

Sandy Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Thursday 16 December 2021 at 7pm via Zoom
Minutes

Present: Nigel Aldis, Robert Baker, Richard Barlow, Anne Elliott-Flockhart, Amanda Gibson, Arnold Gilpin, Joanna Hewitt, Ruth Lock and Chris Patterson.

Apologies: Anne Ramsay.

1. Review and approve the minutes from 18 November 2021

The minutes were approved subject to the following correction:

- That the sentence on page three, paragraph three should read may need support from someone from the council rather than made need.

2. Review open actions see list attached

- The Chair will contact Sally Chapman in January. She has also asked Central Bedfordshire Council to provide a list of consultants who are working in the area with a view to finding a consultant that we can work with.
- All web surveys will be closed at the end of the month.
- Analysis to be done in January from any additional surveys completed.
- The pens have been delivered.
- Barclay's window has now been painted.

3. Updated Project Plan & Timeline

Chris shared the project plan. The plan has been reviewed by CBC's NP Officer and is heading in the right direction.

Next year will mostly be spent building evidence for each of the working groups. BRCC have suggested that the green infrastructure plan will take until July so it makes sense to align evidence gathering for the working groups with that.

Working groups need to go through the results of the surveys then come up with suggestions that can be put to residents at next year's consultation events, along the lines of you said – we think this - do you agree?

We will need to write questions in a similar way across the working groups so the whole is cohesive.

We need to remember that the NP creates planning policies and should focus on issues that affect planning decisions. If the town gets new development, then the developers can be asked to provide or help fund the town's requirements. We will need to comply with CBC's local Plan, which is already being revised and remember that we are a working group of Sandy Town Council, and any proposal will need to be agreed with them before we go to Reg 14 consultation.

We need to be mindful of the budget. A budget item to be added to agendas in the future.

4. Working Group Updates & Plans

- **Environment**

The NP environment working group met with members of STC environment working group in December to review the aspirations in the current green infrastructure plan. The objective was to see which have been completed which are still desirable, and which are no longer relevant or can't be achieved. This information will be sent to BRCC in January and will form the basis of their initial questionnaire to residents to see which are still favoured and what additional ideas arise.

The grant funding has been approved and paid to STC by Locality for the phase one of the GIP update.

Anne R will set up regular meetings of the environmental working group.

- **Leisure & Culture**

The leisure and culture working group have met to go through the results so far from the questionnaire analysis. The results were a bit short on heritage so the group discussed what they might include.

Members were disappointed that CBC's leisure facility improvements weren't intended for the Sandye Place site, but it was felt they need to move on from that.

The group proposes to contact local groups and ask what facilities they feel are lacking in the town, what facilities are missing that make it hard for the group to function. **Richard** volunteered to contact the local groups. We also need to contact schools for their input.

A member of the public was interested in joining this group but was unable to make the first meeting.

- **Town Centre High Street**

This working group has not met yet. The Chair, Arnie and Joanna will meet up in the new year, there is one member of the public who will also join this working group, we will also try and recruit someone to represent the High Street businesses.

- **Housing & Design**

Arnie reported that he is still struggling with identifying a design that is common to Sandy. Chris suggested that instead of looking at design we could concentrate on the quality and sustainability of design.

It was noted that the Government have a design guide, but that CBC also has a local design guide, which is currently in the process of being updated.

Arnie will schedule a meeting with Joanna and Nigel to discuss the way forward.

- **Infrastructure**

Chris reported that infrastructure overlaps with some of the other groups but will include, road and rail, digital communication, drainage, utility supplies, cycle paths and vehicle charging points to name a few.

There is not much in the survey results relating to these issues apart from road and rail.

It was noted that we should consult with energy and utility providers to find out what capacity we have for future development and what infrastructure improvements would be needed if future development goes ahead. It was also noted that we should look at CBC's local plan to see what infrastructure improvements it identifies for the area.

Chris and Rob will meet to work on this. The chair will contact the resident who was interested in joining this working group.

5. Grant Funding Applications

- The Chair reported that Locality had approved the funding for phase one of the green infrastructure plan. The Chair will work with STC to raise a purchase order for the work to start in January. This action is now complete.
- The group has passed the first phase for funding for the High Street and Community Infrastructure Improvement fund. The feedback provided suggests that we could be successful with our bid. We need to work with a locality consultant to write up a plan by the end of March to get the application completed. The Chair has tasks to do ahead of a meeting with the consultant next week.

Richard thanked the Chair for all her work on applying for grant funding.

6. Use of Consultants Discussion

The Chair asked at what stage do we use our grant funding for consultants. After comments at the last meeting, it was felt that it would be best to find a consultant to work with who can come on board at the right time. Other groups have used consultants to write the policies to make sure they are worded correctly and comply with NPPF and Local Plan policies.

A member recalled that CBC said they could help write policies, would this be the easiest, cost-effective option? Another member had concerns that CBC officers would have a conflict of interest and an independent consultant would be best.

The Chair has been given a couple of names of consultants, but she will ask CBC for a list of others that are working in the area. The Chair was surprised that consultants can write policies in 4-5 days until she realised that was based on the information and work provided by the NPSG.

It was felt it would be a good idea to identify a consultant early on and have preliminary discussions to make sure we can work together. The Chair will set up a smaller group in the new year to look at consultants identified.

7. Community Engagement Feedback

- **Christmas Lights**

Richard had sent an email out with his feedback. He noted that the vicar was interested in the plan, but due to commitments hadn't had the opportunity to look into it. It would be good to consult with all the churches in Sandy.

There was some interest in the plan at the event, though not as much as at previous events, but it was still worthwhile doing as each event raises the profile of the group. A number of keyrings and sweets were given out.

It was noted that we need something that says Sandy Neighbourhood Plan on it to be displayed at the front of the gazebo or stand. A banner or flag was suggested. **Rob** to look at the design and costings for one that isn't too expensive and can be reused.

- **Barclays Window**

Jed Pascoe has done a fantastic job of painting the windows at Barclays. It is hoped this will draw people in to look at our display. Joanna has had an email from the agent suggesting we take our posters down after Christmas as the lease is up in mid-March and the landlord will be visiting. **Joanna** will ask to keep them up till mid-January and ask for a meeting with the landlord to discuss potential for the building.

8. 2022 Events Plan

- **Eve Appeal Tea Party – 19 March 2022**

- **Spring Market - tbc**

- **Carnival – 11 June 2022**

- **NP Event to test Evidence**

We will need to hold an event at some point to test the evidence gathered so far. We could potentially use the village hall, we can also do this online.

Members to have a think and come to the next meeting with potential dates for this event.

9. AOB

A member suggested that we need to make better use of our printed materials and the video we have. We could use a laptop and projector to display this at future events. We could ask to borrow the council projector to keep costs down.

It was agreed that videos are a great way to get people's attention. We can share an analysis of the results in this way.

The Chair suggested that we invite Jemma from BRCC to our next meeting to answer any questions from working groups which was agreed to.

The Chair thanked everyone for their work this year, as we have achieved a lot. She wished everyone a merry Christmas and hoped that everyone would get a chance to recharge their batteries ahead of the new year.

10. Next meeting 20 January 2022 at 7pm via Zoom