

Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan

Minutes of the Community Steering Group Meeting held at the Bengeo Club at 19:30 on 9 August 2017

Attendees:

Mark Lynch (Chairman of BNAP Community Steering Group, Sacombe Rd resident)
Cllr Steve Cousins (middle Bengeo resident, town & district councillor)
Cllr Linda Radford (town & district councillor)
Cllr Peter Ruffles (town & district councillor, Bengeo Working Club trustee)
Cllr Andrew Stevenson (lower Bengeo resident, town & county councillor)
Cllr Mari Stevenson (lower Bengeo resident, district councillor)
Hilary Durbin (Chairperson of Lower Bengeo Residents' Association)
Ben Penrose (Chairman of Molewood Residents' Association)
Frank Butler (Treasurer of Great Molewood Residents' Association)
Terry Betts (Chairman of Hertford Civic Society)
Paul Keyworth (lower Bengeo resident)
Aska Pickering (Sacombe Rd resident, Chairperson of Stop Bengeo Quarry group)
Doug McNab (town planner & Molewood Rd resident)
Linda Pryor (middle Bengeo resident)
Sue Cousins (middle Bengeo resident)
Janet Gibbs (lower Bengeo resident)
Jock Wright (lower Bengeo resident)
John Howson (Molewood Bengeo resident)
Justine Perry (Dimsdale area business, Cariad Marketing)

Apologies:

Cllr Sue Dunkley (Folly Island resident & town councillor)
Cllr Sally Newton (Ware Park resident & town councillor)
Joseph Whelan (Hertford Town Clerk)
Maria Iancu (Hertford Town Council project assistant)
Colin Broomfield (Buckwells Field resident)
Jody Saunders (middle Bengeo resident)
Jaqueline Veater (Hertford Town Council consultant)

The minutes of the last meeting (12 July 2017) were agreed.

Peter Ruffles summarised the Town Council Working Party (WP) meeting held on 3 August 2017, saying that the WP were reviewing a number of example successful Neighbourhood Plans and that the subject of Terms of Reference for the BNAP had not been on the agenda. It was suggested that the example of Bishops Stortford NPs should be considered and that Town Clerk is very happy to provide information.

Aska Pickering summarised the events of the BNAP Volunteers Meeting held on 26 July 2017:

- 40 participants
- Lots of feedback and discussion, leading to the identification of a set of key themes for the plan:
 - Housing and Development
 - Traffic and Transport
 - Natural Environment and Green Spaces
 - Culture and Community (with Leisure subgroup)
 - Business and Enterprise
- The BNAP still needs to reach out to more businesses and other stakeholders, but activities are in place to address this and representation was reasonably broad for the stage of the process.
- John Howson suggested that the name of Natural Environment and Green Spaces may change to Natural Environment and Countryside.

Mark Lynch initiated a discussion of the Community Steering Group's Terms of Reference and Constitution saying that:

- There is currently energy and support for the plan within the community but this could easily dissipate in the absence of any obvious progress.
- There are external pressures (e.g. HERT4) that add an element of urgency to the production of a draft plan.
- Many on the steering group therefore feel the need to move the plan forward as quickly as possible and are hoping for a relationship with the Town Council that allows that to happen. Hence the request to consider a Constitution to establish the Community Steering Group (CSG) as a body with a degree of independence.

Peter Ruffles stated his view that the CSG could be allowed to do just that, as long as the WP are kept informed and are able to exercise their oversight role. Linda Radford endorsed this view. Andrew Stevenson agreed that this was an appropriate way forward and would be consistent with HTC concerns about their limited resources. This was the approach adopted by the meeting.

Terry Betts suggested having both a constitution and terms of reference so long as they were consistent.

It was agreed that any further comments on the ToR would be combined, with the intention of submitting the ToR to the next steering group meeting for adoption. Any suggestions for amendments to the ToR should be sent to Mark Lynch by 22 August. The ToR will be also submitted in time for the next WP meeting.

The following points were also made in relation to ToR during the meeting:

- Peter Ruffles asked that an explicit reference is made to the duty to liaise and cooperate with adjacent authorities and Neighbourhood Plans.
- Terry Betts asked that HCS and other community organisations are explicitly added to the ToR - they wish to be involved.

- Terry Betts suggested explicit agreement that organisations such as HCS may send a representative to CSG meetings rather than nominating a specific person.

Terry Betts reminded the meeting that wide representation (specifically for landowners, enterprise etc.) is an important part of making the BNAP successful. Andrew Stevenson reported that CRH (Tarmac) had expressed an interest in playing some role in the BNAP. Tarmac see their development of 8 highly sustainable dwellings on Sacombe Rd (a sensitive greenbelt location) as a flagship project, and it may be a useful model for HERT4. Andrew Stevenson circulated some wording that had been approved by CRH (Tarmac). Additionally, Andrew Stevenson reported that McMullen and Sons have also expressed an interest in being involved (their HQ is within the ward boundary).

