



Our plan – Our future

Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

30th April 2012, 5.00pm to 7.00pm, Guildhall

PRESENT

REPRESENTING

Members of the Steering Group

Vivien Bellamy	Community
Howard Horsley	Community
Mary Jacobs	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

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.

2. Apologies

Bob May	Community
Liz Thomas	Community
Cllr. Matthew Green	Much Wenlock Town Council
Cllr. Milner Whiteman	Much Wenlock Town Council

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest. Mike Grace and David Turner noted they had been approached by an agent concerning a prospective retailer. **Agreed** that it would be necessary to consider how to deal with such approaches at a later date.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

The following amendments were noted to the draft minutes of the meeting of 16th April:

Item 6 (6th Para, Line 2 under "Next Steps for Development of Plan"): Replace "landholders" with "landowners";

Item 7 (2nd Para, Lines 1 & 2 under "Creating a sustainable community"): Replace "making new documents more apparent on the website, possibly by a flashing 'New' sign" with "how to make new documents more apparent on the website";

Item 9 (1st Para, Line 2): Replace "67" with "167";

Item 9 (1st Para, Line 3): Replace "three" with "nearly four";

Item 9 (4th Para, Line 1): Replace "W? Town Council" with "Winchcombe Town Council".

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

David Turner asked for views on whether the minutes should be shorter. **Agreed** that, since the minutes were in the public domain, it was useful for them to reflect the discussions which had taken place at meetings.

5. Residents Survey

Survey Progress

Mike Grace congratulated Mary Jacobs, Steve Cunningham and others for their work in recruiting volunteers and organising the survey distribution. Mary Jacobs said that about two-thirds of survey questionnaires had been distributed quickly and that email and Facebook requests had brought in other volunteers, although some forms had been distributed only on Saturday 28th April. She congratulated all volunteers, particularly considering the very wet weather, and recommended allowing at least a further week for responses to be received. She noted that there had been a generally favourable response to the request to complete responses online.

David Turner noted that 217 online responses had been received by 4pm on 30th April. David, Howard Horsley and Mike Grace noted a few calls and emails reporting non-delivery of forms in some areas which it was agreed to explore further outside the meeting.

Howard Horsley agreed that leeway of at least a week in the response deadline was desirable. Charles Teaney noted that 15th May had previously been suggested as a final date. Mike Grace observed that the effective deadline was when analysis of the responses began. The Town Clerk would be asked to store survey forms and volunteer data sheets on

a daily basis. Volunteers should not be asked to go out again except where they had agreed to collect forms.

Howard Horsley asked whether anything would be done if it was found that some areas had few survey responses. He noted that it was not currently possible to check from which areas questionnaires had been received (as had been possible with the Town and Country Plan). David Turner noted that some people had not been interested in the survey and a few actively hostile. Rachel Walmsley observed that an equalities impact statement would need to show that attempts had been made to reach all groups. Mary Jacobs noted that if particular areas showed a shortfall then greater efforts could be made in involving them in later consultation.

There was some debate over whether it was possible to check and record where paper returns were coming from without compromising anonymity. **Agreed** that it would be valuable to reconcile numbers on volunteer sheets with forms returned.

ACTION: Mary Jacobs to let all volunteers know that the deadline for forms return had been extended until 7th May.

ACTION: David Turner to amend website information to inform respondents and visitors that the deadline was now 7th May.

Robert Stuart noted that other areas would be interested in the Much Wenlock experience with the survey and that it would be valuable to show that it had been well-organised.

Survey Data Assembly, Analysis and Communication of Results

Mike Grace said that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Town Council had agreed a single-tender procurement of data input of paper forms with the Community Council of Shropshire (CCS), on the basis of a cost per form of £2 to £2.50. Up to £3,000 in total had been authorised for this. David Turner had agreed that Gill Porter (CCS) would write the brief and the Town Clerk would then commit the expenditure.

Mike Grace noted that the paper forms needed to be sorted into meaningful batches before sending to CCS.

ACTION: Howard Horsley, Robert Stuart & Lesley Durbin to look at paper returns received by 2nd May, 4th May and 8th May respectively and to sort and batch by volunteer route.

ACTION: Mary Jacobs to look at position on forms after 8th May and discuss delivery of forms to SCC with Steve Cunningham.

David Turner noted that it had been agreed that information on the progress of the survey would be published. **Agreed** that information on numbers of returns only would be made available in the May press release.

6. Developing the Plan

Next Steps for Development of Plan

(Tim Coleshaw arrived at the meeting)

Rachel Walmsley outlined her revised method and methodology chart for the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. She noted that activities in stages A (Launch) and B (Gather Evidence) had been completed, apart from the business survey. At stage C (Identify Issues, Objectives and Develop a Vision) it was proposed to involve the community again and to develop and gain support for a "mission statement". Stage D (Develop and Agree Options) was concerned with how wishes and opinions could be implemented and the proposed workshop might be a drop-in event, possibly spread over more than one day. She noted that the community event and two workshops were key events and that they needed to strike a balance between attractiveness and depth.

