

Minutes of Fifth Virtual Meeting of Renhold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Thursday 10th December at 7.00pm

N.B. – To save space Action to be taken **highlighted in Turquoise**

Present: -

Amanda Quince (Chair), Ian McIver (I.T), Keith Herkes (Treasurer),
Claudia Dietz, Nicky Gribble, Peter Norris, Tony Ploszajski, Jooles Roberts (Minutes Sec),
Sandra Einon, Dennis Ivins

New member: Sarah Mitchell-Wood

Specialist Planning Consultant: Sally Chapman, Chapman Planning.

Welcome & apologies for absence (AQ) AQ welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received: Kirstin Rayner, Steve & Anne Marie Livesley, Paul Sawford's absence noted and apologies were subsequently received from Paul Nicola Gribble to join the meeting later

Review of Minutes of last Meeting and Matters Arising (AQ)

AQ thanked the team for all they have done since the last meeting.

Matters arising;

Aims & Objectives of NP – to be covered in this meeting

East/West Railway – RNPWG to be copied into relevant section of Minutes of P.C. meetings, as there is a close cross over

Introduction of new team member

AQ welcomed Sarah Mitchell-Wood, who gave a brief introduction of herself saying that she relocated in July 2020 to Green End, Renhold from Barnet , where she had taken an interest in planning matters & wished that to continue in Renhold

Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial interest for the meeting (AQ/All) None

Visions, Aims & Objectives – Workshop (Sally Chapman/All)

(The following are notes from the discussions which took place, not a full report)

SC thanked AQ for the whistle-stop tour of Renhold yesterday, which gave her a chance to acquaint herself with the 3 new developments off Norse Road and the various Ends of the old village.

Process: Sally explained that there are usually 3 strands to the process:

1. Engagement; 2. Development of the Plan document; 3. Evidence for the Plan.

Each process to RNP is unique & is affected by the skills of the Group & how the community interacts with them. Development of the Plan document is Sally's speciality & this is her remit for the Group. Once all 3 stages have been completed, the Plan is submitted to the Local Authority. There is a list of topics available from Locality, but these are suggestions & it is not necessary to cover every topic. Each policy has to be justified fully, and the Examiner & the LA will look at these. SC advised us not to spend weeks qualifying evidence which could be proved by something very simple. Wording is very important, every word counts & policies must be worded properly to achieve the intended outcome. Start with a vision, objectives & aims - they will set up the policy for the Plan. At the end of the Plan there would usually be a Table showing how the objectives have been achieved. The vision is more for residents than for the Group.

Decide what is most important (this might be something like Heritage), prioritising this will ensure everything else flows through, ensuring planning applications are determined in line with the Plan. Set out community aspirations (this might be something like a play area, additional trees for a copse etc). Developers will see these & may offer them initially, saving negotiation later. These aspirations are not examined so put in as much as possible.. There are basic conditions & legal requirements to the process with which SC will ensure that RNP complies. SC suggested an Action Plan, & was informed that SE is working on a Project Plan. Consultation with the community is carried out but need to avoid questionnaire fatigue.

There are 3 main audiences:

Residents – they expect to see their requests included & will vote at referendum

Examiner – they will make sure that the basic requirements have been fulfilled & legal requirements met. SC said give an introduction with information to show what sort of place the Parish is, complete a picture which overlaps with the residents' requests.

Developers & officers at the Council – these are interested in the policies, maps & wish list.

Style – The Plan can be a simple Word document, or something more grand, as long as it is functional it is fine. KH asked for an example, & SC said a description of the Parish & its issues, facilities and a summary. CD asked what happens as the aspirations change, and SC replied a review would take place every 5 years unless something triggered it earlier, e.g ., a new Local Plan. NP can be reviewed to a limited extent without going through the process again – an annual update of progress could be put into the back of the Plan. However, if fundamental policies are changed, the process needs to start again.

Sally introduced her “Proposed Structure for Draft Neighbourhood Plan” template document – see attached – and talked the Group through it

Topic/Chapter Heading

The first 4 topics would be covered by standard wording.

Parishes descriptions/Issues Introduce the flavour of the Parish, the landscape etc.

