



Our plan – Our future

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

2nd April 2012, 5.00pm to 7.00pm, Guildhall

PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Members of the Steering Group

Mary Jacobs	Community
Bob May	Community
Cllr. Lesley Durbin	Much Wenlock Town Council
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

Tim Coleshaw	Community
Charles Teaney	Community
Rachel Walmsley	Community

Minute Taker

Robert Toft

1. Chairman's Welcome

Mike Grace welcomed those present to the meeting and extended a special welcome to Rachel Walmsley who was an experienced planner and had volunteered to help with work on the Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Apologies

Vivien Bellamy	Community
Howard Horsley	Community
Simon Ross	Community
Liz Thomas	Community
Jake Berriman	Shropshire Council
Gill Jones	Shropshire Council

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

(Robert Stuart arrived at the meeting)

The following amendments were noted to the draft minutes of the meeting of 19th March:

- Item 2 – Add “Liz Thomas (Community)” to those sending apologies;
- Item 5 – (2nd Para, Line 3): Replace “Shropshire Council” with “Community Council of Shropshire”;
- Item 5 – (3rd Para, Line 1): Replace “by Sara” with “with Sara”;
- Item 5 – (1st Para, Line 1 under F. Housing - identifying needs): Replace “tentative” with “tenuous”;
- Item 5 – (Final Para (Action Point), Line 2): Replace “questionnaire” with “two-page covering note”;
- Item 6 – (Final Para, Line 1): Replace “major use of the plan would be in influencing” with “plan would be used to influence”;
- Item 8 – (1st Para, Line 1): Replace “David Turner” with “The Steering Group”;
- Item 8 – (1st Para, Line 1): Add “of RPS (on behalf on Wenlock Estates)” after “Mark Sackett”;
- Item 8 – (2nd Para) – Replace “David Turner to draft a letter to Mark Sackett to be issued under Mike Grace’s name” with “Mike Grace to write to Mark Sackett”.

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

5. Community Survey

Mary Jacobs said that she had been working on marking up maps of the town, identifying groups of about 30 or 40 houses for each volunteer to cover. Volunteers would be briefed to seek on-line responses if possible but would agree to collect written questionnaires where required or, if requested, agree that the respondent would return the completed questionnaire to the Corn Exchange address.

Mike Grace asked about reimbursing volunteers’ petrol costs. **Agreed** to ask the Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Town Council to approve reimbursement of petrol costs for journeys outside the town boundary only, at the standard local authority rate.

Mary Jacobs thought that about 30 volunteers would be needed for effective coverage and noted that 15 were now signed up and would be given their preferred area as far as possible. She and Steve Cunningham hoped to recruit more before the 16th April and would be organising a volunteers meeting, contacting those were not able to attend by telephone.

Mary noted that the survey reference code would consist of the last part of the postcode and a numerical count. The latter would be checked to see if it fell inside the number range for the volunteer’s group and an issue check (on additional questionnaires for a household) would also be made against the maximum number of returns permitted against individual reference numbers. She noted that Sara Botham had advised not querying maximum numbers after questionnaires had been returned.

Bob May thought that the numerical count should instead consist of a two-letter volunteer code and a sequential number which the volunteer would assign. He thought that the volunteer’s initials should not be used to identify them.

Agreed that the second part of the reference code should be in the format AAnn, where AA would be a code for the volunteer (to be agreed centrally) and nn would be a sequential number assigned by the volunteer.

Bob May noted that some premises in the High Street and Barrow Street were shops and businesses without resident proprietors and thought that guidance would be needed for volunteers covering this area. Milner Whiteman noted that it would also be necessary to take the advice of staff about residents of the Lady Forester Home and Wheatlands. He offered to provide guidance on local issues to volunteers. Mike Grace noted that Councillor Tim Marsh might be able to advise on premises in the High Street.

David Turner noted that the travelling expenses of Mary Jacobs and Steve Cunningham also needed to be re-imbursed. This was **agreed** by the Steering Group.

Mary Jacobs confirmed that the Town Clerk (whose phone number was given as a contact on the questionnaire) had been briefed about the survey. Mike Grace thanked Mary for all the work she had done so far.

Mike Grace raised the issue of data entry and processing of the written returns from the survey. David Turner noted that this would be problematic only if a large number of written returns were received. He thought that it was important that processing should be transparent and that those involved should have no prejudicial interest in the results. Bob May wondered if Shropshire Council or the Community Council would have a list of people able to undertake the task. David Turner agreed to raise this with Sara Botham and Gill Jones. **Agreed** to discuss this further at the next meeting.

ACTION: David Turner to discuss data entry and processing needs and costs for written returns with Sara Botham and Gill Jones and to report back to the Steering Group.

Mike Grace noted that data analysis issues needed to be considered. Bob May thought that the theme teams should be able to look at initial analysis, possibly supported by Sara Botham for "number crunching". Charles Teaney queried what sort of analysis might be possible. Robert Stuart noted that the 10 or 12 free text responses would be those where analysis would be more demanding. David Turner thought that word searches would be possible on these provided that analysis was undertaken on a spreadsheet or similar software.

Lesley Durbin said that she had believed that returns would be analysed professionally but noted that the software to undertake this was not necessarily freely available. Rachel Walmsley noted that using an independent person to analyse the results would be seen as more acceptable.

