

SPC Standon Parish Council

Clerk of the Council – Ms. Belinda Irons
14 Crawley End, Chrishall, Herts, SG8 8QL
Tel: 01763 838732

Minutes of the Meeting of Standon Parish Neighbourhood Development Steering Group

Held on Tuesday 10th February 2015 at 7.45pm at Standon & Puckeridge Community Centre, Station Road, Puckeridge,

PRESENT: Steering Group Members:

Jonathan Law (Chairman), John Riris, Jacqueline Veater, Claudia Chalkley, Maureen Wren, Warren Pickering, Brenda Howard, Neil Johannessen, Jennifer Heaven.

Standon PC: Cllr Graham Cowell, Cllr Dick Rainbird MBE

Belinda Irons, clerk

Public: 4

15.13 Apologies Colin Jenkins, Niall Megaw, Kala Thomas, Jan Cunningham, Mike Gill

Planning Consultant: Mr Jed Griffiths: Griffiths Environmental Planning

15.14 Minutes of the meeting held on 20.01.15

It was noted that Alan Cooper was appointed to the Food Group but was not present at the meeting. Subject to verification of this point, the minutes were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

15.15 Declaration of Members' Interests (disclosable pecuniary interest/another pecuniary interest/a non-pecuniary interest) None.

15.16 New steering group members – consider any requests to join Steering Group

Ms Sam Wells was in attendance with an interest in volunteering but was unsure whether to join the Steering Group. It was suggested that she observe tonight's meeting and consider whether she wanted to join.

Ms Jennifer Heaven, a Colliers End resident, stood for appointment to the Steering Group.

PROPOSAL: *That Jennifer Heaven be appointed to the Standon Parish Neighbourhood Development Group with immediate effect.* PROPOSED: Jonathan Law, seconded Graham Cowell. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

15.17 Comments from non-committee members attending (limited to three minutes)

None received.

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15.18 Constitution – Agreed by SPC

15.19 Statement from Chair – project review and discussion

The enthusiasm and the ideas that have flowed since the last meeting have been fantastic, but if that enthusiasm is not effectively harnessed, we are going to fall flat on our face. It falls to me to do that harnessing, but I cannot do that without your help.

We have a number of strengths, and we have weakness, and I feel that it is important to recognise them.

Strengths

- *We are strong in number (although there are significantly fewer people present tonight than before);*
- *We are passionate about our community;*
- *We have lots of ideas, which are all valuable;*
- *We are diverse and have a mix of skills;*
- *We have contacts and networks within and beyond our community;*

Weaknesses

- *Communication - because we are strong in number, communication between meetings is difficult;*
- *We all prefer to communicate in different ways;*
- *For the majority, the Steering Group is not their primary commitment – we all work at a different pace;*
- *People want their views heard;*
- *We have different approaches;*
- *You have a chair who has limitations;*

I simply do not have the time to be managing the process at the pace it is presently going at. Despite spending hours preparing for this meeting, I have this afternoon still received a comment that insufficient information has been provided and this is disheartening. I can do more than I already am.

To achieve our objectives, I must ask the following from you:

- *I cannot do everything – this is not Jonathan’s plan, this is a Neighbourhood Plan and you are the Neighbourhood. Team leaders and Topic Chairs need to take ownership of tasks and*

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responsibilities and deliver what they are asked to with specific tasks assigned by them to others in their teams;

- *Help me to find an effective way of communicating between meetings;*
- *All hands to the pumps from here on in – we have a lot of work to do. We are about to hit the button and begin talking to the community;*
- *We shall all work collusively, with respect and consideration for our diverse backgrounds;*
- *We all need to recognise our limitations as a group, especially on our time, and be realistic about what we take on;*
- *Concerns and ideas need to be debated in open forum, and once something is decided upon it will not be revisited lightly;*
- *I want to apply the Goldilocks principle to our use of procedure. Not too much, not too little. Just right. We are formulating a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which will be a legal document and will be scrutinised by an independent examiner and could also be challenged by landowners and developers. It is important that due process is followed, and there are criteria, procedures and formalities that must be complied with. But, this is also a community project and the process should not become bogged down by unnecessary and excessive dogma. Standon Parish Council took the decision to delegate the Neighbourhood Plan to members of the community, and the purpose of doing so will be undermined if there is expectation for its members to become quasi-councillors.*
- *Team leaders and the Topic Group chairs shall have the autonomy to run their groups as formally or informally as they like, BUT, they shall be accountable to the Steering Group and they shall be expected to deliver what they have been tasked without deviation.*

