

Minutes of the Twelfth (Virtual) Meeting of Renhold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Thursday 18th January, 2022 at 7.00pm.

N.B. – To save space, Actions to be taken are highlighted in Turquoise

Present:-

Amanda Quince (Chair), Ian McIver (I.T), Keith Herkes (Treasurer), Jooles Roberts (Minutes Sec), Claudia Dietz, Nicky Gribble, Denis Ivins, Sarah Mitchell-Wood, Peter Norris, Tony Ploszajski, Kirsten Rayner and Paul Sawford.

Apologies:-

Sandra Einon, who although unable to attend meetings, is very knowledgeable and has offered to be of assistance if required.

1. Welcome & apologies for absence (AQ). AQ welcomed everyone to the meeting, stating that although RNPWG had not met for 7 months, lots of work had been going on in the background, with informal sub-committees being formed by AQ, IM, NG, KH & TP in order to keep up the momentum and to do this work effectively, focusing on the GI Plan and writing the Context section. Two face to face meetings and a couple of Zoom meetings were held with Cliff & Mike from Beds RCC and CD had worked on the Housing Needs Survey on our behalf.

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

3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising (all). All matters arising appear on this Agenda.

4. Feedback from GI Aspirations List (NG) It became apparent, when reviewing the list put forward by BedsRCC, that not all of the aspirations on that list were really understood by the residents. It was thought that there were other areas which had not been included, & the map was complicated. NG, AQ, IM and KH went through the list, checking that the numbers tallied to areas on the map until it was felt that the revised version better reflected the views on the response forms from the parishioners, and was hopefully a document which could evolve & develop, i.e. if in the future a parcel of land were to be donated it could be included. BedsRCC were a bit reluctant to make some of the changes, but parishioners could be assured “you told us to do that, and we have done it”. KR enquired why BRCC were not particularly happy. Was it because they feared that the list could be challenged? AQ assured her that the numbers provided the evidence.

Little & Great Early Grove were named by a lot of parishioners as being in need of protection & looking after, but the landowners were not keen to include their woodlands.

KR suggested a further column to state whether or not the green spaces were protected. Some of the sites which have been afforded protection might need to move up the list & others moved down. Some sites will already be protected, i.e. the cemetery, which KR said is protected by the Burial Authority. It is the extension to the cemetery which is under question. BedsRCC to clarify who owns that land.

PS joined the meeting at this point.

IM explained that BedsRCC took the results of the survey at face value, without taking into consideration the distance between the rural & more urban parts of the village meaning that some respondents were not aware of some of the areas. TP was thanked for his supreme effort in establishing whether certain areas could be designated as a Local Green Space. KR suggested a zoomed in map showing the designated aspirations in the local area, segmenting it, i.e. the Ends, new estates, etc. as focused maps might help the Borough's Neighbourhood Plan Assessors. AQ felt this would need to be done as a supplement as BedsRCC would need more money to carry out any further work. This zoomed map could be included in the NP. PN was assured that the map he was using was the correct one, and the aspirations did not change the numbering on that map. PN agreed to prepare 3 or 4 zoomed in maps.

5. Feedback from GI Local Green Spaces (TP) In his summary of the feedback, TP said there were 20 sites which could all potentially be designated for local Green Space, but to look at all of them, BedsRCC would require more money, so ‘no hoper’ sites were weeded out to reduce the number to 7 which was within BedsRCC remit for charges. The level of detail which BedsRCC will give was felt to be quite impressive. TP agreed with KR's suggestion for an additional column prioritising the sites, with the sub group feeling that the 7 were the right choices. KR asked to see the list of 7, which were actually there in black, with one omission. IM to highlight the 7 in yellow. IM to send a copy of the list to JR. KR said school sites are protected whilst they remain schools,

otherwise they are not. TP informed that when BedsRCC have looked at the 7 spaces they will be recommended to BBC.

The Village Hall was gifted for the use of the village and parishioners would like it to be more accessible to them. It is a charity, run by a management committee who work very hard managing all aspects themselves. JR offered to assist TP & NG with his work on these subjects. AQ to coordinate a meeting with the VH Management Committee and the Trustees of the Sports Field once the GI Survey is published.

6. Feedback on TPO (KH) Bushey and Jubilee Spinneys are not on the list as they do not meet the LGS criteria but are in need of protection. NG said that Bushey & Jubilee Spinneys are owned by the same landowner, who owns part of the wood, so maybe they do not wish them to be designated. It was agreed to take this discussion away from the meeting & involve the landowner as well. A TPO can apply to a group of trees/woodland. Once the areas on the list have been agreed to be considered worthy of protection, Renhold Parish Council can apply to have a Tree Preservation Order put on them. The Tree Officer is very busy, and therefore RNPWG needs to do its own survey. KH was recommended to look at the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan, which is very helpful. KH added that none of the areas identified were areas of triple Scientific Interest but Little and Early Great Grove are county wildlife sites.

