

MINUTES of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Committee of North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 6:00 pm in the Turner Hall

Committee Members Present:

Robert Gunn
Steve Legg (Secretary)
David Painter
Kevin Swann (Vice Chair)
Judith Wardle

Others in Attendance:

Neil Homer, and Matt Jennings, representing the O'Neil-Homer Planning Consultancy

NP 66. Apologies for absence: Sherard Veasey.

In the absence of Sherard Veasey, the Chair of the committee, Kevin Swann, the Vice Chair, acted as Chair for this meeting.

NP 67. Declarations of interest: None of those present had any special interest to declare.

NP 68. Discussion with Neil Homer concerning our objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan and a review of the draft Questionnaire and work required to progress it for delivery.

- NH began by commenting on the approach we have been using so far in the design of the Neighbourhood Plan village questionnaire. He has built up a lot of experience in helping communities to develop a neighbourhood plan, and does not think that the Locality Questionnaire template provides an approach that can be successful because it is too long, is based on outmoded assumptions about the planning process, and risks opening up discussions that are outside of the NP remit and are therefore simply a distraction.
- The Locality Q invites respondents to request mutually incompatible outcomes.
- It has been designed by Community Engagement Officers and others who do not have the expertise or responsibility to deliver the outcome of the NP.
- The Locality questions tend to suggest residents should respond by demanding that there be no future development. This is simply unrealistic given the unavoidable fact that houses will be built in great numbers around the district on the basis of the housing strategy set out in the emerging Local Plan.
- It is more realistic for the NP to identify a site within the village where it would be acceptable to designate its being used for something like a Community Land Trust over which there would be some local control.
- The WODC Local Plan 2041 is currently going through its consultation phase, and our NP must be cognisant of that. We need to study the 2041 plan in depth, especially with regard to scenarios such as "Village Clusters", which would see North Leigh and New Yatt coalesce into a much bigger settlement.
- NH asked about what we had learned at the Parish Meeting last October where residents had listed their concerns and aspirations for the village on post-it notes. KS summarised the areas of concern that had been elicited. He has a transcript of these which he will circulate.

Action KS.

- NH suggested that we may not learn much more from a village questionnaire beyond what had already been obtained from the Parish Meeting. He confirmed that it is not required to carry out

a village questionnaire in order to fulfil the requirement of the NP to have consulted the village. In one sense we already have done this.

- NH proposed that instead of proceeding as we had planned, we should adopt an alternative strategy. Some villages have tried to prepare a NP using the Locality template over several years, and the project has failed. Others have adopted a different strategy and have succeeded within two years. The Deddington NP is an example of this. NH recommends we take a detailed look at this one.

Action: ALL.

- We should instead, with the assistance of O'Neill-Homer prepare a proposal for the scope of the North Leigh NP, we should gather evidence to support the scoping document, and we should present it to the village at a workshop to be held in the New Year.
- We must avoid offering mutually incompatible options, and make it clear that there are some areas outside of the remit of a NP.
- The NP Scoping Document should cover areas including:
 - A Site Assessment Process to be carried out – what sites are there that have future potential for other uses
 - Infrastructure assessment – internet, mobile data, water/waste water, surface water, energy, etc.
 - Green Infrastructure assessment
 - Consideration of the School site - potential for enlargement / relocation
 - Catalogue of Heritage Assets
 - Village Design Code
 - Designating a site for a Community Land Trust or similar
 - Assess need for extending sports & recreational facilities
 - Assess potential for extending retail provision, e.g. shop, pharmacy.
- NH will deliver a project brief and set of recommendations summarising what was proposed in the meeting. This will constitute the final deliverable of the consultancy package already purchased.

Action : NH

- We will review Neil's report and discuss how to proceed at our next meeting.

Action: All

NP 69. Review status of grant support from Locality

- The Locality grant application went in but there seems to be a backlog with applications and they are taking 6 – 8 weeks to process.

NP 70. Review Technical Support Guidance requested on Locality application

- This item was not addressed in the meeting.

NP 71. Agree actions to be carried out prior to next meeting

- See above for actions.

NP 72. Date of next meeting.

- Neighbourhood Plan Committee – 6:00 pm Monday 23rd October in the Turner Hall.

The meeting closed at 19:45.