

Neighbourhood plan meeting 01/02/2021

Meeting start: 7pm

In attendance: Caroline Rackham, Lin Francis, Amy Hardingson, Emma Cully, Christine Farleigh, Catherine Bartlett

Caroline: We're still waiting for New Forest to come back with how can proceed with them.

We also might be able to look at other options outside of a Neighbourhood Plan. Because all of our building has already been allotted so we can just say what we want ideally with the town centre and a few other bits. It's a slimmer document than for some other areas.

We have 3 main topics we are looking at/including.

- The design aesthetic framework which looks at the look and feel
- The town centre looking at what we want there
- Green Strategy

We can do these as 3 different documents which can be pulled together.

Lin Francis: We already have shops in the town centre part. Are we able to take a design through there in case any of the shops want to be part of it? Is it worth thinking of a design to go across there that people can join in with?

Caroline: We can do things like setting out the height of buildings, and a statement about getting better quality architecture and questions to achieve that/think about.

Lin: If we had a plan or a design already there then the developer may pick it up. Not necessarily push it on them, but it's there if they want it.

Amy: I think that's interesting. I have a friend who is an Architect who has suggested that architecture students can collaborate with towns on real life situations like our town centre.

Catherine: This neighbourhood plan document is essentially a framework. We've got our overarching themes, and then we have policies within that. Setting the parameters of what we'd like to see. And defining what our town centre area is, and a parameters plan. A neighbourhood plan isn't really about drilling into the details, it's about overarching guidance. That

then means that a potential investor can come along and propose something in line with our framework.

Lin: Catherine said 'vision' there, which captures what I was looking for. Whatever happens, it will be different.

Caroline: And it might be time for us to talk to the precinct owners

Catherine: There are lots of key stakeholders in this area: police, HCC, NFDC, health centre and community centre... but with the exception of the private precinct owners we are mostly looking at public sector bodies who are looking at the longterm future and how they can do something that makes sense. It's not beyond the realm of possibility to look at a masterplan approach. Such as introducing a residential use into the precinct area. ... Or you could see a developer being invited to look at this area as an opportunity. To recognise and celebrate our successful local centre (because we do have a successful town centre, it is a hub) and to enhance that. There's nothing wrong with Totton town centre as a facility, it's just its look and feel that needs fixing.

Christine: I like Amy's idea of getting students involved for fresh ideas. Is the precinct limited with its categories?

Caroline: Yes that's what we're pushing for. To have a mix of retail, civic and residential will open this area up for development. We really need this changed and NFDC have recognised this, and this seems to be on the way.

So is everyone happy with our 3 categories that I've proposed?

Nodding of heads

Ok, let's go with that for now then.

Right, town centre wise we are parked and waiting for NFDC on info. Catherine has very kindly said she is going to create something visual from what we've gotten from snug, and I am going to add the comments we've had. Does anyone have anything else to add?

Lin: Having lived in Sussex and Brighton for quite a long time, I wonder about having a walkway occupied by artists so it has more of a feel to it. If we could get half of that kind of feel down towards Rumbridge then that would be a good spot.

Caroline: And Bath has the same sort of vibe. Part of it is about having very small units which have low business rates and which are ideal for crafts

businesses and start ups. There's potential if we closed library road that we could have a start-up business market or something. Or we could get a unit that is split into small areas. We could essentially manufacture the right environment for that.

Lin: It would be fantastic to provide a bit of tourism and attraction to Totton

Caroline: Any views on the idea of Library road road closure?

Amy: I'm pro it as a resident that would be directly affected. Especially with more home working in our future I think the benefits will outweigh the cons for more people. Having a better town centre with a nice pedestrian area on our doorstep outweighs a slightly longer drive to the motorway.

Caroline: It's a question of how it would be engineered that would make it possible

Christine: Would we need to make other changes? Because people could go up Stannington Crescent and up Testwood Lane.

Emma: Moving the Taxi rank to Salisbury road, or using Beaumont road as the exit point

Lin: It's a pity we don't have a roundabout near Lidl

Caroline: That would be a good idea.

I think we're at a bit of a standstill right now with us waiting on NFDC and seeing if we can get a new officer involved. Amy or Lin can you take on the mantle of chasing the town?

Amy: I'm limited at the moment with homeschooling

Lin: perhaps we can work together on that?

Amy: Good idea

Caroline: And we've got our green ideas. At one stage Catherine you were going to talk to David Harrison about the cycle network. What happened with that?

Catherine: Oh yes, that hasn't happened yet.

Caroline: There's quite a push by HCC at the moment to get cycle paths up and running and a bit of money available for it. Do you want to talk to David

about that Catherine, and specific access points that we can include in our green strategy.

Catherine: The environment bill that's waiting for royal assent at the moment is looking at biodiversity needing to be boosted, if not onsite then nearby. Ratio of population to semi-rural green space has now gained more momentum and an even greater focus. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of people having access to green space. I firmly believe that any new developments coming to Totton now will have this green space question under the microscope and will need to connect to existing green networks. The bare minimum that any land should provide is a circular route of 2.5km which should connect to existing networks. Requirements are getting stricter to provide good green spaces to make sure that walkers don't encroach into protected areas.

Caroline: We are running out of space to provide extra green space in development in the New Forest. One concession that's been made is that developers can contribute to rangers salaries. We need to be really careful that we maintain our green spaces and protect them.

Catherine: Yes there are instances where informal green spaces are encroached upon. And with our neighbourhood plan we can highlight these and make sure they are protected in perpetuity. The Civic Lawn for instance, is under-used as a green amenity in the town centre. That is one thing that Snug looked at and how we can open up that land and draw people into that green space. The other thing... You know how Southampton are bidding for City of Culture? I'm always focused on the role of green spaces in cities, and I'm working on how green spaces in Soton can be used as part of the city of culture bid. What's interesting about Totton is that we have all these interesting areas – down by the harbour and the board walks. But it's getting better linkages and connections between these areas. We can map the public footpaths that exist and highlight the dominate routes. One of the best maps in Dorset shows the preferred cycle routes which is a really useful document for people.

Caroline: I talked to someone about the possibility of doing a cycle route map for Totton, so that might be in the works.

Catherine: That's great. It's all about providing a hierarchy, a key, and access to the appropriate networks.

Lin: If we could advertise our board walks a bit more they are so brilliant. I am sure people come to use them.

Amy: And we could use the Community Rail Partnerships as well as a springboard for literature, and funding for creating it.

Caroline: Maybe you're right Catherine, we have a great town centre, it's just about improving the connections

Lin: And putting up a façade around the shabby bits

Amy: And I should send everyone the maps that the Totton Art students have made for me as I have permission to use those for a consultation!

Caroline: Brilliant. I can send those out with the minutes perhaps.

Thanks everyone for your time. I think that's it for today.

Meeting ended 19.55

Action Items

- Catherine creating something visual from what Snug have given us, and Caroline to add the comments we've had so far
- Amy and Lin to work together on talking to town council/members about Neighbourhood Plan
- Catherine to talk to David Harrison about cycle network opportunities
- Amy to email over Totton Art Student maps that we can use for consultation activities

Ideas of note

- Exploring avenues of maps/literature to advertise what we already have (board walks, green spaces etc) – i.e. Community Rail Partnership grant possibility
- Talking to South West Trains about footbridges to help better connect our walkways.
- Collaborating with architecture students to get ideas for 'vision'