Moving forward, I need people to be taking ownership for tasks, and envisage that different group leaders will need to manage their responsibilities and teams (where applicable), and feed in to the Management Team who will spread the load. Unfortunately attendance is low, and not much of the Management Team are here to discuss this further.

Jonathan Law ‘walked’ through the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and highlighted the fact that “pre-submission” consultation is a legal requirement for the draft neighbourhood plan itself, (not earlier steps) and that it is necessary to show details of who was consulted, the main issues and concerns raised, and how these concerns were considered and addressed in the neighbourhood plan. Whilst theoretically you could simply draft the

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plan without any consultation, it is not suggested that we do that it would also make pre-submission consultation much harder if the views of the community had not been obtained at an earlier stage. A chart of relevant milestones was set out, indicating various points where a detailed questionnaire could be used.

It was suggested that a policy team could help manage the development of policy and support topic leaders. There was no interest in this role from the Steering Group members present, and it was suggested that this could be something that Jed manages.

Warren Pickering commented there was a sense of ‘rush’, and it was not clear why. It would be useful to understand the timescales for the various stages.

Neil Johannessen comment that EHDC has taken two years and isn’t close to finalising their District Plan – we must not rush but do it correctly and ensure the finished document is fully compliant with the NPPF and the EHDC District Plan.

Dick Rainbird commented that, having attended many training sessions, it is clear that it may take up to 3 years to produce the Neighbourhood Plan, but more likely to be completed in two years. There are many difficulties which will need to be addressed, and nothing should be rushed.

Jonathan Law responded that the time scales are unknown at present, and it will be a ‘step by step’ approach to completion. The most important element is achieving a ‘community vision’ which will guide the Neighbourhood Plan. The ‘rushed’ element has been brought about by the tight PS News deadline and the desire to take advantage of the PS News to advertise an open day.

15.20 **Proposal: Amendment of para 2 of the constitution to rename from “Standon Parish Neighbourhood Plan” to “Standon Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan” (this enables the use of the domain <http://www.spndp.org>).** PROPOSED: Jonathan Law, seconded Warren Pickering. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY. NOTE: 13 members of the Steering Group were present which enabled this resolution to agreed.

15.21 Jonathan Law explained that he wanted to hold a further debate over the approach, following analysis by the CSG of the logistics of a questionnaire.

Neil Johannessen presented a balanced overview of the two alternative approaches to initial consultation. The circulation of a questionnaire by post prior to a meeting, or alternatively, hold an open day without a questionnaire and use that event to inform the questionnaire

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Report from CSG – task response to communications strategy; article for PS News; the questionnaire to accompany mailshots; and leaflet for distribution with invitation to open day (NOTE: time/resource constraints mean CSG document pack to follow agenda, for consideration at the meeting).

John Riris, Jonathan Law and Warren Pickering provided a very good update on the works to date. Discussion has centred on achieving a Royal Mail delivery, including a brief questionnaire with the flyer advertising the open day event, using a mailing establishment to take the burden off the Steering Group, agreeing the format of the flyer, the date of the open day, and the most effect use of volunteer time. Several options were outlined (see below), with pros and cons to all.

- (i) Send a short questionnaire to each household with a flyer advertising the open day. Have a stall at May Day to advertise the open day.
- (ii) Produce the flyer to go into PS News for delivery to each household in the parish, produce posters for the notice boards and other outlets, have a stall at May Day prior to the open day event. Use the open day event to formulate a vision, and produce a questionnaire from the open day event.

