

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Committee of North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on Thursday 16th November 2023 at 6:00 pm in the Youth Centre

Committee Members Present:

Steve Legg (Secretary)
David Painter
Kevin Swann (Vice Chair) – part of meeting.
Sherard Veasey (Chair)
Judith Wardle

Others in Attendance:

Martin Bowsher, Nikki Budd, Suzanne Millar, Adrian Watts, Fiona Watts
(Email addresses were provided, and those present requested to be copied in to the committee documents).

NP73. **Apologies for absence:** Rob Gunn.

NP74. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

NP75. **Discussion of the proposal from Neil Homer for the consultancy support work to progress the Neighbourhood Plan.**

A proposal has been received from Neil Homer of OneillHomer for the work to progress the Neighbourhood Plan to the stage of Pre-submission Draft for consultation under Regulation 14.

It was decided to obtain quotations for this work from two other consultants before evaluating the three together. Steve will approach Community First Oxfordshire and Bluestone Planning. Steve will discuss with them whether they already have a generic Neighbourhood Plan consultancy support package, or if they need to meet with us first to establish our requirements.

ACTION: Steve – contact two other consultants.

It was further decided that Sherard and David would work together to create an evaluation scheme which would be used to compare the three quotations and select the preferred one.

ACTION: Sherard & David – produce evaluation scheme.

Judith has circulated the Hailey Neighbourhood Plan and its Locality-derived Questionnaire, which was generally considered to be a suitable model for what we would like to produce for North Leigh. Neil Homer has deprecated the use of the Locality-style questionnaire, on the grounds that it can give a misleading impression of what can be achieved within the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, and can thus result in conflicting expectations that can stall the development of the Plan due to conflicting views within the community. It will be interesting to see what the other two consultancies feel about the value of the questionnaire.

Judith has contacted a friend on Hailey Parish Council, asking who was the best person to speak to about their Plan. He suggested contacting Graham Knaggs, who is the current chair, and wrote most of their document. Graham's profile says he has a background in "planning and finance". Judith offered to contact him to find out how their Plan progressed, whether they had used a consultancy firm, and whether it had proved effective.

ACTION: Judith – contact Graham Knaggs.

Sherard has contacted the person who led the development of the South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan. While South Leigh is a much smaller community than North Leigh, it was interesting to hear that most of the process had been concluded within 11 months, with most of the content having been created by one person on the team, who is a retired Planning Officer. The South Leigh NP has already shown its worth in a recent planning application to construct a Waste Digester Plant in the village. WODC refused permission, and quoted more than one of the Neighbourhood Plan policies in their decision.

Sherard has also spoken to a person involved in the (completed) Hook Norton Neighbourhood Plan. He heard that they documented three sites within the village that might be suitable for small scale developments, but had rejected two and adopted only one site. However, within a short space of time, all three sites had been the subject of a successful planning application by developers.

It was agreed that Sherard would invite the South Leigh team leader to give us an overview of how their work progressed, and to explain how much paid consultancy input was required.

ACTION: Sherard – arrange visit from S. Leigh NP Lead.

NP76. Review status of Locality Grant Application

Kevin has opened a grant application with Locality that will remain active until April 2024. He has not had time to progress the grant application since the last meeting, but will meet with Steve in the next few days to progress this. They will also prepare a budget proposal for the Neighbourhood Plan subcommittee to present to the next Parish Council meeting on the 14th December. In both cases, estimates can be based on the figures provided by Neil Homer. Although the quotes from other consultancies may differ, it is likely that they will also be framed within the limits of the grant available from Locality.

ACTION: Kevin & Steve – meet to progress Locality grant application & Parish Council budget proposal.

NP77. Agree Actions

See actions noted above.

NP78. Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be on Monday December 11th at 6 p.m. in the Turner Hall.

The meeting closed at 19:05.