

**Notes of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting, Friday, 15th April,  
17.00-18.30 OTC**

**Present:** Liz Sanders, Michael Haley, John Nowell, Christopher Clark, Paul Dowse, Frank Payne, Michael Hinman, Maureen Burns-Jones, Ann Lewis

**Absent:** Oliver Bird, David Salkeld

**Matters Arising:**

- regarding the NP Plan submissions, we know only that there have been 3 responses to the Barleythorpe's (one of which is Frank's) and 4 to Oakham's.
- before further decisions can be made about our website, we need approval from the TC. Michael Haley to pass on details of costs and expedite. It is possible that the co-opted Town Councillor (Alf's replacement) will take on responsibility for setting up Facebook for the NP.

**Event Review and Outcomes:**

- Liz stated that we had met our 3 main objectives on Saturday 9th April in the Victoria Hall. We met and engaged with residents, informed them of the NP, and they provided us with feedback.
- approximately 46 names were given on the questionnaires, 40 of which are contactable. A future event will take place whereby the latter will be able to decide if they are willing to go forward and form working groups with us.
- feedback from all SG members was positive. It was agreed that there was a lively buzz in the hall, plenty of interest and comment. The team worked well together, the Guides did a great job and the real stars were the Baptist Church coffee and cake providers. (Both were thanked in the local paper.) It was felt that we adopted the appropriate tone as a NP Steering Group in that we were not seen as Town/County Council.
- next time we hope to have a more professional, streamlined look to our presentations but not to the extent that we appear too slick or to have spent vast sums of money. (Our name badges were seen as a very good idea.) More specific focus on topics would also be advantageous.

- our residents were predominantly over 50 and it was agreed that next time we must contact and communicate with other sections of the population. Very helpfully, the Guides all took questionnaires with them for friends, family and other Guides to fill in and these will be returned to us.
- regarding feedback from the post-it notes, there was quite a lot of overlap and some comments were not strictly to do with the NP. It was agreed that all our feedback must go through the TC for consideration and must not simply be forgotten. The evidence must show that we have heard what was said and can act on it but we must pass on what we cannot deal with.

### **Individual feedback from post-it responses - main areas of concern:**

Tourism, Heritage and Leisure: Christopher noted that in order to attract visitors we need better information in the town - comments about lack of maps, information, tourist info centres which are accessible to/open for visitors.

Transport: Paul noted that parking was a major concern (ties in with tourism and business and town centre) as was transport/local buses and the impact of the level crossing on congestion.

Community facilities: high on Frank's agenda was the over stretched surgery and the lack of a new surgery for the Oakham North development. The need for a community space/multi-purpose facility was also made clear. Does Oakham need a purpose built facility or can use be made of what we currently have? Michael Haley pointed out that in future the library and museum may be relocated and buildings may be available for change of use. Michael Hinman suggested that Oakham School could be approached about further use of its facilities.

Other: Maureen introduced the matter of the part played by RCC. When would they need to listen to what we have to say? Michael Haley explained that, once the boundary has been decided, there would be dialogue between the TC and RCC. All the SG does must be agreed by the TC . RCC can answer our questions and could be invited to attend our meetings to provide us with advice.

Business: John's feedback from shopkeepers suggested that parking needs to be sorted out. Businesses/shops are closing and the town centre is looking a little sad. Michael Haley pointed out that in future, and once the NP is in place, the town will get more funding from CIL money.

Rural and Open Spaces: Michael Hinman reported that there is anxiety about the retention of green spaces and about future developments. Residents feel that there is a

lack of playing field space (especially on the 'bird estate'), a lack of facilities and play equipment for different age groups. Liz suggested that people might not be aware of what there is on offer at present.

Housing: Ann reported that most comments were to do with provision of accommodation for the elderly (understandable given the age of those attending event) and the need for social housing. Many felt that smaller developments are required, not large developments. How far the town should extend was another concern. Those on the Uppingham Road and to the east of the bypass were concerned about further development. Strong feelings were expressed about Oakham not extending beyond the bypass and not encroaching on neighbouring villages.

#### **Next Steps:**

- there is a need for collation of our individual feedback which Oliver kindly offered to do - and Paul offered to help with this process. Points for the TC and RCC can then be passed on and key, initial issues for the NP retained.
- another press release is required (for either next week or the following week), one which contains our findings, collation of points and an explanation of what we can work on to prove that we are a proactive team.
- invite people to form working groups on our given areas by holding another presentation/information session in the Victoria Hall, using the details given on the questionnaires. Liz suggested that we may get 5 or 6 keen people - as well as another co-opted Town Councillor.
- work must also be done on communications - leaflets, logo, approaching schools etc.

The date and time of the next meeting, for consolidation of data and to work out what we will do with working groups, is Thursday, 28th April from 17.00-18.00 in the TC office.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 18.30.