

Uppingham Town Council
Draft Minutes of the Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Group
Thursday 18th June 2020

In attendance:

Jane Lang (Chair), Chris Merricks (Vice-Chair), Dave Ainslie, Sharon Aumais, Edward Baines, Liz Clarke, Christine Edwards, Kath Gilbert, Chris Merricks, Dick Reeve, Steve Rozak, Mark Shaw, Ron Simpson, Pat Taylor, Geoff Thompson, Howard Thompson, Janet Thompson.

Apologies: Stephen Taylor

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to NPAG's first Zoom meeting and checked that everyone was familiar with the technology. The zoom recording was turned on. Two members of the public were present – Simon Pease who introduced himself as a housing developer, and Nick Townsend, a local resident.

Edward Baines declared an interest as Chair of the Uppingham Homes Community Housing Trust, which owns the site at Badley Orchard. Dave Ainslie, Mark Shaw, Margaret Simpson, Ron Simpson and Geoff Thompson declared their interests as Directors of that Trust.

2. Chair's Opening Statement

The Chair read out the Summary of her opening statement forwarded with the Minutes, which is a document of two halves. The first half represents a report on progress through the year, and the second half addressed motions which members of the group had requested to be put at the meeting, the one relating to the Badley Orchard site being rejected, and the two others being agenda items. Members were encouraged to ask questions for clarification. In response:

- a. Dave Ainslie stated that NPAG is an informal group but is subject to Town Council resolution 174/18 regarding rules and regulations.
- b. Ron Simpson stated that he did not agree with the Chair's statement, and that it was not correct. He further stated that community input had been denied and that Councillors would need to sort it out at the next Council meeting.
- c. Dave Ainslie raised the issue of the scope of the meeting to consider these issues.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Chair apologised to the meeting for being unable to produce the minutes of the last meeting due to personal circumstances and IT issues.

Dave Casewell proposed the following motion:

That the meeting notes the minutes are not yet available and defer discussion on them until they were available.

This was seconded by Dave Ainslie. The motion was unanimously agreed.

Jane recalled two actions on her. One was to start to write a Plan, of which the documents attached were a specimen. The other was to enquire as to progress on the site north of Leicester Road which had recently gained outline planning consent. She said that she understood that this was still in negotiation on the terms of the S106 agreement. It had been for some time, and it may be concluding shortly, though this is not definite.

4. Scope and Format of the Plan

The scope and format of the current plan was discussed. There was broad agreement that we need a good plan.

Dave Ainslie stated that not enough progress had been made, and there was a need to put together a document, which is what he had done. His proposal used a template from Locality. He also stated that we need a stronger evidence base, which supported the relevant part of the Chair's statement.

The Chair stated that the work in the past year, notwithstanding the issues around the Covid-19 outbreak, had taken a bottom up approach to give members the opportunity to develop ideas together, and had resulted in the documents issued. The issue is that the different groups have carried out audits, and generated some ideas, but there was a need to draw them together into actionable policies. She also stated that no work had been done on which policies in the previous plan are to be carried over, which are to be withdrawn, and what the gaps are where new policies could be developed. This is particularly relevant in view of the changed circumstances we are now living in. The Chair stated that in the desire to move forward, process was not happening in the right order. For instance, she had been advised by Rutland County Council's Planning Department that the consultation which took place on development sites was done the wrong way round, because a site appraisal should have come first.

The group had a wide-ranging discussion, including identifying the need to have any final draft document scrutinised by an external expert before it was published.

Dave Ainslie proposed the following motion:

That following the tabling of a document described as "Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan refreshed version covering 2021 – 2036 1st Edition" by the Chair, to consider whether this document serves as an appropriate working template/mechanism for moving discussion forward. For the avoidance of doubt this document, if accepted, will be initially used internally by the NPAG for the purposes of constructing a draft document that can be considered for wider publication at an appropriate future date. The content so far shows an exemplar example of how the template might be used.

The motion was seconded by Edward Baines and was unanimously agreed.

Dave Casewell proposed the following motion:

That a grant of £10,000 be sought from Locality to cover further progress with the Plan.

The motion was seconded by Liz Clarke and was unanimously agreed.

5. Affordable Housing

With reference to the rejected motion to put the Badley Orchard site into the Neighbourhood Plan, Edward Baines said that there was a draft amendment to the Local Plan which would allow communities to make choices about where the planned limits of development were. This is in the log of agreed amendments on the County Council website. The Chair said she would make her own enquiries about this issue.

A general motion in the following terms was proposed by Dave Casewell:

The Neighbourhood Plan Group agrees to support the provision of housing in Uppingham to be in general conformity with the Local Plan on numbers as a minimum.

The motion was seconded by Dick Reeves and agreed unanimously.

The group agreed the following *actions* relating to the preparation of a Plan:

Membership:

The Chair to ask Miranda Jones to be co-opted to chair the Environment Group.

Sub-group Activity:

The sub-group Chairs, Dave Casewell (Transport, and Amenities and Open Spaces), Dave Ainslie (Housing Survey), Ron Simpson (Economy) and Miranda Jones (Environment) to arrange for their group to meet to discuss further what they want to achieve, and then to see how the group work fits with the template. There is a need to focus on both words and evidence. The groups were asked to meet twice before the next full meeting of the group if possible, and to populate the template with the results of their review.

6. Chairmanship of the Advisory Group

The Chair of the group is nominated each year, and their appointment is ratified by Full Council at its Annual Meeting, which this year is on the 1st July.

The motion was:

To select a nominee for the post of Chair of NPAG for submission to Uppingham Town Council in accordance with their standing orders.

Jane Lang was nominated by Dave Casewell, seconded by Dick Reeve, and Chris Merricks was nominated by Christine Edwards, seconded by Geoff Thompson.

There followed a vote. Chris Merricks and Jane Lang did not vote.

Chris Merricks was nominated by 11 votes to 5.

7. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the group was arranged for Thursday 16th July at 7.30pm, to take place using Zoom.