Agreed that analysis of the results needed to be undertaken professionally but that the costs of this needed to be considered further.

6. Project Programme Review

Rachel Walmsley introduced herself and noted that she had a background in planning and urban design. She had offered to help on work on the Neighbourhood Plan and could produce a draft on issues for the next stages including workshops and discussions and how to work with the results of the survey.

Charles Teaney noted that key dates for distribution, input of data and analysis of responses were now firmer. Robert Stuart queried whether the theme teams should be working on developing the options now. Mary Jacobs thought that evidence was needed to inform option development.

Charles Teaney noted that it was likely that elements of other plans would be used in developing the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Much Wenlock Design Statement and plans of the former Bridgnorth District Council, and that he had intended this when referring to the development of “boilerplate” language.

Mike Grace noted that more clarity on dates should be available later in April when DCLG had released further guidance.

Bob May thought that it was necessary to consider the potential supply of land and how and at what times to involve landholders.

David Turner emphasised the importance of theme teams responding to Charles Teaney’s “traffic light” Health Report emails. It was **agreed** that, as a result of discussions at the meeting, all areas currently had “green” status.

7. Developing the Plan Themes

Creating a sustainable community

Tim Coleshaw said that the theme team was working on options and were continuing to flesh these out. They were now well aware of the relevant policy framework and Simon Ross had written a note on the position against sustainability criteria. Tim noted that the team wanted to know when ideas and papers should be circulated further. Mike Grace thought that early circulation was best.

Housing needs

Lesley Durbin said that the team had completed its work on finding research on surveys, housing bids and housing needs. She thought that they now needed to await the results of the survey although some data was available from previous surveys. Mike Grace queried how exceptions such as single-site developments and affordable housing would be treated. Lesley Durbin said that talks with landlords had suggested that they treated affordable housing as part of general development proposals and as a rule offered two-bedroom houses. It was noted that the weighting of “local connection” in determining housing need was uncertain.

ACTION – Lesley Durbin to finalise and circulate housing data paper which will include the official policy of Shropshire Council on local connection and to what extent a local connection is taken into account.

Improving community services

Robert Stuart said that he had circulated a note of a meeting with the National Trust on the Wenlock quarries. These were likely to be either owned or leased by the Trust. The team had met with Shropshire Council and were trying to find out further information about plans concerning car

parking and toilets. Severn Trent Water had agreed to a meeting with Shropshire Council which would also involve the Environment Agency.

Milner Whiteman **agreed** to circulate a LGA brief on the National Planning Policy Framework.

(Tim Coleshaw left the meeting)

Jobs and the local economy

Bob May noted that the main issue to be faced was the identification of possible land. The problems would lie in meeting identified demand which the market did not currently meet as it did not itself identify the demand. The team would be meeting with the Chamber of Trade to discuss what could be done to promote Much Wenlock and the proposed business survey. The team had also had meetings with colleagues in Shropshire Council. It was proposed to use Survey Monkey or similar software to conduct the business survey on the assumption that all responses would be received online.

Mary Jacobs said that the Mary Portas review of high streets had called for greater inclusion of high streets into neighbourhood plans. She queried whether there were existing models of this which could be built on.

Bob May noted that Shropshire Council would actually be implementing this part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Mike Grace thought that implementation would be a challenge to Shropshire Council and an indicator of their commitment to the plan.

Protecting our local environment

Charles Teaney had received a report from Vivien Bellamy in which she noted that research had been undertaken on all the relevant documents. She noted that her time was somewhat limited at present.

Mary Jacobs noted that some further volunteers might be available to work on theme development. Robert Stuart thought it might be worthwhile inviting people to join focus groups. Mary thought that when thanking survey volunteers (at the end of May) they could then be invited to take part in further work.

8. Media and Communications

The Press Release on the launch of the survey was **agreed**. David Turner noted that he would be calling on volunteers for a meeting with the press, possibly on 16th April. He appealed for text for forthcoming articles in What's What and the Wenlock Herald. Mary Jacobs and Robert Stuart offered to contribute.

Mike Grace offered help with fixing outdoor flyers regarding the survey.

David Turner noted that he would like to acquire a photo of a survey volunteer talking to a resident. He also appealed to those with Internet Explorer to check the appearance of the website on their browser.

Mike Grace noted that he had written an article which had appeared in the RTPI West Midlands magazine and circulated some copies to the meeting.

ACTION: Robert Toft to circulate an electronic copy of Mike's article with the minutes.

9. Outstanding Actions

Milner Whiteman noted that he had contacted Revd. Stephen Lowe at Holy Trinity Church concerning including notice of the survey in parish notices.

ACTION: Robert Toft to remind Liz Thomas of the action from the minutes of the 19th March regarding notes from the Primary School meeting.

10. Budgets

David Turner noted that funding would be necessary to enable software for the business survey to be conducted online.

ACTION: To ask the Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Town Council to allocate up to £300 to facilitate conducting the business survey and other surveys online.

Mary Jacobs noted that the production of large-scale maps involved a cost. **Agreed** to spend up to £100 on producing large-scale maps for the Neighbourhood Plan

12. Date of Next Meeting

This was **agreed** to be 16th April, starting at 5.00 p.m. in the Guildhall.