

East Dean & Friston Neighbourhood Plan

Shaping East Dean, Friston, Birling Gap and Crowlink for the future



Minutes of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held in the East Dean and Friston Village (Small) Hall on Monday 14th November 2022 starting at 6.30 pm.

NPSG Members Present: Cllr Michael Bustard (Chairman), Cllr Grant Fowler, Cllr Chris Lees, Cllr Hollie Milligan, Lesley D'Urso (Residents' Association), Jonathan Timberlake, Peter Williamson and Gina Zelent.

In attendance: D Picknell (Administration Officer)

No members of the public were present.

1. Chairman's Welcome

Councillor Michael Bustard advised those present that the Parish Council is very grateful to all who have volunteered to join the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which is very important in shaping the neighbourhood in future years. MB advised that most meetings would not exceed one and a half hours and that future meetings may include members of the public in person or via Zoom to make the meetings as open as possible for people to contribute.

MB advised members that Lesley D'Urso and Peter Williamson have some experience in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and welcomed their contribution.

2. Declarations of Interest

MB asked if members had anything in life, a club or association that may conflict with working on the Neighbourhood Plan. All members confirmed that they did not. Jonathan Timberlake mentioned that he was on the Residents' Association Committee, member of the local History Society and Greensward Company. LD advised members that she is the Chairperson of the Residents' Association and a Director of the Greensward Company.

3. Introduction

MB asked the attendee and members of the Steering Group to introduce themselves.

Debbie Picknell (DP): Advised members that she is the Administration Officer for the Parish Council and has lived in the village since 1996 and feels privileged to live in such a beautiful area.

Gina Zelent (GZ): Informed members that she moved to the village in December 2021 and during the day she is a public health consultant that includes wellbeing and wishes to get involved in the local community.

Grant Fowler (GF): Advised members that he moved to the village 20 years ago and has family connections for many generations in the village and loves living in such an appealing village. GF informed members that he is a Parish Councillor and the Lead on council matters for the Cricket Pavilion, Recreation Ground and Play Area.

Jonathan Timberlake (JT): Advised members that he worked in tropical ecology for over 55 years and returned to the area in the last 17 years. JT informed members that he is interested in environmental conservation.

Hollie Milligan (HM): Advised members that she has lived in the village for 30 years. Works full time for the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and has British Tennis and a National Role with more responsibility. HM advised members that next year her responsibilities will be lower.

Peter Williamson (PW): Advised members that he moved to the village in 2017 and runs the local outfit, Nordic Walking for Health. He also convenes Climate Friends - Residents for a Climate Friendly Parish. PW informed members that he used to be the Tree Warden for the Parish Council and this is how he met Lesley D'Urso.

Lesley D'Urso (LD): Informed members that she moved to the village in 2017 and is Chairperson of the Residents' Association. LD advised members that she was a former Parish Councillor involved in applying to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The process was in its very early stages when Covid 19 hit and was subsequently put on hold. LD advised members that she is keen that all residents of the Parish have the chance to articulate what they wish the Parish to look like in the future and have a stronger voice with regard to planning matters going forwards.

Chris Lees (CL): Advised members that he was elected to the Parish Council in May 2021 and is the Lead for Rights of Way and Footpaths. CL informed members that he has been associated with the village all his life. He was married in Friston Church and his parents and grandparents are buried there. He grew up in the village and returned 10 years ago.

Michael Bustard (MB): Informed members that he has lived in the village for 6 years and before that he had a small holding for cattle and sheep. MB advised members that has been on the Parish Council for nearly a year. He is interested in being involved in the village and enhancing the area in which we live. MB informed members that he was Chairman for 7 years and Vice Chairman for 3 years of the Parish Council where he previously lived. He was a Sussex Magistrate for 10 years.

MB advised members that he encourages openness to learning and sharing knowledge. PW asked if any members had a relationship with other members. LD advised that she is allotment buddies with GF and HM advised that her daughter and MB's daughter went to the same school.

