

Minutes of a meeting of the NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN JOINT COUNCILS COMMITTEE (NPJCC) held in the Committee Room at Mountfield on Thursday 3 August 2023 at 10.00am.

PRESENT: Councillors: Jim Basker (Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council, Chairman from minute 2), Paul Everall (Bradpole Parish Council), Ian Bark (Bridport Town Council), and Amanda Streatfeild (Symondsbury Parish Council). Cllr Sarah Carney (Bridport Town Council) attended as an observer.

Also present: David Dixon (Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer) and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Ian Bark was nominated and seconded to serve as Chairman for the municipal year. There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED: that Cllr Ian Bark be elected to serve as the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Joint Councils Committee for the municipal year 2023/2024.

Cllr Bark chaired the meeting from this point.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Phyllida Culpin (Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) and Paul Hartmann (Symondsbury Parish Council).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Paul Everall was nominated and seconded to serve as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year. There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED: that Cllr Paul Everall be elected to serve as the Vice-Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Joint Councils Committee for the municipal year 2023/2024.

Cllr Everall noted that the Local Government Association was looking at the issue of allowing meetings to be conducted virtually.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the informal (inquorate) meeting of the NPJCC held on 1 December 2022 be noted, and that the recommendations therein be adopted.

6. IMPLEMENTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to a draft of the Annual Monitoring Report, ENCL: 3820. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer introduced the report, commenting that:

- He was grateful to Sal Robinson, Jo Hughes, and Steven Yarde for their work on the report.
- This was the third annual monitoring report, and the trend appeared to show increasing recognition of the Neighbourhood Plan. 46% of applications had noted compliance. There was a sense that decision reports tended to use standard wording when referring to the plan.
- The majority of planning applications were for small improvements, whereas the focus of the Neighbourhood Plan was at a more strategic level. With this in mind, NPJCC should consider whether future monitoring reports should focus on larger developments.

Members discussed the extent to which Dorset Council takes account of comments relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan, and then include them in the officer report.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer advised that changes to the National Planning Policy Framework were awaited. A House of Commons committee report in July had noted that there was no government response to a consultation that had attracted 26,000 responses, and that there was too much 'stop and start' in the development of planning policy. He recommended that the monitoring report be updated to reflect this.

Members further discussed:

- Indications of changes to national policy, which tended to be announcements that were not followed by actual policy changes.
- Information that was still to be confirmed in the monitoring report, including updates to project activity and funding, and car park charging points.
- Next steps following finalisation of the draft report, which would be to publish the document and submit it to Dorset Council.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Monitoring Report be approved, subject to the incorporation of the further information required.

7. PLAN REVIEW TIMETABLE

Consideration was given to the BANP Steering Group proposal, ENCL: 3821. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer summarised the notes of a meeting held on 15 May 2023, setting out a possible approach to a 'light touch' review of the Neighbourhood Plan, with the Steering Group as the main driving body.

Members discussed:

- A need for the Steering Group to develop further its definition of ‘light touch’.
- Future NPJCC governance arrangements following changes in parish boundaries in April 2024, possibly incorporating one member from each of the five Bridport wards, and one from Symondsburry Parish Council and a quorum of four members.

RESOLVED: that

- NPJCC supports the proposal that a ‘light touch’ review be driven by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and that a further report be provided at a future meeting; and
- NPJCC governance changes be tabled for consideration at the next meeting.

8. BUDGET REPORT

The Town Clerk reported that parish contributions needed to be finalised before being circulated to participating councils. Issues discussed were:

- Costs of administration of projects.
- Whether the number of meetings could reduce.
- The costs of producing the annual monitoring report.

RESOLVED: that draft contributions be circulated to NPJCC members.

9. OTHER INFORMATION UPDATE ITEMS

The Town Clerk reported that current issues for the Foundry Lea Working Group were the Reserved Matters application, the felling of trees on West Road, and footpath diversions. The next meeting was scheduled for 25 August, with a pre-meeting on 15 August for local stakeholders only.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer reported that usable logs from the erroneously felled trees on West Road were being delivered to Wessex Community Assets, and the remainder would be offered to local residents by the Town Council.

Cllr Paul Overall advised that the main concerns in respect of Foundry Lea at present were the Construction Traffic Management Plan, and the Miles Cross junction.

The Town Clerk reported on the Community Governance Review transition plan. The Town Council was working on delivery of the plan, including services, assets, governance, finance, and staffing. The main issue for the NPJCC would be that of governance, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer reported that the Town Council was working on councillor recruitment ahead of the elections in May 2024.

Cllr Paul Overall asked whether a meeting of the town and parish councils, to discuss the community governance changes, had been arranged. The Town Clerk advised that he would pursue this.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

10. DATE FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman reported that future meetings of the NPJCC were scheduled for 31 August 2023, 30 November 2023 and 29 February 2024, all at 10.00am.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that

- (i) the meeting scheduled for 31 August 2023 be cancelled; and
- (ii) the remaining scheduled meeting dates be noted.

The meeting closed at 11.16am.