

Masham Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) Steering Group

Meeting 7pm 21st July 2022 at l'Anson's Offices

Minutes

Present: Neil Pickard (Chairman), Susan Briggs, Richard Mawer, Jim Dalton, Kelly Kitching and Howard Mountain.

Apologies: Flo Grainger, Mark Cunliffe-Lister.

The previous meeting of the MNP was held on 11th March 2020, following which the Covid pandemic caused all work to be put on hold.

This meeting was called in order to discuss and agree whether to re-launch the initiative to create a Neighbourhood Plan or alternatively to decide whether it was more appropriate to halt proceedings and direct the efforts of the community in a different direction.

Howard Mountain, who has been involved with the process of creating the Neighbourhood Plan for Kirkby Malzeard, Laverton and Dallowgill from its outset, attended the meeting in order to provide advice on their experience and to offer his assistance should the group decide to continue with the MNP.

1. Original reasons for commencing the process.

a) The principal concern in 2018 was centred around a potential influx of new housing, as at one stage there appeared to be the possibility of up to 200 new properties being built. Since then, a new Harrogate Local Plan has come into force and the likelihood now is that there will be 48 houses constructed on the Westholme Road site and up to 49 houses on the Swinton Road land, with the possibility that the Auction Mart site may also be developed if flooding concerns can be mitigated. Allowing for other infill development it is now more likely that a total of 120-30 homes will result within the foreseeable future. The current planning policy should mean that 30% of these will be 'affordable housing' aimed at local people.

b) The existing school facilities in Masham were also considered an issue as it was approaching capacity and it was hoped that the Plan could contain measures which may help to resolve this, perhaps by the allocation of an alternative site.

c) It was hoped also that the on-going issue of flooding affecting some areas of the town could be improved by the inclusion of flood management policies.

d) The percentage of properties used as holiday lets or second homes was noted as an issue at the time and if anything, this is now perceived to be of greater concern.

e) The adequacy of the existing sewerage treatment works was questioned.

f) Parking and other traffic related issues were also noted as being in need of action.

2. Is a Neighbourhood Plan still needed?

A general discussion took place and the conclusion was reached that there would still be benefits for the community in pursuing this, but that a wider ranging consultation and 'community' plan was also necessary alongside this, to cover non-planning aspects.

In addition to involvement by the Parish Council, it was felt that other groups such as the Community Office, Town Hall, Sports Association, Business Connections Group, the Peacock and Verity initiative, the Flood Alleviation Group and others would also need to act together for a successful outcome to be achieved.

It was felt important that these Plans are put in place as swiftly as possible and work would therefore re-start immediately.

3. The next steps.

It was agreed that the Steering Group would proceed with the process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan by completing the 'Initial Ideas' stage by holding discussions with representatives of the groups referred to above at a forthcoming meeting.

A draft 'Policy Indication Document' (bullet-point version of what the Plan may include based on informal consultation carried out previously) would be drawn up at the next Steering Group meeting in August, for presentation to the 'Initial Ideas' meeting in September, so that they could add their input. This meeting will also be used to commence the 'Stakeholder' Consultation process through which local businesses, organisations etc are able to formally share their views on how the community should move forward.

Susan Briggs will commence work on a public consultation document to cover planning and non-planning aspects and Howard Mountain, who was asked to co-ordinate the Neighbourhood Plan element, will obtain tenders from potential Planning Consultants with a view to making an application for grant funding from Locality, from whom up to £10,000 is currently available to cover related costs.

Future meetings.

Steering Group meeting – August 8th starting at 7pm in I’Ansons Offices.

Initial Ideas meeting with local organisation representatives – to be held in the School Room on September 7th – 7pm start.

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm and the group thanked I’Ansons for their continued hospitality.