

# **Wells Neighbourhood Plan Working Party**

## **Minutes**

### **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 10am Zoom meeting**

**Present:**

Roger Arguile (RA-Chair), Cheryl Curtis (CC), David Fennell (DF), John Edwards (JE), Greg Hewitt (GH), Nichola Holmes (NH), Rachel Leggett (RL), Andrea Long (AL), Peter Rainsford (PR)

**1. Apologies:** Received from Lindsay Dew (LD)

Jacqueline Gray (JG) and Jimmy Tottle (JT) unable to join Zoom meetings.

**2. Minutes of last meeting, 29.4.21**

Accepted as a true record.

**3. AECOM virtual tour – RA/PR**

The virtual tour of Wells took place on Tuesday afternoon, 13<sup>th</sup> May with RA “driving the bus” and PR “providing commentary” to Ben Castell and his colleagues from AECOM. It was a successful meeting and they are happy with the results for writing their report.

Appreciation was expressed by the NPWP for RA and PR’s work on this important step in the process. Ben Castell has a copy of the tour recording; PR enquired how to make this available to the rest of the working party.

RA and RL will facilitate this as the file is quite large for sending round.

Graziano from AECOM will visit Wells in person during the next fortnight to supplement his virtual tour and RL will keep in touch with him to ensure that the design code drafting progresses efficiently.

JE asked when AECOM would need the completed character appraisal notes to incorporate; RL said as soon as possible because AECOM are currently averaging 8 to 10 weeks for draft code production even when they have all the relevant information.

**4. Finances - GH**

GH reported that Locality contacted him earlier this week with some questions to clarify details on the 2021/22 funding application which has been submitted. Locality aim to contact GH again within a fortnight regarding the grant.

**5. Call for Sites – AL**

Andrea thanked GH for the successful launching of the Call for Sites on the WTC website. The Call is now ongoing until June 30<sup>th</sup>. GH has not received anything yet, although WTC agreed in principle on May 4<sup>th</sup> to put forward some part of their land bordered by Mill Rd. and Two Furlong Hill for consideration as an affordable housing development.

PR asked about the inclusion of industrial units/sites not in use on Maryland. He will contact NNDC to request approaching the landowner(s) as there has been no progress with redevelopment since 2015, when some action was last attempted by WTC.

AL said it was quite usual for no site applications to be received until the last week of the call because of the work necessary to prepare the forms for submission. Our longer call of 8 weeks may produce better results.

After the closing date, GH and AL will pass the applications to AECOM for their independent assessment of the sites. AECOM will produce a map and feasibility report showing the sites as red, amber or green for development as suggested. This report will then be fed into the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to inform future development options.

## **6. Design code – RL**

Rachel reminded the NPWP that the Wells design code will sit as an appendix to the NP because it underpins the design policy for the area. The design policy may include specific places and proposals to reflect Wells' unique character. RL showed an example of the interaction between NP objectives and policies and she will circulate the draft Harleston code to aid further discussion at the next meeting.

AECOM will draft the Wells code as an expert but independent body.

## **7. Character appraisal progress report – NPWP**

RL asked for an update on the character appraisal work being done by the working party, using her version 5 of the Wells town map.

CC has completed the East area and done draft notes on the South area which she will send to JE for review.

RA and PR have done the Town Core and will send their notes to JE for review.

RA has done the West area and will complete the general notes on the largely undeveloped Southeast and Southwest areas for JE to have.

NH has completed the Central area with help from Lindsay Dew and JE already has those notes for review.

It was suggested that the draft area notes should also be circulated amongst the NPWP when they're sent to JE so that we could all check each other's observations.

JE will coordinate the area reports as soon as possible and send them to RL for discussion.

RL will send the NPWP templates to assist with selection of possible Local Green Spaces and Non-designated Heritage Assets.

JE asked for the Town Core area boundaries to better match the official Conservation area for the purposes of appraisal. NH asked about the rest of the parish to the south of Wells town; this is mostly farmland, owned by Holkham. PR requested the inclusion of the new car park, playground and football pitch in the appraisal.

This prompted a discussion on including land to the north of the Town Core as far as the beach to bring more local features into the character appraisal report. Many people responding to the Placecheck consultation have highlighted their appreciation of its beauty and the value of this area to the local economy. RL will amend map and recirculate for discussion at the next meeting.

## **8. Policies, following on Objectives work – AL**

Having agreed the five draft Objectives at the April meeting, AL has prepared for the NPWP a list of headings to produce policy ideas for the NP, using the data gathered so far.

Going through each heading on screen, there followed a wide-ranging discussion resulting in changes and additions to the policy suggestions, plus some minor amendments to the wording of objectives 4 & 5.

AL will refine these ideas and circulate the updated list for discussion at the next meeting.

## **9. Communications – RA**

RA reported that the newly published June edition of The Quay magazine includes an update on NP work and information about the Call for Sites.

GH/RL have put the Call up on Twitter and RA's posting on Facebook about the possible inclusion of the WTC triangle along Mill Rd has certainly raised awareness of the NP.

## **10. July consultation – RL**

Public meetings having been prevented by the pandemic restrictions, local consultation so far has been limited to the online Placecheck and one to one discussions, usually by phone or email. It had been hoped to host a community consultation exhibition in July publicising the NP as events returned to normal.

RL stressed the importance of having definite policy ideas ready for the exhibition as these will generate the mandate for writing the NP to put forward to the local referendum. She suggested that in view of the emerging timetable of work on the draft design code still to be done with AECOM and the elongated Call for Sites process, it might be better to delay the public consultation exhibition until September. By then, a coherent body of information can be presented to all interested parties in the town. Following some discussion, the NPWP agreed to holding the exhibition on the weekend of September 25<sup>th</sup>. GH will make enquiries for booking the Congregational Church hall as a venue.

#### **11. AOB**

The NPWP discussed Holkham Estate's recent press release (published in The Quay magazine) regarding the Wells Harbour Railway, amid fears that it is to be discontinued. A petition against its closure currently stands at nearly fifty thousand signatures. AL remarked that it is important to maintain communication via WTC to gain an understanding of Holkham's intentions for traffic management and the future of beach access in the context of draft NP policies.

#### **12. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021, by Zoom at 10am.

Meeting closed 12 noon.

NH