

STEERING GROUP MEETING

Held at St. Oswald's Church Meeting Room, 20th October 2017, at 6pm

Present:

Tony Hill (Team Leader)
John McCurdie (Secretary)
Alan Thompson (Community Monitor)
Jannice Wilkinson
Sue Cook
Chris Granger
Claire Ellwood
Patrick Willink
Mark Cropper

Introduction:

The meeting started at 6.10pm.

Tony said that in August the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was not viable because the community in general was not supporting the plan. A large cadre had formed against the plan, especially after land allocations had been announced.

Tony said that the formation of the Residents' Association had been a good thing, since local issues were now being looked after. He mentioned that the last Parish Council Meeting had shown a split in the councillors of 7 to 4, when a motion was passed to prepare a draft NP for 22nd December. The opponents to the NP tried to raise an amendment for a 6-month pause, but it was not allowed because it was tabled incorrectly.

Tony said that he had talked to many people recently, and he felt that a schism was growing, influenced by a minority. There is a lot of hostility both to the plan and to people involved, especially since the Parish Council own the NP.

He returned to the default position as it stood in August, and he felt that the schism could continue for several years. Tony thought that we could not galvanise enough people, and that 4 councillors could continue to cause trouble. In addition, there were still several disruptions, for example with Freedom of Information requests.

As a result, Tony has decided to relinquish the Chair for the Steering Group. Before making 3 proposals, he invited people to make individual statements and to discuss them.

Statements and discussion:

Patrick (statement)	Felt that there had been a certain inevitability to tonight's outcome and that was ok. The NP is just one vehicle for achieving the Vision. He felt that the team had been successful in achieving the moral high ground. The team had never intended to cause division: they only ever wanted to create good things.
Jannice (statement)	Was very conscious of the public scrutinising every word, even making a complaint to the Standards Board (which was not upheld). She did not feel as if we could achieve anything.
Sue (statement)	Was aiming to do good things for the community. She felt that the aims of the NP had been misunderstood, and she never wanted division. She added that the community must think about the future.
Claire (statement)	The decision is disappointing, since the Steering Group (SG) had put a lot of time into the NP. She had tried to put herself into other people's shoes in looking at the NP.
Mark	Agreed that everyone had put in a huge number of hours, especially Tony with many 1:1 chats, but he felt that the community did not want to know.
Claire	Nobody was interested in the NP before land allocations. She is worried about what might happen without the guidance of the NP.
Patrick	Very easy to be negative, but many people thought that what we are doing is good.
Mark	There is poor social cohesion, but we have put some glue into the village.
Tony	We must not lose this work. We will get what we aspire to, just in a different way. He added that other aspirational NPs had similar problems, e.g. Kirkby Stephen.
John (statement)	Back in July, Farrar Huxley submitted a proposal to get the NP back on track, which Jannice, David and he discussed. Even allowing for consultants' recommending extra work for themselves, the cost was unaffordable and the amount of perceived work needed was eye-opening. Everyone present felt worn down by events and felt it was time to stop. However, a subsequent meeting of the whole SG generated enthusiasm and the NP was continued, but the same problems remained and again he felt that it is time to stop.
Alan (statement)	This is the third time that stopping a proposed NP has happened. He would have liked to have seen a community vote, viz. a referendum of people on the electoral roll.
Chris (statement)	The desire was lost after the May meeting for the community: the heart had gone. What has made it worse is there is another person on the Parish Council who is against the NP.
Alan	Felt that those for the NP will not be heard, since the anti-NP people are driving it. The reasons for ending the NP should be published.
Patrick	Said that we should keep the moral high ground.
Sue	Agreed.
Mark	We do not want acrimony.
Alan	It is already there!
Patrick	We do not want divisions to be deeper.
Chris	Wanted to dig in his heels, and spell out who is responsible. If there is long-term ambition, it is better to drop the NP.
Mark	Please, no negativity.
Jannice	There is a lot of energy, and when it is taken away it will go somewhere else to do good things.
Chris	August gave Tony and David energy to carry on, but the heart has still gone.
Mark (statement)	He had commissioned the Vision document to achieve something positive, and the first two years were great. That positivity ended in May. In August, the SG

	decided to drop several sites and have another round of public consultation, but there was no positive reaction. He had thought that the NP would gather and unify the village, but it had had the opposite effect. When he heard about the last Parish Council meeting, he realised how personal it was and he had no enthusiasm for writing policies. He felt that we would end up with a diluted and worthless document. He was disappointed that the community has not unified, and he did not want to remain on the SG.
Tony	Said that there had been innuendo about his being too close to Mark and having a conflict of interest with regard to Burneside Community Energy. He added that Nigel McGurk of Erimax had been really taken aback by May's meeting and also wanted to withdraw from the NP.
Mark and Patrick	Stay silent, especially with the media. Just leave a vacuum.
Alan	Pleased that the NP had brought the Mill, Cricket Club, and Football Club together. He said that it was easier for everyone to talk, and the SG had brought people together

Tony urged all members of the SG to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council. He said that positives from discussions were that we already have 2 housing sites allocated by SLDC and an exciting potential district heating scheme from Burneside Community Energy.

The 3 proposals that would be taken to the Parish Council are:

a) With Reference to: *Motion 5, October 2017 10b*

'That the Council continues with the Plan and an early draft is produced by 22nd December 2017. The Draft Plan for formal consultation will be agreed early in 2018, after further community consultation.'

The Proposal: That the motion (Burneside Parish Council minutes 17/135 c) is rescinded with immediate effect

(Burneside Parish Council Standing Orders 2015, rule 7a, option 2)

b) The Proposal: All work to produce The Burneside Neighbourhood Plan shall cease forthwith and the Plan is withdrawn with immediate effect.

(Burneside Parish Council Standing Orders 2015, rule 7a, option 2)

c) The Proposal: The Burneside Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Sub Committee) be dissolved with immediate effect

(Burneside Parish Council Standing Orders 2015, rule 4d (xii)).

The meeting ended at 7.15pm.

John McCurdie
Secretary, Burneside Neighbourhood Plan Team