Colin Jenkins has commented by email, that he does not understand the issue – there is no need to produce a lengthy questionnaire just a short one. There is no need for hesitation, as a mail shot should be utilised to best effect. He has further commented there may be ‘challenges’ from the community and land owners should they fail to receive a communication and are not apprised of the open day event. Mike Gill has emailed to say that he prefers a questionnaire followed by a meeting.

Jonathan Law made has produced a detailed project plan for the three eventualities and these further observations:

- (a) Royal Mail: if the Steering Group decides to proceed with this approach the group shall need to commence work immediately, starting tomorrow. The questionnaire (of which there are various completed versions ready for approval) would need to be finalised to go to print immediately. Volunteers need to be co-ordinated to photocopy documents, stuff envelopes, and ensure the filled envelopes reach Royal Mail to take account of the five weeks lead time and a response period. It will be pressured, and someone needs to be prepared to do that work as he will not and cannot do it all himself. The group needs to keep this in mind when deciding the approach, and must be prepared to pitch in.
- (b) Mailing House: two week delivery – printing, envelopes filled, and delivered. This route is more expensive but free everybody up to concentrate on Topics and preparation for open day, and means that there will be less rush to agree on which of the various draft questionnaires to use.

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(c) No questionnaire before the meeting: this enables ‘open minds’ to put their views on each topic to the group, and means that resources will not be required to process questionnaires prior to the meeting. The questionnaire will then be formed from these comments.

Colin Jenkins has commented by email, that he recommends a short questionnaire be included in the mailshot. ***What do you value and wish to preserve within our Parish***
What do you deplore, and wish to prevent within our Parish

A copy of the suggested wording was available for all members present.

Maureen Wren commented people will not respond if they are asked open questions – a ‘tick box’ approach would obtain more results and this would need more information than is currently available to achieve.

Warren Pickering commented a web site needs to be developed quickly, as it will be advertised in PS News.

Graham Cowell commented a light touch was needed at the beginning of the process to enable full consideration of all options to be made, with momentum building going forward.

John Riris advised that the draft flyers, and PS News advertisement have all been drafted ready for agreement. Proofs of the flyers, which have been professionally designed by Warren Pickering’s company, were distributed to the members present.

Neil Johannessen has negotiated for 3,000 flyers to be inserted in the PS News at no additional charge, and also for a free print advertisement (space permitting). He pointed out that John Harris offered this without much persuasion as he was keen to support a community initiative.

The proposal is to distribute flyers in PS News which will be delivered to each house hold in the parish and beyond.

Dick Rainbird commented that the flyer clearly had to be clearly produced by local people. We must be consistent in our message. There are many outlets which would be willing to assist to disseminate information.

PROPOSAL: *That Standon Parish Neighbourhood Development Group herewith agrees that a flyer will be printed and distributed via ‘PS News’ to each household in the parish’.*
PROPOSED: Jonathan Law, seconded Warren Pickering. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

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PROPOSAL: That Standon Parish Neighbourhood Development Group proceed to a public meeting without a questionnaire going to each household. PROPOSED: Jonathan Law, seconded Jacqueline Veater. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

PROPOSAL: That Standon Parish Neighbourhood Development Group agrees to a mailshot to each household using Royal Mail, prior to the open day event to ensure all households are made aware. PROPOSAL: Jonathan Law, no seconder. NOT CARRIED

15.22 Discussion about questionnaire and format and date of public meeting and any proposals then arising

Discussion about timing - the decided approach means a far earlier date is very achievable. But, May Day could be used to generate interest in the event. A meeting in April will be immediately before the general election, and people may be at saturation point prior to an election. Additional time to prepare will not be a bad thing.

