

## LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### Report of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

held on Tuesday, 4 June 2013 in the Town Council Offices

**Present:** Councillors: R Barnes (Chairman)  
K Francis  
C Ridler  
T Widdows

**In Attendance:** A Burrows  
Miss M Cooper  
R Hadley  
A Harrison  
G Holliday (Town Plan Steering Group – TPSG)  
I James (TPSG)  
Ms NShields (TPSG)

**Also Present:** Cllr P Bettington (observer)  
Mrs B Stump (Jnr. Clerical Officer, LTC)

**1. Apologies for absence**

Cllrs Conway and Harvey.

Working Party members appointed by the Town Council in 2012-13 have now changed: the members appointed at the annual Planning & Economic Development Committee Meeting are Cllrs R Barnes, A Conway, K Francis, E Harvey, C Ridler and T Widdows. Consequently, Cllrs Bettington, Bradford, Crowe, Fieldhouse and Roberts are no longer members of the NPWP. Bill Stump has withdrawn from the WP.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**3. To approve the report of the meeting held on 7 May 2013**

Approved.

**4. Paul Esrich, Manager of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (MHAONBP)**

- The MHAONBP is working with Colwall Parish Council on the development of their Plan. Paul Esrich is interested to see how Ledbury's is developing, and to continue MHAONBP's objectives which impact communities close to the AONB.
- MHAONBP is presently reviewing its five year management plan, which has statutory powers. All public bodies, including councils, have a legal obligation to enhance the AONB and LTC will shortly have an opportunity to comment on the draft which includes transport, recreation and tourism, landscape, bio-diversity, historical and development issues. Ledbury is largely outside the AONB boundary, but the government, through Defra, is pushing the Partnership to think about the setting of the AONB and the area immediately around its boundary. Consequently there will be a greater impact on the setting immediately around the AONB in the new Management Plan.
- MHAONBP recently consulted on a building design guide for the AONB and produced guidance documents for highways, landscaping, historical, environmental issues, together with identification of scenic views & protection of them.
- Land to the east of the Bosbury Road, opposite existing industrial units and up to the edge of the wood, was raised. The MHAONBP would prefer if identified development land was not right up to its immediate boundary; the National Planning Policy Framework places high import to AONB landscape. Paul Esrich felt major

development would not be appropriate, and it would be difficult to envisage development being possible under NP rules. Significant development within such a small area would have to be well justified, particularly where it encroaches on an AONB boundary. The danger is that future precedents are set. Most of the land is steep woodland, which would reduce its attraction to a developer.

- The NPWP might wish to consider consulting a landscape architect (as does Colwall) for analysis of its settlement boundary which exists presently, and where new development might fit best within Ledbury's landscape. A landscape assessment of development sites in areas adjoining the town and the AONB would be useful for future justification, and how to mitigate the impact of what is already there. Andrew Burrows commented that it would be necessary for the NPWP to explore the importance of the AONB on the fringe of Ledbury, and discuss ways which explore its quality and, where it is an essential part of the AONB, how it might be enhanced and the most important areas protected for the future. This must be seen to have been done as part of the NP exercise. A qualified landscape architect would explore the issues on each site identified within the NP.
- Little in the way of grant support is available for Ledbury's NP from the MHAONBP, which is finding its own funding cut by councils and the government. However, some documents created by the Partnership could be used to comprise part of the evidence base for the NP.

**Extra Agenda Item: Suggested merger of the Town Plan Steering Group and Neighbourhood Plan Working Party.**

- After the Agenda for this meeting had been issued, a proposal was circulated by Mary Cooper to consider merging together the TPSG and NPWP. Justification for the proposal is that both are being produced at the same time, engaged in similar tasks (e.g. the TPSG questionnaire is waiting for NP elements for inclusion) and the two groups comprise a common membership. It was suggested that the Town Plan could be a chapter within the Neighbourhood Plan, or vice versa. The results of the 10 May visioning exercise would produce issues which are obviously "Town Plan" and others "Neighbourhood Plan". It was suggested that Ledbury residents might become irritated, and ask why two separate groups are holding communications, marketing and consultation events which, to them, seem related.
- A decision to combine the groups would have to be ratified by Full Council with clear objectives, and a subsequent allocation of roles. Employing someone to deal with the administrative work was suggested (in addition to the existing minute secretary provided by the Town Council who does not have the capacity to do more).
- If the WP were disbanded and replaced by a Steering Group (i.e. community led) then a public meeting would have to be held. Consequently, who would Chair? Who would put together a project plan, who would wish to be a member of a wider group? How would the meetings be constructed? (It was suggested the first 10 minutes of a meeting dealt with one group's issues, and the rest of the meeting dealt with the other group's matters.) What might be the financial implications of merging? Would a combined group be eligible to apply for grants? Other councils have merged their two groups, so a precedent does exist.
- Cllr Widdows said he could not make an informed choice at the meeting due to there being too many unanswered questions, and he needed more information.

**Action: A sub committee comprising Cllrs Barnes and Ridler, Mary Cooper and Nina Shields will look at the mechanics of merging the Town Plan Steering Group and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party and report for consideration by the NPWP.**

## 5. **Timetable and timeline for the tasks**

Cllr Harvey had issued an updated project schedule, together with a covering email putting forward several issues for discussion.

