

## **Neighbourhood Plan meeting 20/05/2021**

**In Attendance:** Emma Cully, Amy Hardingson, Lin Francis, Caroline Rackham, Christine Farleigh, Trevor Harris, Ann Page, Kate Crisell, Catherine Bartlett, Claire Upton Brown, David Russell, Dave Hills, Richard Lewis

**Meeting start:** 19.00

*The first few minutes of the meeting are missing from the transcript. Minutes start with Claire Upton Brown giving an update on NFDC's plans.*

Claire: We will be taking the work of the Neighbourhood Plan forward in our work. It's imperative that we have full involvement and engagement with the community.

Catherine: It can be a challenge to engage people, and it would be good to work together to achieve that in the community

Claire: We need to engage people at all different levels

Trevor: I looked up the New Milton neighbourhood plan website, their report has only just come out. It's some 90 pages long and has many in-depth sections. So I think we may still be a way to go with Totton

Claire: It is a long journey. They have to be very robust documents.

Caroline: Part of the issue was that there was some money floating around, that we haven't received, which would help us along.

Claire: Yes that funding can help to pay consultants, and that sort of thing

Caroline: Other towns also have areas where they can decide what to do with that land. But our areas are already allocated. So the only area we might have some influence over is the town centre.

Kate: When NFDC does consultation, will you be contacting the owner of the shopping centre as part of this?

Claire: We will be contacting all the stakeholders and inviting individual landowners.

Richard: As an independent planner living in the area I can help with certain areas of the report, and responses.

Claire: Absolutely. We're keen to work with trained individuals and enable training opportunities.

Richard: If there's a partnership between the parish council and the district then that's brilliant. We need to think about the aspirations and strategy, and what wants to be included in this plan. It's not a detailed masterplan, we're working on a vision. I can help put some of these things together, and work with the public engagement side. We need to be the best town at promoting our local interests to the Local plan.

Caroline: Speaking of consultation, our next step with the design framework is to do a physical event. Which we did have planned just over a year ago. Where are we at with that?

Ann: With guidelines as they are now, we'd be able to go ahead. I can let you know what Saturdays are available at the community centre.

Caroline: How would it work with Covid?

Ann: Provided we keep people distanced, it's fine. We'd probably be better off waiting until after the 21<sup>st</sup> June, because it may not be one of the named events that are allowed up until then.

Caroline: Could you have a look at late July dates, and if there's a Saturday free? And do we have any volunteers to help prepare boards and activities?

*Amy, Christine, Ann, Lin volunteering to help. Amy to look up list of previously planned activities in the minutes.*

Claire: I'd be happy for us to have a presence there.

Ann: Could we do something with a screen?

Caroline: Absolutely that's a great idea. The next thing is to talk a bit more about the town centre ideas. Catherine could you share the visuals you've been working on?

*Catherine shares screen*

Catherine: I think we've talked around this document a little before, but this has now been amended to reflect some of our most recent discussions.

Caroline: I wonder about altering some more of these bits and pieces. Particularly reducing the civic buildings, as we thought perhaps there were too many.

Catherine: Yes so in this design by snug the spaces have been redistributed, and this was one possible rearrangement to open up the green space and have more efficient use of space.

Caroline: I think where we had got to was that everyone liked the idea of making the town park more of a central focal part. And thinking about the civic buildings and specifically how much space we need. And also looking at access and making it more pedestrian friendly. We also discussed the level of the buildings and limiting the level around the park. And the other thing that we concluded was not to have any more space taken up by civic buildings. The salmon coloured buildings on the drawing at the moment are where the car park is, so we need to discuss if we want to maintain car parking or limit it more. There are specific car parking areas related to each area – civic parking, retail parking.

Ann: Is that top salmon building where the community centre would be?

Caroline: Yes

Dave: The town council is currently looking at renovating the town park, so how would we tie this in?

Caroline: Yes this design is quite old now, and we can tie those ideas together in the future.

