaney noted that communications with volunteers needed to be in clear language. Mike Grace and Bob May noted that whilst volunteers were needed to help with later stages their help was also valuable at the present time to look at the implications of the survey results. Simon Ross noted that it was important to identify those who would be willing to take “an extra half-step” and take forward work on themes.

Agreed that the volunteers meeting would take place on 19th June from 7pm to 9pm and that Steering Group members and theme leads should meet from 6pm.

Agree Actions Needed to Progress Plan

Mary Jacobs noted that the implications of the report on the Dawlish plan should be discussed. Mike Grace thought that this should be done at a later date since Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) input was required.

7. Managing and Recording Evidence and Correspondence

Robert Toft noted that he and David Turner had discussed the recording of evidence and correspondence. They had agreed that the first stages involved the categorisation and indexing of documents and he agreed to produce an outline for consideration by the Steering Group.

8. Membership of the Steering Group

Mike Grace noted that Vivien Bellamy and Howard Horsley had resigned from the Steering Group. He asked whether the Steering Group should include all regular attendees. David Turner noted that not all of these were resident in Much Wenlock. Milner Whiteman thought that representatives from business and landowner interests were needed and noted that the lack of these had been criticised in the report on the Dawlish plan. Bob May thought that the main issue regarding this had been the lack of engagement with these groups.

David Turner noted that anyone was welcome to attend Steering Group meetings. Mike Grace noted the need to distinguish between Steering Group activity and that on formulation of the Plan.

Agreed that all those regularly attending Steering Group meetings and resident in Much Wenlock would become members of the Steering Group and to publish dates of future Steering Group meetings.

All present agreed that they were content to receive information by email.

9. Date of Next Meeting

This was **agreed** to be on 25th June, starting at 5.00 p.m. in the Guildhall. Robert Toft would ask Sharon Clayton if a minute taker was available for this meeting. Milner Whiteman, Charles Teaney and Liz Thomas apologised that they would be unable to attend the meeting.

10. Any Other Business

Charles Teaney advised that the Plan timetable now extended as far as June 2013. **Agreed** to discuss this further at the next meeting.