

MINUTES OF THE BENGEO COMMUNITY STEERING GROUP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 28 MARCH 2018 AT ST ANDREW'S CENTRE, HERTFORD

Attendance: Mark Lynch (Chairman), Steve Cousins, Sue Cousins, Hilary Durbin, Maria Iancu (HTC), Jacqueline Veater (Planning Consultant), Paul Keyworth, Brendan Clifford, Doug McNab (delayed), Emily White (delayed), Ben Penrose (delayed).

1. Apologies for Absence

Alex Pharaoh, Mari Stevenson, Andrew Stevenson, Aska Pickering, Terry Betts, John Howson.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the previous Community Steering Group meeting were approved as a correct record.

4. Steering Group Membership

Brendan Clifford, chairman of the Folly Island Association was welcomed to the meeting and to the Steering Group. The FIA will input into the work of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman has asked the members attending the meeting for suggestions on how to make the Community Steering Group even more representative of the various areas of Bengo ward and the diverse skills required for the work. It was discussed that each Chairman of the Working Groups would need to nominate a deputy Chairman that could attend the meetings of the Community Steering Group in case they are unable to attend.

It was discussed that the eastern part of the ward does not have a local community organisation. The breakdown by postcode of the survey results will show if the area has engaged in the consultation process.

5. Feedback from the Town Council Working Party

The members noted the minutes and agenda of the Working Party that have been sent to them via email. It was discussed that at the request of the Working Party, the Chairman of the Community Steering Group and the Planning Consultant have agreed to draft an estimate of the future costs of the Bengo Neighbourhood Plan, which will be circulated soon.

In regards to the future costs for the Neighbourhood Plan, it was discussed whether to use a volunteer from the community or professional services at a cost of about £2,500 for designing and typesetting the Neighbourhood Plan document. The Members agreed that it would be best to use professional services because a

volunteer would require possibly a week to complete the job and they would need to be available on short notice for further changes.

The Planning Consultant mentioned that she will apply soon for a grant from the Locality organisation to support the production of BNAP.

Another estimated cost for BNAP is the expenditure for the pre-submission consultation. Booklets containing the policies of the Plan will be printed and distributed to all addresses in Bengo ward.

6. Policy Workshop

Most of the meeting's attendees also participated to the Working Groups workshop on 27 March, so a recap was deemed unnecessary. A list of the workshop attendees was compiled during the meeting.

7. BNAP Survey Status

The results of the survey were then discussed by the Community Steering Group. The Chairman commented that there were 779 responses received, which is less than the 1000 that was hoped for, but definitely not a bad result. It was discussed that compared to other surveys that only receive 1-2% responses rate, BNAP survey fared very well.

It was mentioned that the transformation of the disused railway into a cycleway received an 88% approval rate. It was also noted the preference of the public for the brownfield and industrial areas to be developed, rather than green areas.

Next step is to analyse the data more thoroughly and do some cross-analysis (e.g. correlate a certain answer with postcodes).

"Heat maps" would be some useful analyses because they would show the people's opinions by their location. However, this type of analysis requires certain mapping abilities.

The results of the survey will be uploaded on NextCloud to be available to the members of the Working Groups.

There was a mention that the Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan will be completed by the Chairman and other volunteers from the community in the coming period.

The discussion then moved to the issue of the children's survey. It was considered that there can be alternatives to the regular paper surveys, such as focus groups, or a presentation and open discussion with the young children. It was discussed that many of the children studying in Bengo don't actually live in the ward and it would be good to avoid consulting them – it is likely that Duncombe School has the most students who live outside the ward.

Sue Cousins will approach schools after Easter. This means the consultation of young children will take place after the middle of April. For consulting teenagers,

schools can be approached and asked to email students living in Bengoe to invite them to complete the survey. The online survey could be re-opened for this purpose. First schools that can be approached are Simon Balle and Sele School, where contacts have already been established, while Richard Hale could also be contacted.

8. Working Group Status

The Working Groups provided updates on their work. The groups have not met recently as the survey was ongoing, but new meetings will be planned soon.

Apart from looking at the results of the survey, they should aim to consider the Project List. This can be done collaboratively to avoid conflicting objectives.

The Planning Consultant is keen to attend the next Working Group meetings to help them in the next stage of the process.

It was mentioned that the heritage matters are currently not in the remit of any group, but they could be covered by the Natural Environment and Green Spaces Group. There were mentions of the heritage report of Hertford Town Council which includes non-statutory heritage sites. This would be a good starting point for the work of the Group. A map of the heritage sites in Bengoe will be displayed at the forthcoming exhibition.

9. Hartham Greenspace Action Plan

The Chairman gave an update on the work of the Hartham GAP. The deadlines were very short and it is expected the Chairman will be contacted again soon in regards to sending a representation.

10. Business WG Proposals on Parking

The Chairman of the Business Group presented the work of the group in the past months. The separate survey that was applied to businesses active in the ward showed there is a relative content with the current facilities. This should be sought to be preserved, considering that the Neighbourhood Plan will be in place until 2031 and that the business environment is likely to change drastically over time with the advent of new technologies. Since employee parking is, however, a major concern, the Business Working Group has been considering whether the car parks at Hartham might be re-purposed both for businesses and as part of a wider "joined-up" scheme linking to other elements such as the old railway line (if that becomes a footpath/cycle route).

Considerable discussion ensued and some felt strongly that catering for more cars was the wrong direction to be moving in.

There was some support for the suggestion that a bus to Sainsbury's could be catered for by allowing buses (only) to cross between the two Hartham car parks.

11. Public Exhibition

Maria Iancu has asked Bengeo Primary school if the school hall can be a venue, but was told that the school can no longer be hired. After discussion, it was agreed that Duncombe Hall will be considered as the first choice of venues for the organisation of the consultation workshop. Preferred timing for the workshop is on a weekend in the second part of May or first part of June. Steve Cousins will find out the availability for Duncombe Hall in that time period. Exact dates are to be confirmed, considering venue availability. There is the possibility that this is organised in two different places and/or days.

It was discussed that Bengeo Club is not accessible for wheelchair users, and church halls such as the Trinity Church may not be appropriate for everyone. Other possible venues are the St Andrew's Centre and Hertford Theatre, yet these are located on the outer edge of the ward. Display boards would be needed to exhibit maps and proposed policy directions.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

To be decided.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting ended at 21.35.