

# **MINUTES of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Committee of North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 6:00 pm in the Turner Hall**

## **Committee Members Present:**

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

## **Others in Attendance:**

Suzanne Millar, Adrian Watts, Andy Clements

## **Co-option of new members**

Martin Bowsher, Suzanne Millar and Adrian Watts offered to assist and were co-opted onto the committee.

It is hoped to allocate pieces of work to pairs or individual members in the New Year. An illustrative list of potential topics can be seen in the BP quote. Some topics may be best suited to be assigned to the consultant entirely. Other topics may need some local data gathering and the consultant will work that up into the finished section. Committee members will be asked if they would like to choose a topic to work on.

NP79. **Apologies for absence:** Martin Bowsher, Paul Evans, Fiona Watts

## **NP80. Declarations of Interest**

None.

## **NP81. Review of Actions of Last Meeting**

- Steve – contact two other consultants - Done
- Sherard & David – produce evaluation scheme – Done & circulated
- Judith – contact Graham Knaggs – report circulated
- Sherard – arrange visit from S. Leigh NP Lead – **action continued - Sherard**
- Kevin & Steve – meet to progress Locality grant application & Parish Council budget proposal – Done.

## **NP82. Review of Locality Grant Application**

The application has been successful, and the sum of £6,960 has been awarded.

This must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March – any excess must be returned.

We may be able apply for another grant in 24/25, up to an overall maximum of £10,000.

There is an additional grant of up to £8,000 for large or complex plans.

There was a long delay in this funding year (23/24) due to the government department failing to confirm funding would be made available until part way through the year.

There is increased concern about whether the government will continue to fund neighbourhood plans in 24/25.

Although our application to Locality was based on the quote by CFO, we are not bound to use them.

Kevin & Steve will complete the online registration process in order to access the grant. It will hopefully be paid into the Parish Council bank account by the end of the year.

**ACTION: Kevin & Steve.**

Kevin will ask the Parish Council to approve the draft Neighbourhood Plan committee budget he has prepared for the financial year 23/24.

### **NP83. Review of quotes from consultants**

Quotes have been received from three consultants: OneilHomer, Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) and Bluestone Planning (BP).

The OneilHomer quote has been excluded as they were unable to work within the Locality maximum day rate of £578.

The BP quote was received only today and had not been fully considered by all committee members.

Sherard requested all committee members to review the consultancy evaluation scheme he produced with David, and email Sherard with suggestions for how it could be enhanced.

**ACTION – All.**

There was a discussion of the ways in which we could work with a consultancy and how other local parishes have used consultancies.

Hailey Parish Council was successful in obtaining a Locality grant, but used consultants only in the latter stages of their Neighbourhood Plan work. South Leigh did not use consultants.

Judith reported on the meeting she attended recently about Rural Housing. There was an interesting presentation about genuinely affordable housing built specifically for local people at Hook Norton.

She mentioned that Hailey had allocated a site for affordable housing, and it had been developed in the intended manner.

North Leigh residents are likely to be implacably opposed to the allocation of building sites within the Neighbourhood plan, due to the excessive amount of recent development. Nevertheless, it may be necessary to include a question about housing need in our questionnaire, even if this returns the expected result. In any case, the District Council will be able to supply data on local housing needs.

It was noted that the response rate to the questionnaire is likely to be less than 20%, even if paper and electronic versions are distributed and local groups are polled for their views.

**NP84. Next Meetings – purpose and schedule.**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. in the Turner Hall. This will be a focussed discussion on the relative suitability of the two remaining quotes, from CFO and BP.

The following meeting will be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January at 6 pm in a venue to be determined. The purpose of the meeting will be to adopt one of the two quotes. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Parish Council meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> January to be formally ratified.

It is hoped that one of the two quotes will have a majority support within committee members following discussions on December 19<sup>th</sup>. If so, the preferred consultancy will be advised of the likelihood of their being selected in order to facilitate their commencing work directly after the Parish Council meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> January.

The meeting closed at 18:55.