Consultation Summary – SE will have knowledge of these – there has to be a summary of the consultation. Start folders now incl questionnaires, results, how the information was gleaned, add to these folders as the process proceeds. Publicity, website, photo of flyers on noticeboard. Make one person responsible for recording this information. TP, who has already started this, volunteered to take responsibility & was thanked by all. SE said there is no template which can help, it is common sense, and KH suggested it is an audit trail, what was done & how the Group got to the results. This document (Consultation Statement) will be available to the Public.

Vision AQ reminded everyone that the section from the PC which had already determined a vision about people and that had been advertised in the Annual Report be used as that, **but** SC advised that the NP vision fits well with that as it **needs** to be more about the place, although it can be about people as well. It only needs to be 3-4 sentences & SC will provide some examples. **RNP's** will be unique, i.e., the different Ends & new developments of the Parish, maintaining the characteristic nature of them, rural setting is important, acknowledge proximity to Bedford & how residents use its facilities. Landscape hill & valley, hill top setting to be retained. Parkland setting at A421 end. Working agricultural farmland to be preserved. Group put forward Community, Countryside, Connectiveness, Cohesion as being words to be used. Maintaining integrity of the village in proximity to Bedford, not form a part of it. SMW requested woodland (which she was informed is ancient woodland) be included.

NG joined the meeting at this point.

Chapter Headings

Objectives Objectives are not policies. Natural environment, retaining rural setting to come first. Talk about how new development should reflect rural character of the area & has to be appropriate. Small scale housing to enhance, & maintain & advance the rural character. NP said residents of the new developments value their views up towards the old village & the countryside on their doorstep. They do not want infill with modern houses. Preserve the green spaces between the estates. DI suggested the wording be taken from the Survey Results analysis, highlighting positive aspects & future evolution. Examples to be supplied by SC. Consideration to this from ALL members of the Group requested & contributions put forward to AQ within 7 days. SC went on to point out that unfortunately the Local Plan will overrule RNP. Latest policy always overrides older policies, new planning law overrides old. AQ said in her experience some developers do take NP's into account. RNP needs to support local development, small cul-de-sacs of, say, 10 dwellings. 30 dwellings would not be characteristic with existing settlements.

Environment: Built & Natural This is where the GI plan will come in, noting views, where people walk incl. to school from the new developments, behaviour rather than land use. Point out that the residents of the new developments, named Cranbourne Gardens, Aspires and The Spires, like to be associated with the old village & do not necessarily want to become part of the urban area. The 3 developments are visually separated with green land in between. The separation between Bedford & Renhold needs to be maintained to avoid coalescence. SC will construct objectives around the words she has gleaned.

Housing There is a requirement for smaller, more affordable properties, both starter and retirement homes, to be determined by Beds RCC housing analysis. If a need is established from the resident survey, then the character of new houses to reflect the setting and in small clusters, the density to go in the Policy. Sustainable housing will be mentioned, with thought put to the legacy being left, but as no one in the Group has expertise this will not be in detail. SC will forward a document for NP's relating to climate change. There is a White Paper with a Government Statement which talks about including a design code to go alongside NP's and there is funding available if the RNP allocates land for housing. CD volunteered to look at this on behalf of the Group and AQ thanked her on behalf of the group for stepping up to that responsibility.

Traffic & Transport Roads should be safe & accessible to all road users (NG pointed out their use by equestrians). Pavements – most of which do not have kerbs - should likewise be safe for use.

Community facilities The shop, pub, village hall, school etc. These should be protected & where possible their loss resisted, although in the main in Renhold these are private enterprises. Aim to retain & encourage new. It was noted that lease on the pub, which is currently closed, is being advertised by the brewery as the current landlord will not be renewing his contract. AQ to ensure that this is noted by the PC also.

Recreation & Green Space The GI Plan will identify these. There are currently play areas on the new developments which should be protected, & new recreational areas should perhaps be encouraged - particularly in the old village where there are no playground facilities.

Local Business A survey of who does what was suggested, and JR suggested this should be very carefully worded, as people working from home are likely to be suspicious of the motives behind it, what would they have to gain by completing their answers? KH suggested improved broadband might be one thing.

Community Spirit & Aspirations Traffic calming would go in & DI suggested using the Survey Results. The GI plan will cover this. Local green space aspiration will go in here too.

SMW suggested hedgerows could be included, and these will come up in the GI Plan, as will the new footway to the school.

Monitoring & Implementation & Review

Allocating housing in the NP:-

Pros - Allocating housing offers respect to local needs

There is funding for Design Code and a Housing Needs study. It was noted there is discussion underway about the addition of 2 more charity cottages.