David Turner noted that not all stakeholders, particularly landowners, would be willing to disclose their commercial interest and that some would engage professional advisers. He thought that it would not be possible to get all interested parties to attend.

Howard Horsley noted that the discussions organised around the Much Wenlock Place Plan had not been done well and thought it was important to make public events interesting.

Mike Grace wondered if the first workshop (item 15) should be limited in scope. He thought it also important to consider how to bring in those with specialist interests.

Rachel Walmsley queried whether there should be a day for landowners and possibly for other groups. Howard Horsley was concerned that there was a risk of alienating landowners and that perhaps they should be surveyed and he had drafted some questions. He thought that they should at least be kept closely informed since otherwise there was a danger that they would not participate in implementation.

David Turner and Robert Stuart noted that some results would need to be known first and Mike Grace agreed that landowners needed some context. He thought that an important issue was what and how to communicate.

(Howard Horsley left the meeting)

Robert Stuart noted that having money and costings attached would help to shape options. He assumed that costs would be available in order to inform particularly difficult decisions. Lesley Durbin suggested leaving out the community event (item 16) and having a series of workshops (under item 18), at which costings could be given and to one of which landowners would be invited. Mike Grace noted that information on the economics of development would be revealing.

Charles Teaney and Robert Stuart emphasised that the management and communication of expectations was important. David Turner noted that a particular challenge was not to lose the interest of those whose priorities had not been highlighted as important. Robert Stuart noted that the allocation of land and providing funding for it were different since, for example, land for a car park could be allocated without it being built.

Rachel Walmsley was concerned that there should be an opportunity for the community to respond if the community event was dropped. Robert Stuart suggested inviting those with a specialist interest to workshops. Mike Grace thought that the first workshop should concentrate on vision and the outputs of this should be communicated and discussed with specialist interest groups in the second set of workshops (item 18).

Robert Stuart noted the need to learn from areas holding earlier referenda when organising the referendum on the plan. Mike Grace thought that the way in which the referendum question(s) were put to voters would be important.

Agreed that:

- i) Item 16 should not be an event but should be relabelled as “communication” and effectively merged with item 17 (Adopt vision and objectives);
- ii) item 18 should be broadened to include several workshops bringing specialist interest groups into consultation;
- iii) The method and methodology chart should be agreed subject to these changes.

ACTION: Rachel Walmsley, Mary Jacobs and Mike Grace to agree the revised text and to circulate to the Steering Group.

Mike Grace noted that the revised documents should be communicated to demonstrate that the Steering Group had a clear programme. He and other members of the Group commended Rachel Walmsley for her hard work and its high quality.

Actions for Implementing Next Steps

Mike Grace noted that first results from the residents’ survey should be available in 2-3 weeks. David Turner said that he and Bob May would be meeting tomorrow to discuss the content of the business survey, following input from the Chamber of Trade. They would circulate the proposed questionnaire to Group members for discussion at the next meeting.

Mike Grace proposed that the vision workshop should take place in mid-June. He noted that there might be some funding for facilitation from the Locality network but, if not, this should be discussed further at the next meeting. Rachel Walmsley and David Turner thought it important to have an external observer/facilitator.

ACTION: To ask the Neighbourhood Plan Committee of the Town Council to commit funding of £500 for a facilitator.

7. Progressing the Themes

Mike Grace noted that each theme group needed to produce a document by mid-June which would include the work which had been undertaken already and the outcomes of this. Jake Berriman and Gill Jones would need to be consulted as part of this work.

Creating a sustainable community

Tim Coleshaw said that the next steps were dependent on working with the results from the residents' survey.

Jobs and the local economy

David Turner noted that Bob May had sent out a position paper on which comments were welcome.

Protecting our local environment

Vivien Bellamy noted that the amber on the "health report" arose since she would welcome support with this theme. Tim Coleshaw offered some help on this. Vivien said that she had looked at further documents including the Conservation Area proposal.

Housing needs

Lesley Durbin said that further progress on this theme was also dependent on working with survey results.

Improving community services

Robert Stuart said that it would be valuable to find someone who would be able to undertake analysis of the car parking data collected.

8. Project Programme Review

Charles Teaney noted that he had sent a copy of the project plan, including statutory consultation periods, to Jake Berriman and was awaiting a response. He noted that progress against the plan was acceptable.

ACTION: Mike Grace to speak to Jake Berriman about the project plan.

9. Media and Communications

David Turner noted the considerable increase in unique visitors to the site in the last fortnight (up from 202 to 467), of which 55% were new visitors, which he thought to be due

to the activity on the Residents' Survey. He thought that the message had been well communicated and had been further highlighted through Mike Grace's radio broadcast and a survey-related article in the Bridgnorth journal.

10. Outstanding Actions

David Turner had drafted a letter of appreciation to Sara Botham and had sent this to the Town Clerk for signature by the Mayor.

11. Budgets

There were no requests for further items of expenditure other than that for a facilitator (see under item 6 above).

12. Date of Next Meeting

This was **agreed** to be 14th May, starting at 5.00 p.m. in the Guildhall.