

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Report of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

held on Tuesday, 1 October 2013 in the Town Council Offices

Present: Councillors: R Barnes (Chairman, Neighbourhood Plan Working Party - NPWP)
A Conway
K Francis
C Ridler
T Widdows (Mayor)

In Attendance: R Hadley
G Holliday (Town Plan Steering Group – TPSG)

Also Present: Ms Amy Herford
Mrs K Mitchell (Clerk to the Council)
Mrs B Stump (Jnr. Clerical Officer, LTC)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Chris Bosley, Andrew Burrows, Mary Cooper, Andrew Harrison, Cllr Liz Harvey, Ian James and Nina Shields.

The Chairman welcomed Karen Mitchell, Clerk to the Council.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. To approve the report of the meeting held on 3 September 2013 and actions arising.

The report of the meeting was approved.

A list of actions undertaken since the first meeting of the Working Party in February was circulated. The Chairman did not propose to go through it in detail, but requested members review before the next meeting, when outstanding actions would be discussed.

4. Rural Community Energy Generation

Nina Shields had requested at the previous NPWP meeting that a sub group be created to look at this and considered at this meeting. Chris Bosley and Andrew Harrison have already volunteered, as too, did Amy Herford today. The group's first meeting will take place in the Town Council offices on Wednesday, 30 October at 18.30 when Ben Boswell, Sustainability Manager at Herefordshire Council, will attend.

5. Update from the Sub Groups

5.1 Communications & Consultations Strategy

- Rich Hadley reported no new developments: the leaflet agreed at the last meeting is ready to go to print, but he would notify the Clerk, Karen Mitchell, and the Chairman, of the cost of its production (5,000 copies) and distribution, before finally instructing Sketch Collective to go ahead. There is a temptation to distribute at the same time as the Town Plan Household Questionnaire; however, it was decided to keep them separate to avoid confusion of the two Plans.

ACTION: Rich Hadley would inform the Clerk & Chairman about the printing & distribution costs of the NP leaflet by Friday, 4 October in time for details to be included in a future agenda for Council approval.

- There has been no action to compile a plan to engage the public in discussions about the proposed idea for Lawnside Road development (Item 4.2 of NPWP meeting of 06-08-13). Rich Hadley told the meeting that the Communications Group is waiting for "a steer" following the decision not to proceed with an early October consultation event. The

Chairman explained that following the previous meeting, and after consulting within the WP, it had been decided not to proceed rapidly into a public consultation on the development of Lawnside with PLK Holdings. PLK, who are already having pre-qualification discussions with Herefordshire Council, indicate they are still interested in a consultation event facilitated by the NPWP.

5.2 Land Group

Griff Holliday reported that the Group's activities are dependent upon the outcome of the proposal that a consultant be engaged for specialist work undertaken on behalf of the NPWP (Item 6.1 of the report of the meeting of 03-09-13). This proposal which involves significant expenditure requires approval by Full Council. It is minuted that a "break point decision be made at the point when the effort involved [in producing a NP] has been assessed prior to a bid for grant funding being submitted." That "break point" has been reached and the Mayor decided to postpone the proposal going to Full Council in September because he wanted more information to help Town Councillors inform their decision. This matter will go before Full Council at its meeting on Thursday, 3 October. There are activities that the Land Group can proceed with once the Council's decision is known.

5.3 Update on the Plan Review Meeting of 25 September

Griff Holliday reported on the meeting and updated the Action Plan. Actions 1 & 2 are dependent upon the outcome of the meeting of Full Council on Thursday, 3 October. He expressed concern that there had been little development (pending 5.2 above) and the group needed to start moving by forming three Working Groups (of 4 members each) for *Retail, Environment and Infrastructure*. Their work should start, and research on existing data. The Civic Society and CPRE could be approached, for instance, for assistance with design statements for the town scape.

A further Plan Review would be conducted in due course.

More people than comprise the membership of the NPWP are required to carry out the work needed, and volunteers are urgently sought.

ACTION: the Clerk and Chairman will draft an email seeking members and non members, willing to be part of, and carry out, the work required of the Working Groups.

The Chairman expressed the thanks of the WP to Griff for conducting the review meeting and updating the documents, at a time when he is so busy on TPSG work.

6. Budget Update

Ledbury Town Council is embarking on setting the annual budget. Since the last meeting, the Mayor, Clerk to the Council and others, have discussed the NP budget. As stated in 5.2 above, the Town Council must now decide whether it wishes to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan at all. Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) recently held a NP seminar, attended by Karen Mitchell, Chris Ridler and Barbara Stump (who issued a report.) Consequently, the Chairman suggested that the NPWP should consider engaging Consultants who could look at all aspects of preparing Ledbury's NP. A considerable amount of work has already been done by WP members, and the reasons for inviting Consultants to tender were discussed. If it were decided to invite companies to tender, it was also broadly agreed that the NPWP would consider buying in independent, professional advice to help draw up the brief for the job.

RECOMMENDATION: That Ledbury Town Council goes out to tender for the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, and associated project costs.

There was a broad discussion about the sum of money that is able to be spent by the NPWP without the approval of Full Council. Presently £200 is the figure, but it was thought too low and could result in delays to urgent work being undertaken whilst waiting for monthly Full Council meetings to approve.

RECOMMENDATION: To raise the delegated funding of approved spending to £1,000. This sum to be approved by the Chairman of the NPWP, Clerk to the Council and the Mayor.

7. Any other Business

7.1 Media and Communications

Following the recent articles in the *Ledbury Reporter* quoting the wrong date for the TP Questionnaire issue and inaccuracies regarding the NP, Andrew Harrison proposed by email that "All communication with the media to be through the communications group" This was discussed and agreed.

RESOLVED: That any PR communications, statements, quotes etc. are prepared by the Communications Group and put to the NPWP Chairman and Mayor for approval before release. All communications to the press are to be in writing.

7.2 Chairing of NPWP Meetings

Andrew Harrison wanted to know the thoughts of the WP about revolving the chairing of the WP meetings. After discussion, it was agreed to retain the same Chairman, except when the main subject matter of a meeting would best be chaired by the NPWP member most qualified to deal.

8. Items for the next Agenda (Tuesday, 5 November)

- Review of decisions taken at Full Council on Thursday, 3 October 2013.
- Review of outstanding actions.
- Rural Community Energy Generation sub group's first meeting with Ben Boswell on 30 October 2013 (Nina Shields).

The meeting ended at 20.55.