

Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Minutes of meeting held on 23rd August 2016 at the Pine Lodge

Attendees

Barry Coward (Parish Councillor)
Bertie Bright (County Councillor)
Mike Holifield (Resident)
Ian Dennis (Resident)
Kate Daunt (Parish Councillor)
Elizabeth Swabey-Collison (Parish Councillor)
Gayle Wootton (SODC Planning Officer; Neighbourhood)
Raymond Fergusson (Parish Clerk)

1. Introductions

Barry Coward welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Steering Group and asked each member to introduce themselves to the Group. Barry referred to the two papers, “What is Involved Brief” and “Getting the Ball Rolling” as the papers covered the areas that the Steering Group would address as it developed the Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning

Barry explained that the Parish Council had formed a small working group to look at Neighbourhood Plans and as result a lot of research and background work has already been done that would be part of the evidence base if the Village supported the proposal to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. Barry emphasised the need for community engagement to develop consensus and to create community support and also that it was a requirement of the planning legislation. Barry stated that a Village Meeting was planned to be held on Tuesday 13th September that would explain the background to a Neighbourhood Plan and would provide an opportunity for residents to share their views. This would be covered later in the agenda. Barry explained the various stages of the process to develop a Neighbourhood Plan that would be concluded by a referendum that would be organised by SODC where if more than 50% of those voting yes would bring the Neighbourhood Plan into legal force.

3. Role of SODC

Barry explained that SODC had a duty to provide assistance and guidance to the body (Parish Council) once a Neighbourhood Area has been designated although Gayle had been supporting the initial Working Group. Gayle took the opportunity to outline areas that a Neighbourhood Plan could consider outside a specific number of houses as the current Preferred Options document did not allocate any houses to smaller settlements but encouraged a 5% growth in the housing stock of smaller settlements. The discussion centred on

- Housing mix
- Character of design
- Aspirational wish list
- Traffic impact on potential sites
- What is right for the village in fifteen years’ time

During this discussion the school site was raised for consideration in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan. Barry stated that he would ensure that the Head would be part of the wider consultation with interested parties.

There was a question on the need to explain the advantages and disadvantages of producing a Neighbourhood Plan as a clear statement would be helpful to explain the reasons to the residents.

4. Timescales

Barry expressed the view that he envisaged a short sharp process and that the overall process could be completed by the summer of 2017. He highlighted two critical pieces of work that needed to be addressed as soon as possible if the process was to be completed within the projected timescale. The first was a Housing Needs Assessment and this would be done through a questionnaire completed by the residents. The design of the questionnaire would be sub-contracted with the subsequent analysis and report. Barry stated that he had already identified two possible sources that could do the work. One was Community First Oxford and the other was Stratford District Council. On the basis of the information provided by Barry the Group agreed to use Stratford District Council. Barry hoped that this could be finished and analysed and a report received by Christmas.

The other piece of important work was the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This work is a process for evaluating the environmental effects of the plan before it is made. The need to carry out an SEA is determined by SODC and the appropriate paper work has already been submitted for consideration. Gayle indicated that it was unlikely that it would be required but she would confirm the status in due course. Barry reported that as result of the background work which had already been done over the past few months, a first draft SEA was almost completed for consideration by the Group.

5. Steering Group/Working Group structure and methods of working

Barry invited nominations for Chairman. Raymond suggested that it might be worth considering a non-parish council person chairing the Group. However a discussion it was agreed that Barry had would be best suited to chair the meetings as he had already done significant work on the project. Barry accepted the role as Chairman.

Raymond accepted the roles of Secretary/Minute taker as well as managing/controlling the all the financial aspects of the project.

Barry outlined the programme of meetings starting with the Village Meeting on the 13th September and a Group meeting on the 20th September. It was agreed that as far as possible the meetings would be held in member's houses and Kate, Bertie, Mike and Barry offered to host a future meeting.

Barry anticipated that certain discrete work would be done by members and reporting back to the Group but all members would be involved in adding value as the plan evolved.

Gayle suggested that the Group produce a terms of reference that determines the relationship between the Steering Group and the Parish Council. Barry stated that the Parish Council were the Qualifying Body who led the Plan. Gayle explained that the District Council need to ensure that the Plan met the Basic Conditions of:-

- Appropriate to National Planning Policy
- Must be in conformity with the SODC Local Plan

- Must be compatible with Human Rights requirements
- Must be compatible with EU obligations
- Must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development

Although they may advise the decision to proceed with the plan rested with the Qualifying Body.

6. Progress to Date

Barry reported the following progress:

- The Neighbourhood Plan Area had been designated and approved by SODC
- The Steering Group had been formed
- A brief for the Steering Group had been circulated and project plan/work schedule would follow
- SEA draft was almost complete but SODC would confirm if it was required
- A grant of £5,000 was available from SODC on submission of an acceptable budget. The treasurer would explore other sources of grant funding.
- The village website <https://www.hugofox.com/community/little-milton-village-community-7833/about-us> has a tab Neighbourhood Development Plan that contains a library of reference documents and in due course will hold all the working documents.
- The Housing Needs Assessment will be the first step in collecting the baseline data.
- Barry has already spoken with the necessary Housing Associations to ascertain the basic data and those properties that are subject to an s106 agreement.
- The Housing Needs Assessment will be part of the Village Survey that Barry and Kate will draft for consideration at the meeting on 20th September

Gayle stated that SODC were currently completing a SEA Screening Option with statutory consultees for comment. The information would be made available to the Steering Group in support of the Neighbourhood Plan. Additionally SODC are working on an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the aspirations within the Local Plan. This document may contain information relevant to Little Milton.

7. Village Meeting – 13th September

Barry outlined his thoughts on the structure of the meeting on the 13th September that included a short questionnaire to be completed on the night by those attending. There was a discussion on the best time for the questionnaire to be completed as well as some comments on the current draft questionnaire. Barry stated that he would consider the comments and take the necessary actions. Barry asked that the Secretary record the questions asked on the night.

8. Village survey

Barry commented that it was important to have a good response to the questionnaire and experience showed that it would require a concerted effort through door collection.

9. Next steps

The Village Meeting on 13th September 2016

10. Next meeting

The next Steering Group Meeting will be held on Tuesday 20th September 2016 at 7.30 p.m. at the Pine Lodge when we will discuss the results of the Village Meeting and review whether to proceed with the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. We will also review the draft of the Village Survey.