MB asked LD and PW to share their knowledge of preparation for the Neighbourhood Plan. LD advised members that before Covid the Parish Council looked at starting a Neighbourhood Plan. There is a Village Design Statement to give people having work done a flavour of how the work should look which is a good planning subsidiary document. LD advised members that she understands the Parish Council is in the process of updating the Village Design Statement to be submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority. DP advised members that there is a draft document with updated policies and awaiting 2021 Census data. PW advised members that it takes longer for this information to be made available at the parish level than for larger geographical areas.

LD advised members as follows: -

Planning applications go to the Local Planning Authority which is the South Downs National Park Authority, previously Wealden District Council. The Local Plan has to be accepted nationally and gives a flavour of what the Local Planning Authority wants in our area. When an application is registered with the SDNPA, planning consultants look at the application. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee and have little weight in the planning decisions. The SDNPA Planning Consultant Office is in Midhurst and talking to Planning and Enforcement Officers is often difficult. For residents of East Dean and Friston with an out of date Village Design Statement they have very little influence on planning matters. An adopted Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document and therefore has weight in planning decisions. The NP has to sit within the Local Plan but can articulate matters that are of importance to residents of a specific locality. The NP is only adopted if it is voted for by the majority and demonstrated wide consultation throughout the process. LD advised members that she had seen planning appeals refer specifically to the NP and work in favour of what residents have wanted for their area. LD recommended a set process with review of the VDS for update and resubmission to the SDNPA for them to recognise.

MB advised members that he would like to invite the SDNPA Communities Lead and an Independent Consultant to the next NPSG meeting. LD and PW advised members that they found the last NPSG meeting on the 10th March 2020 disappointing. GZ asked what made the meeting disappointing, what process they went through and why the Parish Council wanted to go ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan in the first place? LD stated that the meeting was disappointing as there was no real expression of interest to our situation and there was no encouragement. GF advised members that the SDNPA are legally bound to help and without it the previous Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group got fractured in their understanding, prospective and desires. PW informed members that the SDNPA guidance was all about building properties.

LD advised members that the NP sits with the SDNPA Local Plan and there needs to be a housing target. The NP could detail whether, for example residents would want any future development to include smaller residential properties for young families or those needing to downsize.

PW is interested to know what resources and support would be supplied. JT advised the Steering Group that the consultant would need a brief. LD advised members that the Steering Group can plug the gap with guidance/information from Locality, a national organisation that supplies support at a local level [Homepage - Locality](#).

MB advised members that the Parish Council intends to apply for a basic grant of £10,000 to support the Neighbourhood Plan. There is an additional grant of £8,000 for allocating sites for housing in the NP.

LD confirmed that a grant for a NP had not been made before and money applied for by grant has to be used for the NP process.

MB advise members that there will be a Parish Council budget next year to support the NP.

PW asked if Locality gives grants for NP work. MB advised that he will make enquiries. **ACTION:MB**

MB advised members that future NPSG meetings will be open to the public. He asked for a Steering Group member to be Vice Chair in his absence and proposed Lesley D'Urso, this was seconded by CL. Members unanimously agreed for LD to be Vice Chair of the NPSG.

4. Dignity at Work and the Civility and Respect Pledge

MB asked members if there was anything they objected to in the Dignity at Work policy or the Civility and Respect Pledge which were circulated with the agenda. All members agreed that they had no objections.

PW advised members that the 7 Principals of Public Life treated everybody with dignity and respect which came into effect in 1995. He asked for a reason why the Parish Council has adopted the Civility and Respect Pledge. MB advised members that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had recommended that Parish and Local Councils adopt the Pledge.

MB advised members that he encourages constructive feedback. As part of the Civility and Respect Pledge he invited members to raise any training needs to equip them to do the work. MB advised members that the Consultant is not empowered to offer training. Relevant and appropriate training may be offered by NALC.