Dave: At this moment, I think until we know what the land owners want to do with their land we may have started the wrong way around. We should ask the people who are in a position to do something – those are the key people we need to consult so we know what possibilities might be in our future. We've got to consider that some of the land owners might want to sell their land so that there can be a bigger development. We need to find out what the land owners are prepared to give. And then we can give our input, and our influence.

Claire: That is the kind of process that we usually do. What are you looking to do, would you like to lease, would you still like to have a presence? In terms of maintaining and delivering a masterplan to meet the needs of the wider community... We know there's a real issue with recruiting key workers. So part of the conversation with police and fire station might be understanding that they still need some amenities onsite. But once we know what kind of spaces we have, we can understand how to interconnect in a way that makes sense.

Caroline: I think we are thinking along those lines, and we just wanted to get an overview of what the town wants for the future. I think the benefit of us gathering our views is that we can then present those views as part of those discussions.

Lin: The idea is to gather ideas from residents, obviously councillors can have their input too, but we need to know what local people want.

Dave: We're in economic straightened times. If say a big landowner goes bust and decided to leave Totton then all our plans go out. And that's why we need to understand their intentions for the future.

Claire: I think we're trying to get to stage 3, and we need to go through stage 1 and 2 first. We're asking people about their vision, but we've got a lot of moving pieces that can change things quite quickly. But with all of those things, how does the community see the future – or what future would be desirable given those scenarios? We also need the information on landowners to influence the document.

Caroline: I think we need to put a pin in it for now, to go on with what we've started

Ann: Two things. Firstly, I think the snug drawing needs redoing because since that was done we've had a lot of change. The men's shed hasn't been taken into account, for instance. Secondly, I understand what Claire is saying about the developments having a big impact, but the key thing for us is the access through Totton. But someone has to take the lead on doing something with that train line.

Caroline: Just to be completely clear the snug drawing is a starting point.

Richard: Listening to this, it seems like everyone is a bit right. We need the landowners, we need the principles... a blank page is all very well but people respond better to ideas. Even if we might throw this out – it is a starting point for a discussion. Town centres should be high density, there's a conflict with car parking. We've got a huge challenge highlighted here, and it's all funnelling through Totton and there's immense pressure there. We could be radical and throw out Asda and suggest we could do something there and see what the reaction is. If the reactions are angry – great. That's information we can use. We need to people to feel listened to and heard. But we want for nobody to feel left out

Amy: I think we should definitely pursue a consultation based on what we have to stimulate discussion and help us collect more views and ideas. It would be good to do that simultaneously with moving conversations with landowners forward – what are the next steps for that stage? Who would be having those conversations?

Caroline: We have spoken to the landowners a few years ago, with Dave Bevan. We have had some initial discussions. Which is perfect, as now we have some visions coming together. And then Claire can talk to the landowners to take that step forward using the information we prepare for her.

Kate: The consultation might be good to have different pictures of buildings so we have an idea of what styles that people like.

Caroline: That is one of the ideas

Catherine: I just want to go back to what Claire was talking about with working groups

Claire: Checking that we're all doing work that is headed in the same direction

Catherine: I think it's clear there's not been that much communication between the town and district

Caroline: As far as the park goes, we started with a discussion to look at access at the war memorial, and then we realised the pond was due, and there are some ideas that are coming together out of necessity. But the brief hasn't been written yet

Dave: We were saying at the beginning that the consultation with the landowners is important. Thinking as a landowner, if some of these discussions get going the price of that land goes up. I wonder if we shouldn't be giving too much away in the consultations. If someone knew we needed their bit of land, then the price of the land would become expensive and that might prevent us from doing what we want to do. I'm worried about the expectations that we might be raising for people. I'm worried we are going about things the wrong way.

Catherine: I think the assumption here is that we are making decisions about pieces of land and telling people about it. When what we're doing is stimulating ideas and asking people what they think.

