

Neighbourhood Plan Meeting

30/11/2021

In Attendance: Caroline Rackham, Amy Hardingson, Katherine, Susan Compton, Trevor Harris, Steve Shepherd, Christine Farleigh

Meeting Start: 19:15

Caroline: So recently the town council decided to hire a consultant to look at the Neighbourhood Plan which we can go through now. Unfortunately I'm not entirely confident about the quality of the consultation as they missed a few things we've done, and they were very focused on our work with Snug which we've moved past. But it's still got some very useful points in there.

What they have done is to give us a kind of summary of what we could do. We've been told we're working at too high a level and we need more detail. It's very critical of what we've been doing which is a shame, but it has got a whole list of points of what we can do.

- Call for sites. The Local Plan part 2 is going to be very focused on what is built where. Claire Upton Brown keen for us to do this/critical we haven't yet.
- The town centre – we need the designation changed in the town centre to allow mixed use, so we can get developers interested. This is something we need to discuss with Claire Upton Brown.
- Local Green Space designation
- Heritage assets – we have discussed this before about collecting a list of buildings which are important to the community

Katherine – your listed buildings are your designated heritage assets, we can also list non-designated heritage assets which don't necessarily need to be very historical, they could be interesting architecture or important to the community. It gives an extra level of protection to those buildings and the reasons they are important to the community. We can also use blue plaques as part of our heritage assets.

Caroline – we’ve had this as an agenda item before, but I don’t think it’s come together into a list before. I would suggest Calmore community hall in Paullettes lane. It’s quite a distinct building that has been well loved.

Susan – War shelters are disappearing fast. They were in people’s gardens which is difficult

Caroline – we have some Georgian architecture houses from before Totton grew. They are disappearing because they are falling into disrepair and then they get demolished for new.

Let’s make this an agenda point for our next meeting.

So, going on further through the consultation document we come to Climate change. I’m involved in a project which will collect some more information about how climate change will affect our area, so we can feed that into the Neighbourhood plan after that conference.

Katherine – If we end up with the increase in sea level that can be predicted there’s a lot of Totton and Eling which will be affected

Caroline – Eling in particular and there are things like barriers and gates which we could look at suggesting as part of the plan.

Steve – Have we spoken about local housing? Especially this consultation talking about more density around the train station. I know that’s national policy but there just isn’t any land around our train station as it’s so narrow the available land. The criteria needs to be different for Totton because of our lack of public transport, and I’m sure it’s different for all sorts of other places in the UK.

Caroline: There’s a document I need to email around actually because it says that unless there’s a good reason they will be building in the town centre without parking based on this same kind of policy. If more and more people challenge it then that will help us be listened to. It is a public consultation so every challenge counts. NFDC are really pushed by the national policy framework.

Katherine – the national planning policy doesn’t have max and min spaces put to it. Those numbers come through at local level, and is being set locally for the new forest area. Has to be able to encourage sustainable transport. But of course you can’t necessarily apply one policy to the whole of the new forest. Not just the quantum of parking, but also the size of parking spaces is being looked at as part of this too.

Steve: In terms of town centre – we've had a lot of development in terms of this policy. Can we get to a critical density where we can say we've got enough property without any parking?

Katherine: No there's no limit. It's set by what developers think they can sell.

Susan – I'm finding that younger people aren't driving so much as it's so expensive. These car share schemes are also getting popular.

Caroline- unfortunately we don't have car share or scooters like Southampton. We definitely need to do more for our young people, and these houses are being built now which are going to last for 1 or 2 generations at least so we need to think about what the future is going to look like and we don't want Totton landed with too many properties which are only practical for people to work in Southampton, but unable to get to work in the New Forest.

I'll send this document around to the group for more comments from everybody.

Next point is what we need next.

- Officer time
- More consultant help
- More information about the local plan from NFDC

Steve: Claire Upton Brown said she was going to write a letter saying what we should do. Have we received that?

Caroline: No, not yet . We have several thousand pounds to spend on the neighbourhood plan. About £8000, which is enough to get a consultant in. Now seems like a good time for us to do this.

Steve – I'll call the office in the morning and see if they've heard from Claire yet

Caroline – do we want to carry on as we are, or do we want to get a consultant in?

Steve – I suppose it depends on what levels of support we're going to get in terms of Officer time from the town council

Caroline – My biggest worry with carrying on is that even though we have Katherine, Catherine and Richard who are professional planners, we need

more support, more time, someone who can write this up. I think a consultant is the way to go.

Steve – and we need to be realistic about the time restraint

Katherine – we're looking for a consultant to do a draft document on paper and putting all the information into one place that has a feel of a neighbourhood plan document. And then any gaps we can fill in with local knowledge and evidence. We've got the Hythe and New Milton ones to base ours on.

Trevor – I looked at one. They had 4 main areas which theirs is based on which we could also structure our plan around which could work well.

Katherine – The New Milton one is longer than many Neighbourhood plans I've worked with. Some of the best ones are more visual, which have obviously had more local input

Caroline – These are our original aims. *Shares document* Now we were told by Dave not to worry about housing as the district did that, but that may have changed since he said that. This is a very town centre focused list of aims. We also have the transport structure.

Katherine – we could still have our own policy about promoting cycling or a similar envisaging or encouraging policy

Susan – I think connecting the town centre and the park is the main thing I want to raise

Caroline – that was our starting point with snug which we've done lots of work and consultation around

Steve – the issue we have is that Snug came up with an idea, and it has made a few people jump up and down with outrage about changing things or that it will never get done, which is very frustrating. Unless we can get the majority of councillors to agree then it's not going to come to anything. It seems you can only have what you want as long as it conforms – is that right?

Katherine – the neighbourhood plan does have to conform with a local plan, but we can say what we want within that. Our local spin of how that looks within Totton.

Steve – whatever we come up with has to be viable, but that's very difficult for a town council to envisage.

Caroline – I think what she's saying is that it has to be compliant with the Local plan. They have a huge number of houses to fit in. They see the town centre in Totton as a solution and don't want too much resistance.

Katherine – We could say something about an image of something we want about higher density. We want to encourage x,y,z. It's informing future development but not proscribing future development.

Steve – we want to be not too specific about what goes where?

Katherine – yes it's just giving developers some extra criteria to consider

Caroline – Hythe has some very specific parts to it. It's very different from New Milton from that point of view.

Trevor – I think we've got enough housing, but it is a bit out of our control and whatever we say NFDC are likely to override us. Perhaps we shouldn't worry about putting too much in about housing just like Dave said originally because it is so out of our control.

Caroline – but we can say something

Trevor – we can make our point clearly at least

Katherine – You can have a policy about housing mix. A certain percentage of bungalows for instance which ensures a mix of housing that a community wants.

Caroline – All the information they have is for the whole Forest, and we can specify what makes most sense for Totton within that. Is that what you're saying?

Katherine – Yes. If we end up having a face to face meeting I'll bring some copies of plans with me for us to look at.

Caroline – how do we feel about these objectives?

Susan – We have a desperate need for more family friendly facilities in the town centre. We need facilities for all the age groups, consider all needs. We're a diverse town but our facilities don't reflect that right now.

Amy – That's our story as a town. I thought that when putting the website together. Totton is defined by it's diversity. It was part of our past, it's part of our present and we can assert that it's important to us that it is part of our future. We want to keep that diversity and improve accessibility.

Discussion of a few things to add to our original objectives. Saying about how useful getting a draft written by a consultant to draw all this together. We have had so many discussions, we just need to draw it all together again to help us move forward.

Steve – do we need that letter from Clare Upton Brown to see what she's thinking?

Caroline – Yes and we need a meeting as well. I think that idea that her team might be working on the same thing is definitely something we need to discuss because we want to make sure we're working together.

We also have the issue that I'm trying to step down as chair. Would anybody here be willing to stand as chair who isn't a councillor? If not we'll leave it until the next meeting.

Trevor – I think Claire does want to help us. I think she's as frustrated as we are.

Discussion of chair issue. How we can divide the roles of the committee better. Joint-chair is floated as an idea, and the need to make it sustainable.

Caroline – anything else we want to discuss tonight?

Susan – I'm keen to be involved because we are involved in the community and we like to feed information out to people

Katherine – We need to think about how we get information out to people and build it up gradually.

Caroline – the heritage asset would be a great one to use that way

Susan – I could take some photos and post them and ask if anyone can think of any others? Perhaps over the next few weeks I can do that on Totton Together.

Caroline – That would be great

Amy- Perhaps we should discuss a facebook page for the group again?

Assent

Caroline – next meeting date. Tuesday 4th January 7pm

Meeting end 20.35

Agenda points for future meetings

- Heritage assets list
- Envisaging policy ideas (i.e. promoting cycling)
- Social media/communication with community
- Structure of our committee/new chair
- Climate change (schedule after upcoming conference)

Action points from this meeting

- Caroline to email out Consultation document that has been done on our work so far
- Caroline to email out public consultation on housing and parking density
- Steve to chase on whether town council has heard from Claire Upton Brown
- Susan to make a start on asking community about Heritage buildings

Ideas/points to feed into plan

- Heritage buildings – Community hall on Paullettes lane, war shelters, Georgian buildings
- Policy about housing mix – Totton is diverse and we want to protect that, make it part of the future