

# Wells Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

## Minutes

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Present:**

Roger Arguile (RA-Chair), Cheryl Curtis (CC), Lindsay Dew (LD), John Edwards (JE), David Fennell (DF), Emma Harrison (EH), Greg Hewitt (GH), Nichola Holmes (NH), Rachel Leggett (RL), Peter Rainsford (PR)

**1. Apologies:** none received.

**2. Minutes of last meeting, 18.2.21**

Accepted as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

**3. Introduction of Minutes Secretary**

Nichola Holmes was introduced as Minutes Secretary, initially for 6 months.

It was agreed that in future, the Agenda and Minutes for each WNPWP meeting should appear on the Wells Town Council website under the Meetings heading.

**4. Draft Data Profile – Emma Harrison**

Emma introduced the draft Data Profile for Wells, thanking the working party for their comments and suggested amendments so far, which she is incorporating into the document. RA has shared the draft with Holkham, for comment. The finalised Data Profile will be vital for creating our Neighbourhood Plan (NP) policies in the context of the new NNDC Local Plan now emerging, and to comply with national planning policy.

Ian Withington at NNDC is happy that the draft Profile covers all necessary topics and he will provide EH with some further info on housing which she can add.

JE said that NNDC has just adopted two documents as part of the work on its emerging Local Plan: the Landscape Character Assessment and the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment. Wells is covered in three subsections. EH will add relevant detail to the Profile's Environment chapter.

JE stated that the stats in the Housing Needs Assessment had not been crosschecked with the draft Policy.

EH will finalise the Data Policy within the next 2 weeks and send to the WNPWP. It can then be shared with anyone. It will be a background document, standing alone as an Appendix to the NP.

DF led the thanks for EH's quick and well presented work. EH left the meeting.

**5. Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) – Roger Arguile**

RA asked RL about releasing the finalised HNA to a wider audience.

RL stated that the report, which will be used for forming policies in the NP, should be in the public domain. Discussion followed regarding how best to use the data whilst preserving confidentiality and avoiding misinterpretation. The results came from a varied group of respondents but further surveying of local employers will be necessary.

## **6. Stakeholder Consultation – Cheryl Curtis**

CC is working through her list of some 56 local stakeholders, mostly Wells based voluntary groups, with the assistance of RA. She has encountered some difficulty in gaining data from people who have a personal opinion but are quite understandably reluctant to express this as a collective response of the stakeholder group to which they are affiliated.

RL advised that this consultation is being done to better understand the wide range of local opinion and broad issues so that both group and individual responses are welcome and valid and all can be used, whichever is offered. Please send her all the detailed notes.

RA said that owing to the current social restrictions, the greater number of conversations is beneficial in providing more information than comments made at one public meeting.

The question was raised as to the possible value and format of further written opinion surveys. RL will forward the Harleston survey currently in use, as an example.

CC began to detail stakeholders still to be contacted by the WNPWG. Discussion followed on the best way of approaching several, then it was agreed that CC will list them all and ask more of the WNPWG to help with contacting as it is a big task which needs completing asap.

## **7. Business Survey – Rachel Leggett**

RL showed her draft three question business survey which she proposes to send online directly to each identified local business. She requested help from the WNPWP for contact details.

PR agreed that shorter is better but asked for a fourth question to be added, on the economic impact of tourism specific to each business. He suggested a “scale of 1 to 10” format on the benefit of tourist trade and of resident trade.

RL will word it for WNPWP approval.

RL also to provide finalised survey within an email which the WNPWP can forward to any other local businesses not included in her contact list, in order to maximise coverage and response rate.

## **8. Grant application/invoicing- Rachel Leggett/Greg Hewitt**

RL said that another grant application to LOCALITY is needed for the 2021/22 financial year’s funding but they are not open for new submissions yet.

Is there likely to be a WNPWP funding gap during April/May this year?

GH stated that £2.9K is still available to use before the end of March and thereafter WTC has agreed to meet any costs until the next year’s LOCALITY funding is received.

PR said that timing would be critical to avoid unnecessary spend and the new application must be carefully worded to benefit from the funding. He offered to help GH, as before.

RL repeated that a total of £18K for development of our NP can be applied for and the professional design work attracts extra money via AECOM as Tech funding.

Although any LOCALITY money not used in each financial year must be returned, it is possible to reapply for those funds.

GH continues to manage the budget to streamline spending and RL will detail proposals of 2021/22 expenditure for the new application.

### **9. Design Code Process – Rachel Leggett**

The Design Code process enables the NP to express what sort of development the local community wants and in response to the government's planning white paper, how to achieve the development design aims for our parish in line with national planning policy. GH and RL have done the application for AECOM support and have a "diagnostic meeting" with them via Zoom on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March at 10am, to which all WNPWP are invited. RL will send link.

A design team will then do a virtual workshop using Google Streetview to walk around the whole area looking at specific sites and buildings. This will inform the character appraisal document, which is a snapshot of the parish as it is now, produced by the WNPWP.

RA GH and PR suggested sending the Scott Wilson and Bluefish reports to RL: RA will send. PR was invited to photograph any sites in Wells which might be of particular relevance to discussion, especially in the yards which were not accessed by Streetview.

### **10. Character Appraisal – Rachel Leggett**

RL explained that the character appraisal document describes the distinct appearance and feel of an area as it now exists. It will sit as another Appendix to the NP and be used to shape the design code work on recommendations for future development in our parish.

RL suggested that the WNPWP completes the stakeholder consultation process before concentrating on the Wells parish character appraisal in April. There is no deadline from AECOM yet for its delivery; this will become clearer as work on the design code proceeds. RL showed the Swaffham character appraisal map, description and photos as an example and she will provide a template for compiling the Wells parish document.

RA asked LD to lead this work, which she accepted and JE offered to help too.

PR suggested using the housing plan which he is currently preparing to exchange and supplement relevant data between both documents.

### **11. Placecheck update**

RL described the responses so far and will continue to monitor input for the next couple of months at least. She confirmed that multiple visits to the website are possible but quantitative analysis removes possible skewing of the data. Strongly held views are still valid and all comment is welcome.

NH asked about continuing publicity and how to engage people who don't have access to the website. [Query: double sided A4 sheet with town map one side & space for comments on reverse, to be returned to P.O?]

RA will put up more posters to supplement the 12 already on display.

### **12. Date of Next Meeting**

[Later confirmed as Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 10am, via Zoom.]

### **13. AOB**

1. JE asked that Duncan Blake MP's letter to Robert Jenrick, the Housing Minister, be made available. DB has prepared a letter following his attendance at the NNTPF meeting on Feb.19<sup>th</sup>, draft dated 3.3.21, to the Housing Minister requesting a meeting with the NNTPF to discuss housing affordability, and with regard to second homeowners, a Council Tax levy and the removal of business rates exemption. RA to circulate finalised text and relevant information to the WNPWP.

4.

2. PR has circulated to the WNPWP the Harbour Initiative report regarding the Wells flood risk and its mitigation. He wishes it to be considered for future discussion by WNPWP.
3. GH reported that NNDC has responded to RA's question via the WTC as to why Wells area is not registered for the Community Infrastructure Levy on new development. With a NP in place, Wells would be entitled to 25% of the developer's levy. The NNDC reply favoured the use of s.106.  
RL remarked that it is possible to be registered for section 106 levy income and CIL at the same time. The planning white paper may make changes to the way these levies work and strengthen their imposition on new development.

Meeting closed 12 Noon.

NH