ACTION: Mark Lynch to ensure an updated Constitution/ToR goes onto the agenda for the next Steering Group meeting in September.

Aska Pickering presented a proposal for a “Communications and Management” Group that would co-ordinate internal and external communications on behalf of the CSG and essentially be an executive group with day-to-day responsibility for running BNAP activity (on the understanding that full CSG meetings are required for significant decisions). It was agreed that this should go ahead with Aska Pickering leading. Hilary Durbin queried the group’s name and it was agreed that the “management” aspect needs to be clearer. Options suggested included Communications Management Group or Communications Strategic Group. Peter Ruffles suggested that this Group would effectively be the CSG Executive and that may be a suitable model for it.

Steve Cousins suggested that any communications should be approved by the Town Council in advance. The meeting agreed that, while this would be impractical for most routine updates and communications, it should be the case whenever communications appear to be officially endorsed by the Town Council.

ACTION: Aska Pickering to suggest a name and Terms of Reference for the “Communications and Management” Group at latest 1 week before the next CSG meeting.

Linda Pryor summarised her initial analysis of the results of the survey monkey questionnaire on the BNAP website. The results presented are attached. The response numbers are small so far (about 40) but growing.

Frank Butler agreed to share information about the BNAP among residents in Great Molewood although he did feel that they may not normally consider themselves part of Bengo. However, it was pointed out that as they are part of Bengo Ward, they would be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Hilary Durbin proposed that the BNAP should make an effort to engage younger members through Youth Workers, etc. Engagement through schools will be also important.

Andrew Stevenson introduced the proposals for an initial set of BNAP Working Groups:

- Homes & Development
- Culture & Community. (The HUDS is proposing a Cultural Quarter for the area between Courtyard Arts and Hertford Castle. Historic buildings/conservation and new development - there is a possibility that the Arts Council may fund a significant project on the Old Brewery and Old British School sites.)
- Transport & Traffic (which would cover congestion and parking issues)
- Business & Enterprise.
- Natural Environment & Green Spaces.

The CSG is actively looking for leaders/co-ordinators for the Working Groups (from the pool of 60 or so volunteers). Initially they are asked to pull together a pool of volunteers for the Working Group. It is expected that the WG co-ordinators will sit on the CSG and help co-ordinate and report plans/status via the Communications and Management Group.

So far:

- John Howson has agreed to lead Natural Environment & Green Spaces
- Jody Saunders (not present) has agreed to coordinate initiating the Business & Enterprise WG. Justine Perry suggested that she can engage business owners to solicit feedback and start developing themes.

ACTION: Aska Pickering to connect volunteers for each Working Group.

Doug McNab suggested that all Working Groups should:

- Explore broader themes for preservation or future development.
- Focus on how to engage with the community and gather evidence if policy is to change.
- Look at the District Plan and ensure that the suggested policies do not already exist (avoid replicating existing policies).

There is no more information yet on the Working Group volunteer workshop agreed to be ran by Jacqueline Veater on 12 September.

ACTION: Aska Pickering to follow up with Jacqueline and Maria and promote the workshop for Working Group.

There was no detailed discussion of the proposed BNAP Roadmap itself, but some suggestions, principally from Doug McNab, on how to extend and improve the information being gathered:

- Add some simple demographic questions to end of the on-line questionnaire.
- Distribute the website address at high footfall areas (e.g. Hertford North Stn)
- Make it possible for respondents to respond via email, a paper copy or phone.
- Distribute through Residents' Associations
- School newsletters
- Engagement outside Sainsbury's supermarket
- Hertford outdoor cinema

- Engage neighbours - can be done by volunteers, CSG members and the Residents' Associations

It was agreed that the next step on the Roadmap is to engage with Doug McNab and Jacqueline Veater and any support provided by EHDC (new person appointed).

**ACTION: Mark Lynch to present a draft roadmap to share at the next Steering Group meeting.
Steve Cousins to share the contact with EHDC specialist.**

Under "Any Other Business", Linda Pryor asked for clarification on how the plan is supported financially and what would happen if the referendum fails. Councillors explained that EHDC will support the statutory Examination and the Referendum, while the Town Council has budget for the process of producing the plan (to fund, e.g. a consultant). The possibility of the plan failing was discussed and the conclusion reached was that the Town Council and CSG must remain true to developing a plan that the community wants and supports.

Terry Betts suggested that East Herts District Neighbourhood Planning Guidance should be included in any "Further Reading" lists supplied as part of BNAP documentation or, e.g. on the website.

The next CSG meeting is on 6 September. It was agreed that the meeting after that should be on Thursday 5 October. Paul Keyworth suggested that the monthly meetings should make use of other venues and Cowbridge Hall was suggested for the next one.

ACTION: Paul Keyworth to investigate using Cowbridge Hall for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at ca. 21:40.