Numbers 6&9 are within areas declared as potential development sites which needs to be borne in mind when discussing Call for Sites. AQ believes that 6&9 were originally put in as screening between the new estates and KH queried whether they were a condition of the new development, in which case they may be protected so putting TPOs on them would not be an issue. NG & KH to work on this subject. There does not seem to be a standard application form for submitting requests for TPO's to BBC. IM showed the meeting the form which has been designed by KH, which bears RPC references etc. & will hopefully carry more gravitas than a letter. BedsRCC had advised us that a policy to protect the green gaps in the old village would be needed, and BedsRCC have suggested that RNPWG look at the policy written by Sutton P.C. CD & TP to work together on this. AQ to send a link to the Sutton NP to TP, who will forward it to CD.

7. Feedback on Housing Needs Analysis (CD) The survey carried out by BedsRCC received an 11% return, 145 out of 1300 forms distributed. The average is about a 20% return. Unfortunately, residents had not realised that they should have returned the forms even if they had only completed the first section and this omission had dramatically lowered the response rate. CD went through the Analysis - see Housing Needs Survey Report Renhold November/December 2021 attached. In the Draft Document in relation to rural exception sites, small sites used for affordable housing for residents with a strong connection to the Parish, Gemma suggested 5 x 2 bed (2 rental/3 shared ownership) and this was revised to 5 x 2 bed (1 rental/3 shared ownership/1 starter). BedsRCC also recommended 5 open market properties – 2 or 3 bed houses or bungalows. This merits further discussion to determine our own recommendations.

PN said rural exception sites are likely to be in the same area, for people wishing to downsize into affordable homes and KH said the allocation of affordable housing will work on a points system, so anyone in market housing is unlikely to be given priority, but they can be included. Looking at trying to provide affordable housing market units can be included, but do not have to be. It was felt that 12 units sounded too many for Renhold, and 9 would be better. Another thing to consider is would the residents of the more rural old Renhold want to live in the more urban new estates? KH thanked CD for making the documents easier to understand. AQ said in the BBC 2040 Local Plan, Renhold has not been allocated for any housing as there is no need and therefore no allocation. NG expressed concern that decisions and recommendations of housing need were being made based on a fairly poor response. Several residents did not complete the whole form, just the first section. CD & TP agreed to support affordable housing, although demand is low and KH agreed it is sensible to look at a small site for affordable housing but the problem will be finding a site which will not be attached to a Call for Sites area where the developers would be looking for profit and so unlikely to include anything from the GI Aspirations list. If BBC are declaring no need for housing in Renhold, they may be keen to take this up. 7-9 units, including 2/3 bungalows for downsizing with specific directions such as: some have to be ground floor dwellings with an age restriction applied i.e. for people who are over 55 or disabled.

The amendments made by CD were agreed. More discussion to follow. PN to send reference numbers of smaller sites on the Borough's Call for Sites to AQ for consideration and discussion at our next meeting. All Importantly, preserving the Green Spaces between the Ends will prevent some of the Call for Sites from being developed.

9. Action Plan: Timescales, assigned responsibilities (All) AQ went through the chart created by Sally Chapman. Introduction – AQ is working on this.

Vision – KR said this is a good starting point, but needs defining, bearing in mind Natural Capital (biodiversity, climate change etc.) with a few word changes referencing this work and making it a little less flowery and more substantial. KR

Objectives – AQ queried whether as many as proposed were necessary. KR suggested these should be grouped to reduce to 4 categories. TP to look at this in relation to key themes which he had agreed to write after re reading his initial findings.

Recreation & green spaces – to go under the umbrella of Natural Capital

Community facilities –Need to have greater access to what we have.

Inform BedsRCC that date of distribution of the Housing Needs Survey was 27th Nov 2021 AQ

KR suggested there needs to be input from local businesses – small businesses, people who work from home and farmers/landowners to find out what their hopes are for the future. Survey should ask how the RNP could help, get view points on biodiversity and improvements in the Parish, maybe arrange a Zoom call? KR to send examples to AQ.

Ravensden have put their objectives to the wider public, asking what people think. A double or 4 page flyer with a comments block for the objectives to be created.

The Vision will be that of RNPWG

AQ thanked everyone for their contributions thus far and for stepping up to lead on key areas which would keep up the momentum. Everyone to report back on progress made at next meeting. All

10. Report to the Parish Council & for Village Magazine (KH) One consolidated report this time KH

Note for people's diaries.

Thursday 2nd June Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The PC is organizing a bonfire beacon & fireworks at Howbury Hall & is looking for help. Local groups are being invited to have a stall, with any proceeds going back to them, i.e., church, school, W.I, gardening club and so on. Anyone interested in helping to speak to AQ All

Meeting closed at 9:00 pm

Date of next Zoom meeting: Thursday 24th February, 2022 at 7:00 pm