

**Minutes** of the fourth meeting of the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held at the Wivenhoe Council Offices at 19.30 on 5 June 2013.

**Present:** Robert Needham (chair), Jane Black (Wivenhoe Society), Cllrs Neil Lodge and Frances Richards, Karen Syrett (Spatial Policy Manager CBC), Chris Downes (CBC Planning Policy Technical Officer), residents Richard Polom, David Allen, Marika Footring (minutes), Saun Boughton, Peter Hill, David McCabe (Planning and Estates Manager) and Michael Day (Unit Manager) both of Lafarge Tarmac.

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr Brian Sinclair, Eugene Kraft, Rob Lee.

**Declarations of interest:** Robert Needham, Peter Hill (both on Wivenhoe Housing Trust)

### **Review of Minutes of the May 2013 meeting**

Mersea Homes have been informed of the Neighbourhood Planning work and have acknowledged receipt of the letter.

Robert Needham has asked for a dedicated Neighbourhood Planning link on WTC's new website. Marika Footring has posted about the Open Day date on the Wivenhoe Forum and emailed approximately 30 local clubs and organisations with the information, asking for it to be brought to the attention of their members.

There were two items for discussion on today's agenda: funding, and preparation for the Open Day.

### **Proceedings**

1. Robert Needham asked Marika Footring to outline the funding and grant information. Funding is available by way of Direct Support or as grant money. Direct Support comes in the form of expert advice and help with the completion of the various stages of the planning process. Grant funding of between £500-£7000 can be available for start-up costs and incidental expenses such as printing and publicity as long as itemised costings are submitted and the costs cannot be met from other resources. Either or both can be applied for and staged applications are possible. Funding rounds started in May 2013 and will continue until the money runs out, with another round starting in 2014. Karen Syrett advised to concentrate Direct Support applications on specialist services such as planners, drawings etc. when we know which are needed. The suggestion was made that a sub-group be formed to apply for grant funding. Robert Needham and Shaun Boughton volunteered for this sub-group. Karen doubted whether a sub-group was needed until we want to apply for funding for a housing survey, or transport, Highway-related matters, landscape/habitat surveys etc. Richard Polom also thought we first needed an idea of what we wanted to do before applying for grants.
2. Discussion then focused on a housing survey. Peter Hill reported that Moira Groborz of the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) was prepared to do a housing survey. Peter reported that the costs of a survey, and contacting the 3600 properties involved at 25p per survey letter, would need £3-4000 to pay for it, even if we held the cost down by delivering the letters with volunteer help. The two Wivenhoe wards taken together have a population of 10200 people and any survey should concentrate on future needs. Chris Downes mentioned that he is at present doing a survey for CBC which covers future needs and aspirations. The survey is being done by sampling and the Wivenhoe sample is 400 (out of 6000 for the Colchester area as a whole). A draft of the results was expected in September. No definite conclusion as to whether to carry out a housing survey was reached.

3. The meeting then moved on to discussion of the second agenda point. Robert Needham confirmed that the William Loveless hall was available for the Open Day on 6 July and that WTC had made it available free of charge. Karen Syrett's announcement that six CBC officers can come to help on the day was gratefully received. An introductory explanation about residents' involvement in this process needs to be prepared. This should include an explanation and projection of the current and future need for housing as without an explanation it was likely that people would just say 'no' to any idea of further development. Highlight the fact that 'self-build' is currently being heavily promoted by the Government.

Members continued to discuss three aspects of the Open Day: publicity before, setting up on the day itself, and post-Open Day action.

**Publicity.** David Allen and Marika Footring will prepare a flyer taking the Boxted example as a guide. This to be with Neil Lodge for copying no later than 22 June. Neil and Frances Richards will organise the house to house distribution by volunteers during the week before the Day.

Press release to *Brightlingsea & Wivenhoe Chronicle*: Neil will contact Derek Scarpenier. WTC to be asked to place press release on Council website.

Flyers to be displayed on notice board at Railway station and various others, in pubs, Co-op, library. Local organisations to be sent flyer for display on premises and/or websites.

**Setting up.** This must start at 9am. Public expected from 10 am onwards, until 3 pm. Displays of maps around the hall:

- 1) Map of existing Local Development plan with introductory note: '*where we are now, and what we want you to do*'. Karen Syrett offered to prepare the introductory information sheet and can supply large maps, flipchart sheets, post-it stickers and pens.
- 2) Other large sheets with written questions to be placed at stations around the hall together with large maps of the projected Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area.

Neil Lodge to organise refreshments.

A visitor count needs to be kept, Fran Richards volunteered to see that this is done.

David McCabe sought clarification of the residents' role in the Open Day- were we going to ask residents what they want where?- and would it not be better to establish needs first before asking for sites, as is usual at County level planning?

It was explained that potential areas could be indicated but people would be free to indicate their wishes. Any new Neighbourhood plan would have to fit in with the Local Development plan and the Strategic plan, and the eventual draft plan would be subject to independent inspection before it could be submitted for approval.

In answer to questions David said that the Lafarge extraction operations on the Wivenhoe side were to finish in 2015 but that an extension on the Tendring side had been allocated in the draft submission version of Essex County Council's Minerals Local Plan for which, if successful, would extend current operations there for another 15-20 years.

No restoration scheme ran with the present permissions at the plant site but the site is not scheduled to become brown field and in the absence of an acceptable alternative form of

development would probably revert to agricultural use upon cessation of extraction operations. Lafarge are positive about the potential for development but will not be looking to do so in the next 12 - 24 months.

A point to note generally for the Neighbourhood Plan is that whilst the possibility of extraction operations remains there is a 250 metre buffer zone around the current and future workings where, for safeguarding reasons, no development could take place.

**Post-Open Day action.** It was recognised by members that the Open Day could only be called successful if we knew where we were going from there.

The analysis of residents' expressed wishes was likely to take at least a month and, according to Karen Syrett, this was where most of the money had gone in the Boxted project: paying for over-time of the Council's clerk.

It is important that residents know what will happen next. Robert Needham volunteered to prepare an explanation of the post-Open Day process, to go on the final board of the displays in the hall.

If people want to be kept updated with developments then it was thought they could leave an email address.

Due to a prior engagement Robert Needham will not be able to attend the Open Day and Peter Hill will stand in for him. Peter will ensure that the post-it notes get safely transferred to the WTC offices at the end of the day.

There being no further urgent business, the chairman closed the meeting at 9 pm.

**Date of next meeting**

**Wednesday 3 July, 7.30pm** at Wivenhoe Council Offices.