Richard: Adding to Catherine's point, we do have the power to shape some things. We can start to nail some things down with a visionary approach. We can have more of what we want than we think. But we are at an early stage.

Caroline: Can we have 10 more minutes of discussion on what we would like for the town centre – what else can we adjust on the plan of things that we want.

Ann: Social area that is available to everyone

Lin: A nice open café – that would fit in up by the park, and with the community centre

Caroline: Both of those ideas are around making the park more vibrant and social

Christine: We also talked about a play area

Caroline: We're actually looking at that in the town park brief at the council at the moment

Richard: I think that the town centre has suffered hugely by being cut up in the past, and it's difficult to navigate by any mode of transport. I feel that the local plan is an opportunity to identify areas where we can do really great stuff with urban design, we can run public space and public realm, different types and different quarters that comes together to make a cohesive town centre. Just improving the park actually isn't ambitious enough.

Caroline: Start the discussion!

Richard: the dual carriageway is horrible. In Scandinavia they are designed much better. There's a huge correlation between rising obesity and infrastructure. You could have two single lane carriageways, with a large island in the middle that makes it much more crossable. Rumbridge street is already a lovely street, why not build on that and create a creative quarter that leads up to the tide mill? We could link it up with micro public transport options because it is a long way. We also need much wider pavements.

Caroline: Claire will Rumbridge street be part of your consultation?

Claire: We haven't decided yet. But there are lots of hidden gems in Totton.

Richard: We were talking about young people and training opportunities – that links in to this. We could move the train station

Caroline: We did look at that. It would cost £80 million and the best site would be West Totton... there were various issues

Richard: Junction road is the highstreet that isn't a high street. We should have something really interesting in there.

Caroline: At the moment there isn't a designation around the station, so we could actually have the opportunity to change things around the station

Claire: In terms of the station, renovation and public realm around it.. it wants a proper plan around it

Caroline: Can we agree that what you'll look at will include the station and Rumbridge street?

Claire: We want to look in the widest context and find all the hidden gems and opportunities, so that we can bring Totton into the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Caroline: That sounds great

Lin: We were talking about shops that could be shared which could be a boost to young entrepreneurs. In Brighton they have the lanes.

Caroline: We talked about larger shop areas that could be divided. We don't have lanes obviously, but something to help people with starting up businesses would be fantastic

Lin: We need more to help youngsters

Caroline: That was fantastic 10 minutes, and we need more of this

Claire: And I think what we see here are the questions coming through to be asked at consultation

Caroline: Amy, can you take us through the website updates?

*Amy goes through the website updates – that we're about to hit 1 year live and that domain and website plan will be renewed. Some updates to the website made, including adding pdfs of our meeting minutes, and the addition of a blog.*

Caroline: I feel like we're really getting somewhere. Thank you all for your time.

Meeting ended: 20.35

## Key action items and take aways

- Working on the consultation event
  - Ann to email Caroline about dates
  - Amy to pull up list of activity ideas from minutes
  - Caroline, Catherine, Christine, Amy and Lin volunteering to help organise the event
- Amending/updating documents
  - Need to redo the visuals from Snug to incorporate all the discussions we've had over the last 2 years
- NFDC
  - Setting up working groups to do consultation work on Totton
  - To take the lead on spearheading the next round of discussions with landowners
- More discussion needed on future strategy of the Neighbourhood plan (possibly pivoting to supplementary planning documents etc)

## Ideas

- Town park as the central focal point. The park should be social and vibrant – ideas of café, play park, social area
- Different quarters of the town to make a cohesive urban area – cultural quarter by Rumbridge street etc
- Dual carriageway could be turned into two single carriageways with a large island in the middle to aid with crossing and create amenity
- Improving the train station – doing things with the public realm or changing designations in that area
- Area that helps stimulate start-ups (shops that can be shared, Brighton lanes style area, large commercial spaces that can be divided and shared by independents).