

East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG)

Informal Inaugural Meeting, 12 Main Road, East Hagbourne 8pm on Tuesday 3rd November

The purpose of this meeting was to make recommendations for the framework within which the NPSG will operate, for approval at the next meeting of East Hagbourne Parish Council on Thursday 12th November when the Steering Group will be formally appointed.

1. Attendance and Apologies:

Present: Cllrs Crispin Topping (CT), Iain Duff (ID), David Rickeard (DR)
Justine Wood (JW)

Apologies: Andy Barmer (AB), Marcus Wood (MW)

2. General principles and review of draft Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

The draft Terms of Reference package was reviewed and agreed with one change as a suitable basis for operation:

- The group will be known as East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
- It will be constituted as a Working Group of East Hagbourne Parish Council. This means that there is some flexibility in operational matters, but it will act in an advisory role to the Council without delegated authority: decisions and financial commitments must be approved by full Council.
- The NP will cover the area of the civil parish of East Hagbourne (which extends from the Mill Brook in the east to beyond Park Road in the west).
- The NPSG will work in cooperation with the Parish Council and Clerk and draw on expertise from volunteers and the Mindthegreengap organisation. It will co-opt additional members from the community as the work proceeds.
- An important element is that the whole community must be able to contribute and have their views heard. Equally, the work of the NPSG must be transparent and available to publish scrutiny
- All meetings will be properly announced to members, an agenda prepared and minutes taken which will be publicly available on the web site.
- Diverging somewhat from Blewbury's practice, we envisage that the NPSG would meet as a committee rather than a larger public meeting. public meeting would be held regularly at key stages of the process to engage with the community and gain their input (the one change we made to the draft TOR was to make two monthly interval a guideline rather than an minimum - it is better to time meetings when there is something useful to discuss).
- The Council's Code of Conduct was agreed to be a good requirement for members (and indeed all participating in the process). In particular, while everyone's view should be listened to, it is important that any material interest of the contributor is declared.
- With this one modification, the TOR will be recommended to the next Parish Council meeting for approval.

3. Learnings from informal meeting with Blewbury NP

The meeting with Blewbury on 27 October was very informative. Key learnings were

- Blewbury's Steering Group, like ours, started small, but grew to include more contributors over time, representing all aspects of the village.

- A key part of the process was specifying a village envelope where building/infilling might potentially be permitted.
- Formal documents including an urban Design Statement, a Conservation Assessment and a Landscape Statement were useful.

4. Discussion of key roles:

- Chairman: CT was nominated and approved as our Chairman - to be endorsed at next PC meeting.
- Secretary: While we may not need to formally appoint a secretary, it is important that proper agendas and minutes are prepared. DR offered to co-ordinate this.
- Finance co-ordinator: Finances will be controlled by the Parish Council, probably through a project fund held within the general council funds. We hope that Cllr Button will be able to advise us on financial matters as needed.
- Communications: We hope to leverage the undoubted skills of Mindthegreengap in this area although this is a separate project and we will need to consider the proper web host for information generated.
- Volunteer co-ordination: JW felt this might not be much of a problem, because most of the interaction would be through electronic communications and meetings.
- Liaison with the Parish Council; ID volunteered to act as the personal liaison with the Council. DR proposed that minutes of meetings would themselves act as a communication and reporting channel to the council. We should be prepared to give a report, however brief, at each council meeting.

5. Anticipated finance needs

Blewbury had achieved a NP within the £17k amount they were able to secure in grants. This is considerably less than some of the early plans (e.g. Wheatley) had cost. We expect a lot of the work to be achieved by village resources, but with external experts contributing as needed.

6. Plans for inaugural public meeting

We need to prioritise work on the NP with that on the immediate challenge of Grainger's planning application. CT suggested that an early task should be to physically walk the village boundary and highlight the assets to be valued.

We also need to learn more about the range of content in the NP by reading those prepared by other villages. Blewbury's NP should be out for comment in a few weeks and in the meantime there are published versions from Woodcote and others. Brightwell-cum-Sotwell's are developing a plan about one year ahead of us.

DR proposed that some activity was warranted in the near future to engage those who had already volunteered to help and others. an expert presentation on how to go about a NP would be a good way to start the process.

7. Other considerations

None.

Meeting closed at 21:50

djr 20151104