LD advised that those who have already produced a NP would be a good source of information and guidance, especially if their NP area was similar to ours. Inviting representatives to speak to the Steering Group could provide valuable information as we embark on the process. HM asked if Locality gives technical support for getting a NP through successfully. JT advised members that the main role of Locality is as a consultant. MB would make enquiries. **ACTION: MB**

5. NPSG Terms of Reference

Members discussed the draft NPSG Terms of Reference (T of R) circulated with the agenda.

Members agreed to a proposed plan of no less than 10 years and that it could be reviewed against its goals/objectives over whatever was the agreed timescale. Members had observed that the SDNPA Local Plan goes from 2014 to 2033.

PW asked how the NPSG is a cross section of people drawn from the Parish. Members advised that there is representation from The Greensward Company, Residents' Association, Parish Council and Community Health.

JT asked how those with land ownership would be involved. MB advised members that the land owners may be included in the Focus Groups to have their voices heard.

LD advised members that a NP would carry more weight if it included landowners and ownership.

PW suggested to members that the NPSG should develop a shared level of understanding of what 'land use' actually means in the context of neighbourhood planning as, for example, there are various land

designations, including the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that covers the parish coast line, as well as a shared knowledge of the characteristics of the parish population, i.e. how it's made up.

LD advised members that the proposed NP area submitted by the Parish Council was accepted and is recognised within the SDNPA. PW wished to know why the NP area covered the whole Parish as apposed to part/parts of it. MB advised members these queries may be added for review by the focus groups/sub groups at their informal meetings and be covered in key statements.

MB advised members that there should be a communication plan to agree a communication policy. There should be demographic proposals for different groups, ages and ethnicity.

LD advised that once focus groups have been decided there should be an effective communication strategy for communities at large, key stakeholders and landowners. LD advised members that a NP would carry more weight if it included landowners and ownership.

PW suggested under the T of R section 3 'local representatives' should be replaced with 'of volunteers and Parish Councillors' and after 'provide their views and opinions' add 'knowledge, skills'. After 'incorporation in the draft plan' add 'with Parish Council support' Members agreed to these changes.

MB advised members that the NP is a marathon and not a sprint with recruitment to the focus groups to work together as members of the community, not just skills. JT advised that the neighbourhood planning is a process and not a product. It is about involving and bringing people together.

Members discussed 'all decisions by the Steering Groupwill be carried out by the majority (more than 50%) are in favour' that is shown on page 3 of the draft NPSG T of R. Members unanimously agreed that 'more than 50%' should be removed from the document. All members agreed that the quorum for the Steering Group should be 5 and not 4.

MB advised members that the NPSG draft Terms of Reference, after the agreed amendments, will be formally submitted to the Parish Council for their acceptance.

6. Proposed for the next meeting

MB advised members that he has spoken to a consultant who would give a free talk on Neighbourhood Planning. MB informed members that the SDNPA have to give help and co-operate on specific points on the NP as set out in the Localism Act 2011. MB recommended that both a consultant and a representative from the SDNPA attend the next NPSG meeting. **ACTION:MB/DP**

LD suggested that others such as Councillor Tim Bryant, previous Chair of the NPSG, and Geoff Johnson, Planning Consultant at Seaford Town Council may be invited to the next meeting. **ACTION:MB**

7. Any Other Business

MB advised members that decisions made by the Steering Group at meetings will be submitted to the Parish Council for ratification at their full Parish Council meetings.

Dates were proposed for 2023 NPSG meetings in the East Dean and Friston Village (small) Hall being 9th January, 20th February, 3rd April, 15th May, 26th June, 18th September and 30th October. The Village Hall manager will be contacted to check availability. **ACTION:DP**

8. Date of the Next Meeting: Tuesday, 9th January 2023 starting at 6.30 pm in the East Dean and Friston Village (Small) Hall, Village Green Lane, East Dean, BN20 0DR.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.17 pm

Signed.....(NPSG Chair)

Date.....