

STEERING GROUP MEETINGS

Held at Church Meeting Room, 13th June and 23rd June 2017

13th June

Present:

Tony Hill (Team Leader)
John McCurdie (Secretary)
Nigel Davies (Community Monitor)
Jannice Wilkinson
Patrick Willink
Chris Granger
Jenny Harrison
Emma Butterworth
Claire Ellwood
Mark Cropper

Introduction:

Tony Hill welcomed everyone to the meeting and started by reviewing recent changes. Jannice is now Chair of Burneside Parish Council, and at the last meeting the Council said that the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was being paused. A lot has happened over the last 6 weeks, mainly with reactions to Land Allocation, and the original deadline of 31st May had been extended to 13th June.

Community Consultation Day Discussion:

The Community Consultation Day on 13th May was attended by about 160 people, with many couples and families, and a significant number from Bowston. The general meeting between 12pm and 1pm took place in a packed room and had an unpleasant atmosphere. About half a dozen people grabbed the floor, and others remarked that the atmosphere was intimidating, and that it continued after key people left for the main gathering. Patrick asked if there was a nucleus of hostility, and Tony said that there were 10-12 who galvanised others.

From the main meeting and display, Tony said that many responses were simplistic and general, e.g. one person wrote "not needed, not wanted" on all sites. It was felt that many people were frightened of change. Comments from the Steering Group (SG) were:

- Mark – that was human nature, especially for unknown change. We have talked of the need for change but it is not understood.
- Patrick – the community was seeing only developments and nothing else.
- Jenny – the SG needs to address assumptions about what parishioners want and what do they understand about the implications.

Tony said that he would reply to those aspects later. He added that the Bowston SE site was viewed much more negatively than Bowston SW. It was noticeable that a large percentage of the parish was not engaged, even though that we have outstripped most other Neighbourhood Plans from the start.

Next steps:

Tony urged everyone to look again at the revamped NP website
(<http://www.burnesideneighbourhoodplan.online/>)

Land Allocations will be taken to the next phase of the process. Unfortunately, the public thinks that these are decided, to which Mark remarked that we need to explain ourselves better. Tony continued by saying that Land Allocation is a start, and that there will be more consultation as well as Site Assessments, Habitat Assessments, etc. Those surveys go to SLDC, LDNP, Environment Agency, etc. and will take up to 6 months to complete. When the date is set for the start of the assessment process, the rest of the timetable is defined. Policies must be set within those 6 months, and these will be based on the ones drafted in March by Nigel. Land Allocations will form part of those policies. All this work will take place concurrently.

Communications:

Tony said that he had relentlessly asked volunteers to become involved using 3 drop-in sessions, banners, posters, web sites, etc. but that he had not been effective enough. Patrick felt that Tony was being unnecessarily harsh on himself, and that we have presented something causing real concerns, so communications need to change. Jenny said that we have learned a lot about the community, and that we need to create structures for listening. She felt that we should not beat up ourselves but learn. Tony felt that there was a disconnection between the SG / Council and the community. Emma said that she felt that there was only a response from the community when we touched a raw nerve, e.g. parents outside the school showed no interest when the NP was mentioned to them. Mark said that we need to bring in youths, especially those who want to work in the Mill, and that the Youth Club should be revived. He felt that new blood was needed.

Tony doubted that we have the capacity to manage the project and the communications between the main bodies, viz. Parish Council, SG, NP Team, Nigel McGurk, and SLDC. The suggested process would be that December 2017 would be the target for the draft plan, leading to summer 2019 for the referendum. Tony felt that the SG, landowners, and the MIII did not have the in-house resources and skills or the relationship with the community to complete a successful plan. He believed that the Vision was still viable but that it needed to be for the whole parish.

Mark said that there were issues because we are disengaged from the community. In general, the community goes to the church, the Bryce, sporting facilities, then goes home without other

engagement, and people needed to be brought out more. Patrick said that a good NP will get engagement of the community without seeking it.

Proposal:

Tony recommended that we employ professional help for the presentation and project management of the NP. He believed that we could afford it through Locality grants, the precept, and the Partnership. The objectives would be to develop the policies and resolve land allocations into realistic sites concurrently with the site assessments. He had approached Noel Farrer of Farrer Huxley Associates (FHA) to take on that work and work closely with Nigel McGurk. A key feature would be to communicate effectively with stakeholders. Comments from the SG were:

- Emma – he is an outsider, not living in the village or knowing people.
- Jenny – the Vision has been read by very few people.
- Patrick – Noel is flamboyant and will not be locked in a box, so we must ensure that he engages with the community.
- Mark – surely his job is to produce the blueprints that we present?
- Patrick – there is a lot of suspicion.
- Jenny – happy for the SG to develop policies in conjunction with FHA but how?
- Mark - FHA would take feedback from the SG. The next consultation day would need illustrative drawings that FHA could produce.
- Patrick – agreed that good drawings are a vital part of the next consultation, but only a part. Project Management skills are needed to drip-feed communications.
- Emma – are we clear enough about a brief for FHA?
- Tony – we do not have the skills for co-ordination and communications.
- Chris – will sections be written by Noel, Nigel, or both? Noel will be disengaged and will crack eggs.
- Tony – Noel will meet the SG to scope his role.
- Patrick – struggling to separate the roles of Nigel and Noel.
- Tony – requesting permission to scope what Noel does.
- Jenny – unsure about the respective roles of Noel, Nigel, and Tony.
- Patrick – the role of the SG is to unblock. He thought that Nigel would be leading us through the process. We need to manage Noel because he can polarise, and therefore we need to decide who does what.
- Mark – if not FHA, who would do the policies?
- Jannice – we need professionals to guide us. There are different styles of writing, and we need to get a corporate "look and feel".

The SG agreed to invite Noel Farrer of Farrer Huxley Associates to meet them and discuss what his professional services could bring to the development of the NP.

23rd June

Present:

Tony Hill (Team Leader)
John McCurdie (Secretary)
Peter Ashby (Community Monitor)
Noel Farrer (Farrer Huxley Associates - FHA)
Nigel McGurk (Erimax Limited)
Jannice Wilkinson
David Ginsberg
Jenny Harrison
Claire Ellwood
Mark Cropper

Introduction:

Tony opened the meeting by stating that a 6-months timetable had started, triggered by the start of various environmental surveys. We are pausing the NP to consider our next actions, including looking at responses from the community and how better to communicate with them. Presently, there is a spectrum of community feelings ranging from mistrust to apathy. Tony said that it was important to remember that we are at the beginning of the process.

Noel Farrer gave a presentation (attached). He highlighted key points:

- Good landscapes are occupied landscapes.
- There are components of a world-class village in the Vision.
- The Vision set out good and bad points: a lot of things are not working.
- Theme of a festival village.
- There were 12 key actions for the village that involved no land allocations.
- There were 5 levels of intervention.
- A Neighbourhood Plan gives control, otherwise SLDC has it.

He highlighted positive developments that had already happened or were being planned, e.g. Community Energy scheme, United Utilities improvements, Lakes Line upgrades, and work that TMAG had generated.

However, he pointed out that people have only been asked to comment on land allocations, and that we have lost track of the wider benefits of what we are doing. Burneside talks about needs but has no aspiration. There is no social glue to keep people in the village: recent events in Bowston at the Handsome Brewery were the first signs of gatherings.

John said that there had been great advances in, for example, housing and cars over the last half century. Houses used to have one coal fire in the living room, outside toilet, odd cupboards in the kitchen, but now we have central heating, fitted kitchens, etc. Cars now had a heater, radio, much improved efficiency and safety, and much reduced maintenance. Yet all of that came from architects and designers. People did not ask for these improvements, but

aspired to them once they had been seen. He felt that the community had no aspirations but needed to be shown what was possible.

Nigel asked how we can convert people?

Noel felt that there were several things to be done:

- Re-engage with the village about the Vision.
- Show everyone that quality and a better place for all is central to what the NP is for.
- Only show each component of the plan in its context of achieving wider benefits for all.
- Communicate in ways that are clear and easy to understand.

He added that we must be careful, or people will fill a vacuum with their worst ideas. As soon as possible, we need to say when the next public event will be.

In the general discussion that followed, David said that we had to be very careful how we described the involvement of Noel and Nigel. Tony said that the key questions about the working relationship of Noel and Nigel with the NP would be "Is it consistent?" and "Is it achievable in 6 months?". It was agreed that Noel would write the scope and give it to Nigel. Nigel reminded the team not to forget the environmental work and SLDC.

As the Community Monitor, Peter Ashby was asked for his opinion on how the presentation and discussion had gone. He felt that this meeting was one that should have happened some time ago. Although the SG had done their best, it had not achieved what was wanted, but this meeting had addressed a lot of concerns.

David said that the SEA, HRA, etc. assessments involved Locality and AECON, who would do the work at no cost to us. Normally, the assessments would be consecutive but ours will be concurrent. However, he had two questions:

- Where are we with United Utilities and their plans?
- Which sites are in or out?

The answer to the latter question was that all sites are still in.

David continued by saying that we can apply for separate grants of £9000, which will pay for the work needed on the draft plan, and for a grant of £6000 which must be used within 6 months. In April 2018 we should have another chance to be granted £15,000. Any allocated funds could go to the precept, and we have £18,968 until the next precept.

Two actions were agreed:

- Noel to submit his plan within the next week, i.e. by 1st July
- Jenny and Noel to draft a communiqué from the SG about the current situation.

John McCurdie
Secretary, Burneside Neighbourhood Plan Team