15.23 **Proposal: Agree date for public meeting – either 18 April 2015 or 16 May 2015**

PROPOSAL: That SPNDP agree the open day will be held on 16th May in the Williams-Davis room in the Puckeridge Community Centre from 10am to 4pm. PROPOSED: Warren Pickering, seconded Claudia Chalkley. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

15.24 **Proposal: Agree article for PS News for submission by e-mail immediately following the Steering Group meeting to meet copy date of 10/02/15 (publication are aware)**

Drafting by committee is very difficult. Jonathan Law produced two versions prior to the meeting, and then made a third version available at the meeting taking into account e-mail comments received from Mike Gill and Colin Jenkins. Description of the parish is difficult, and the wording as drafted had been carefully considered. Jacqueline Veater suggested that the paragraph that states that the NDP cannot be used to prevent development should be removed, and this was agreed

PROPOSAL: That SPNDP agree the article (as amended at the meeting) for PS News for submission by email immediately following this Steering Group meeting to meet copy date of 10/02/15. PROPOSED: Jonathan Law, seconded Graham Cowell. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

15.25 Training opportunities

EHDC: 12th March: 2 places are available: Dick Rainbird and Jonathan Law shall be attending.

An open course is being run by Locality Bury St Edmunds: 9th March

15.26 Finance

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a) budget: £12,000 from April 2015.

b) grant funding

c) STANDON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT STEERING GROUP HEREWITH
RESOLVE THAT:

(i) The indicative budget prepared by the Treasurer and headed "Indicative budget/expected expenditure to public meeting (March/May?)", which was reviewed at the meeting held on 20th January, be hereby approved,

(ii) All requests for finance for the Group's activities from the SPC shall be channelled through the Treasurer

(iii) The Treasurer should from time to time request from the Parish Clerk such information as may be required to establish and then maintain appropriate ongoing accounts for the SG

(iv) The Treasurer should henceforth table at each meeting of the SG, a reasonably up-to-date summary of the Group's financial position and seek as soon as practicable to replace this by a proper report against established budget

PROPOSAL: That SPNDP hereby approve expenditure utilising the delegated budget provided by Standon Parish Council by adopting the draft resolution prepared by Colin Jenkins on 10 February amended to read as follows:

The table of proposed and anticipated expenditure headed "CSG budget submission v.2" is before the meeting be hereby approved as amended by this resolution as follows: - the cost of printing flyers be amended to £243, the cost of website construction/design be varied from £1,000 to £1,300; and an additional sum of £15 per month web hosting (£180 per annum) also be included PROVIDED that any increase in any of the figures shall be limited to (5)% of that figure, AND THAT copy invoices, acceptable for audit purposes, for each expense item shall be provided to the SPC and the Treasurer as soon as possible and in any event before the next meeting, and shall be tabled at that meeting.

PROPOSED: Jonathan Law, seconded Graham Cowell. AGREED AND RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

Jonathan Law thanked those Steering Group members that had prepared a preliminary report, but time did not permit these to be discussed, and he apologised for this.

The Chairman expressed concern that there is a need to engage the community to join the topic groups and that web content needs to be developed immediately. It was agreed that Jonathan Law shall, prior to submission tonight, draft and add an additional paragraph to the PS News article to invite volunteers to join the topic group. CSG will work to develop website asap and engagement format for the open day.

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Graham Cowell commented that if there are any issues arising from the actions or decisions of any members of the Steering Group, those issues must be brought before the steering group for resolution.

The Chairman drew the meeting to a close at 10.15pm. The following items will be on the next agenda for discussion

15:27 Appointments:

- a) review of current appointments;
- b) consider whether it is necessary/appropriate to convene a Volunteer Sub-Group to co-ordinate volunteers for various tasks and to establish and maintain a dialogue with (non-policy) volunteers. Confirm chair and appoint members;
- c) consider whether it is necessary/appropriate to convene a Policy Sub-Group to co-ordinate, support and train Topic Groups in the research and development of policy; to develop policy training in advance of public meeting; and to co-ordinate the use of professional advisers. If so, appoint chair and members.

15.28 Preliminary reports - Each Topic Leader to share summary of preliminary report with group (guide length three minutes each topic).

15.29 Moving forward

- a) allocation of tasks prior to next meeting;
- b) social evening for Steering Group members(?);
- c) discussion

15.30 Dates of next meetings