- Approval was sought to procure a 6 month licence for **Survey Monkey** (SM) software at a cost of £180, to assist with design, multiple data entry and analysis of questionnaires. Rich Hadley, Nina Shields and Isobel Gibson will meet to discuss the package proposed: Rich Hadley has alternative software (**Smart Survey**) he feels is better than SM (£35-40 month). Whichever tool is used for analysis would have a huge impact on the questionnaire. It was suggested that Isobel Gibson might give some thought to putting together 12 questions that would “get people thinking”.
- Isobel Gibson’s “Terms of Engagement” for the TPSG should be reviewed in light of the work also being relevant to the NPWP.

**Action:** Rich Hadley, Nina Shields and Isobel Gibson will liaise about the use of RH’s Smart Survey licence and the alternative, Survey Monkey.

**Action:** Cllr Barnes to review Isobel Gibson’s Terms of Engagement with the TPSG and consider similar for the NPWP.

## 6. **Update on Communications Plan**

Rich Hadley has set up:

- a NP webpage on the *Your Square Mile* website;
- created a Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan *Twitter* account; and
- circulated a community engagement proposal to the group.
- It was agreed to commission a brand identity and produce information literature quickly. *Sketch Collective* in the Southend are a young, new, local company and could create artwork for the website, newsletters, advertisements, display banners, posters, etc in order to create awareness of the NP. They had given Rich Hadley a verbal estimate of £400.

**Action:** Rich Hadley and Bob Barnes will visit *Sketch Collective* to discuss artwork and branding.

**Recommendation:** That the Town Council approval initial expenditure of £400 to commission a brand identity.

- A database of helpers/volunteers should be established. The UBL/Heineken database could be useful; the company might also be approached for funding.
- Questionnaire Distribution: Ian James will use the 2002 Tilley’s Almanac of Ledbury streets, and also draw on information from past Christian Aid collections.
- Volunteers for questionnaire distribution were obtained from the Community Day event in the Town Council offices on Saturday, 1 June (passed to Cllr Harvey).
- A Newsletter should be compiled: updates in the *Focus* are £50 for 280 words. If anyone has any ideas for the Newsletter’s contents, they should pass them to Nina Shields.
- Children’s entertainment day on 1 August (bottom of Biddulph Way) should be used to create awareness.
- It was agreed to look at past information gathered by the TPSG to provide a Communications Plan framework.

**Action:** Rich Hadley and Nina Shields, with Isobel Gibson, to examine existing information, stock take and consider how it can be used.

## 7. **Visioning Exercise: Allocation of “Headings” and membership of Working Groups**

- The Visioning Exercise of 10 May produced interesting issues, headings and the allocation of WP members who have agreed to look at subject areas. Nina Shields' literature review emerged from a discussion with Isobel Gibson about the questionnaire; a need to identify published documents/policies from the last 5 years, where to find them (website links, etc) and a summary of the key elements contained therein. Ian James will prepare a planning summary documenting the various consultation processes, their results and where the documents can be sourced.
- Rich Hadley had discussed community buy-in with Sam Banks and achieving community consensus by finding the middle ground, using community engagement and the questionnaire to achieve it. The NP has to be evidence-based: it is a “dry as dust” factual planning document. Sam Banks is happy to attend another Ledbury NPWG meeting to talk about community engagement. The draft vision document attempts to draw together information gathered from every consultation into what kind of town Ledbury residents want. Once this is established, areas for investigation will be identified and how to achieve it.
- Cllrs Barnes, Francis and Ridler are visiting Thame in Oxfordshire on Tuesday, 11 June to discuss its NP. (Of interest, Thame did not produce a questionnaire; instead it had consultations and held drop-in events.) Thame's documents are available online, together with what arose from their consultation weekends.
- Cllr Harvey proposed attendance by a member of the NPWP to the Town Team Initiative's Workshop to be held on Tuesday, 11 June in Poynton, Cheshire. Rich Hadley & Ian James both said they would look online and consider attending. (Note: No one was available to attend.)

## 8. **An Update on preparation of Grant Application**

- Rich Hadley is in a position to know for what we are applying: an application will be for costs for community engagement and raising awareness. A budget is to be put together for the next meeting.  
Liz Harvey has a Town Plan Skills audit. It should be consulted and used to enable effective budgeting.

**Action: Andrew Harrison will liaise with Cllr Harvey regarding drawing up budgets.**

- Acquisition of a project planning/management tool was briefly discussed.

**Action: Rich Hadley, Ian James & Griff Holliday will discuss MS Project and other appropriate software.**

- Cllr Francis proposed another meeting before the next scheduled, to discuss the Newsletter and visits to Thame & Poynton. This will take place on Tuesday, 18 June.

## 9. **Items for the next Agenda**

- Report by Cllrs Barnes, Francis & Ridler on their visit to Thame on Tuesday, 11 June to discuss Thame's Neighbourhood Plan experiences.
- Update by Rich Hadley & Bob Barnes on meeting with Sketch Collective (website & branding/logo artwork).
- Update on the mechanics of combining the TPSG and NPWP.
- Update on Survey Tool (Rich Hadley): possible recommendation to purchase licence.
- Update on Review of Isobel Gibson's Terms of Engagement with the TPSG and possible widening to include NP work.

### **Date of the next meeting**

Tuesday, **18 June at 19.00** in the Committee Room of Ledbury Town Council offices.

The next scheduled meeting of the Working Party is on Tuesday, **2 July at 19.00** in the committee room at LTC.

The meeting ended at 21.27.