Cons – Referendum risk if site chosen is not a popular option

Site assessment would add an extra year to the timescale for the production of the Plan

It is not necessary at this time to make a decision with regard to allocating housing. AQ stated that there are currently 1,375 houses and SC said this would show in the Housing Needs Survey. Self-build would sit well in the character of Renhold. PN suggested “keeping powder dry” with regard to allocating housing.

SC will write up the Draft Plan Structure and will send to IM to distribute for comment.

AQ asked everyone to think about the group’s Vision and to respond to email ALL

SC was thanked for her help, and she left the meeting.

RNPWG Update – GI Plan and Website (All)

It was agreed at the last meeting that a good way to present the character of the village is with aerial photographs. KH did some research, with several companies not coming back to him, and has approached John Edwards with regard to taking photos using a SkyCam. John is licensed to work in the community, although he has not so far produced any photos for a NP. The charge for 20-30 photos of the different ends and new developments is estimated at £350. JR reminded the meeting that Kirstin had suggested that contact be made with her friend, who is the pilot who provided the photos for the Gamlingay plan and KH agreed to do this. PN suggested he might ask a local helicopter pilot, and JR offered to ask her husband if he had the equipment to take such photos. JR to inform PN

Cliff Andrews will run the GI Plan presentation at the meeting arranged for 4th February at 7pm which it is hoped everyone will attend & AQ asked that the date be put into diaries. Members of the public will be invited to attend, although Cliff has suggested no more than 30 in total as being a practical number ALL

In the meantime, a flyer to alert all residents needs to be produced. To this end Steve Arnold from Ravensden has been contacted & he has agreed that Renhold NP may use his flyer as a basis for some ideas for the RNP.

Producing the flyer which will be used to engage people in the GI Plan , & a survey (which may be a separate document) with regard to the GI to be a priority. The deadline for getting these documents to be inserted into the Village Magazine is 26th January, but they need to be with the printer at least 3 days before that. Anne Grant to be approached with regard to having an aide memoire printed actually in the Magazine Editorial, and inserting a flyer AQ

NG agreed to talk with her very helpful colleague & ask for help in preparing a draft of the flyer, with a montage of photos. AQ stated that the Locality Grant would pay for the flyer & survey

CD is coordinating a Gap Policy. SE to touch base with her with regard to the Project Plan & Gap Policy.

Look at the websites for Oakley & Ravensden ALL.

IM to circulate Ravensden’s GI Plan Surveys, Newsletters and follow up Newsletters.

Website

Robbie Bays Media, who designed the websites for Ravensden & Oakley, plus more than 60 other sites, has been recommended to KH. With regard to a site for RNP (for which there is Locality funding available), which might then extend to be part of the PC website, Robbie gave a very good

presentation to KH/AQ/IM. He also designs Facebook & other social media sites. The site would be attractive & easy to access, he would maintain it and can update it 2 or 3 times a week. Everything is Cloud stored. There are 2 options. 1) Perpetual model. RNP would buy the software & pay for the construction. The site is then owned by RNP. 2) Subscription model. Cost for initial year £1800, with on-going costs of approx £1800 p.a. JR said she signed up to a subscription model some 25 years ago, and wishes she had never done so. This was with a local one-man band who quickly became too busy to give her site full attention. However, this company owns her website and her domain address and he wants a lot of money to release it. JR asked the costs of the Perpetual Model, and these will be ascertained. KH asked if JR had looked at Ravensden's site and was told that when she was looking at NP's that one was her favourite, but she would strongly urge caution with regard to a contract, especially get out clauses. The cost of the get out would also be investigated. SE asked if 3 quotes had been obtained, and was told this is not strictly necessary for the Locality funding, as you just need to submit an approved quote before the work starts, but other recommendations would be considered. SE suggested making contact with alternative companies, one she has used in the past who were good is TaylorFitch. IM was reluctant to put in a delay, as the website/facebook are now becoming urgent, and it was suggested that this matter could be dealt with by email contact between NP members, with no need to wait until the next meeting
[KH/IM/AQ](#)

Agenda for next meeting on January 14th, 2021

Finalising the flyer which will be used to engage people and encourage them to attend the Beds RCC GI Plan presentation on February 4th, & creating a survey [AQ/IM](#)
Gerry Sansom, Chair of CPRE, has been invited to this meeting

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm