

"Knebworth aims to be a vibrant, inclusive and independent village community which will accommodate sustainable growth and development in its population, services and infrastructure, whilst ensuring that its fundamental rural character is maintained."

Notes of Knebworth NP Steering Committee meeting held on 23rd January 2018, 8pm in the Village Hall

Present: Clint Bull (CB, chair)
Graham Dormer (GD, vice chair)
Bob Hall (BH)
Roy Oostwouder (RO)
Robert Sprigge (RS)
Penny Berry (PB) - Note taker
Claire Graham (CG, KPC)

Apologies: Paul Ambrose (PA)
Paul Ward (PW, KPC)
Gareth Hawkins (GH)
Jenny Harrison (JH, KPC)* Jenny has decided to withdraw from the Steering Committee as she has been unable to attend the meetings

1. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on 14th December 2017 were agreed.

2. Progress Update from Groups

Paul Ward had taken an action to produce a simple tracker to cover each subject group, to record progress such as meetings and research, in order to facilitate reporting back to the Parish Council. CB to follow up as this action is still outstanding.

Group progress and meetings

Housing and Character (RS)

- This group had held their second meeting and parking was highlighted as a significant issue.
- The small green areas around housing need to be preserved and duplicated in future developments.
- Premises are required for meetings and events with provision to be determined by using surveys.
- Consideration given to engaging an expert to ensure compliance with standard government guidelines and determine good housing density.

Environment and Flooding (GD)

- This group had also had a further meeting. Objectives have been expanded with additions to Environment being environmental sustainability, pollution and energy conservation.
- Original flooding reports had suggested links to mains drainage, however as work had recently been done in the Orchard Way area to increase the soakaways by 3-4 times their original size, this would now seem unlikely.
- GD mentioned the E&F group Dropbox again which he uses to share documents on this topic. He would like to see a Steering Committee Dropbox facility to share group documents.
- GD had been given a water map by a topic group member showing problem areas in Knebworth.

Schools (BH)

- Another group meeting had taken place, plus another meeting with HCC to gauge their strategic approach to education.
- Provision of a new one-form entry school is required with developments of 500+ dwellings but, with over 600 new homes due to be built in Knebworth and about 200 in Woolmer Green, there will be a need for a 1½ - 2-form entry JMI school as the existing JMI school is not able to expand. There is some co-operation between NHDC and WHBC and space had been identified on the west of the village on Knebworth Estates land.
- HCC have objected to a new secondary or middle school in the area as they are keen to have new schools to the north of Stevenage to support developments there.
- There have been a lot of discussions between school representatives, with issues such as the three mile transport eligibility limit and poor public service transport provision being highlighted.

Wellbeing (PB)

- PB had met with the local PCSO, who offered to look at attending coffee mornings held in Deanscroft on a Monday morning. They are charity run and open to the public. This facility could then be publicised for anyone to attend to report any crimes or worries directly. This would be an alternative to those who don't use or have no access to the Internet.
- The local PCSO also made some interesting comments about housing development design. In Great Ashby, there aren't enough parking spaces for the number of dwellings built there. As a consequence, the roads are restricted due to parked cars, especially in the evening, and this then leads to neighbour disputes about rights and access to available parking spaces. The Police are often called as neighbourly disputes escalate.
- PB had also contacted Sue Smith, Children's Centre manager. Children's Centres are undergoing re-commissioning and Knebworth will be part of the north quadrant, linking towards Stevenage instead of with Woolmer Green and WGC as at present. Ken Spooner, Practice Manager, expressed concerns as Knebworth Surgery is trying to establish closer links with Children's Centres and indications are that use of this type of service depends greatly on convenience of access. PB is to contact SS again to see if Knebworth residents will be consulted.
- There is a Knebworth Surgery PPG meeting on 29th January which PB intends to attend as the topic of the new GP Surgery is on the agenda.

3. Parking

Housing related parking

- Coincidentally the poor parking design in Great Ashby had also cropped up at the H&C meeting.
- Great Ashby is built on NHDC land but was developed by Stevenage BC for their housing needs.
- RS is to ask Andy Nation, topic group member, about how the number of parking spaces is worked out.
- The need for electric car plug-ins in new developments was brought up. Dwellings that don't have garages or attached parking spaces would not be able to recharge an electric car. Most service stations now have charging points and, in London, some lampposts are being retro-fitted with them.

Non-housing related parking

- There is evidence that single yellow lines with parking restrictions can stop parking problems around stations, eg Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage.
- Viable alternatives are therefore required and this needs to be demonstrated within the NP in order to be achieved.
- As small individual development sites do not produce cohesive schemes, an overall strategic plan is required.
- The proposed housing developments have only addressed housing not infrastructure.
- On and off road parking needs to be addressed at the same time.

Controlled Parking Zone

- CG said that the Local Transport Plan showed the possibility of a new train station just south of Stevenage on the Hertford loop. This could relieve some of the commuter traffic from the Bragbury End area.
- It was suggested that workshops are held following on from information gathered at the Open Day.
- CG advised contacting AECOM with a view to developing the "master plan" suggested by CB.

4. Application for funding

- The last Housing Needs Survey was in 2004 and is therefore out of date. CG usually uses CDA as they are free. NHDC won't do one for Knebworth as each site is under 500 dwellings.
- The Parish Update is due to be delivered to every home in early March, it would be easy to deliver a HNS at the same time. RS was given a copy of the Wheathampstead HNS to adapt for Knebworth use.
- CB is to contact PW regarding the application forms for funding.
- Expressions of interest must be received by 1st March and applications by 5th March.
- Technical help will be needed for gathering and analysing information.
- Traffic volume can be determined by counting cars but evidence is required for the rat runs around the village.
- CB is to liaise with PW with a view to contacting AECOM to see what they can offer.

5. KNP Open Day

- On behalf of the Steering Committee, CB welcomed Roy Oostwouder who has agreed to organise and co-ordinate the Open Day.
- RS had looked at a wide range of open days held by other NP groups.
- CG suggested that the WI would probably do tea and cakes for the event.
- Research by the different topic groups is to be presented to the public and their opinions and suggestions sought.
- Presentation must be positive and relate to land use.
- It had been hoped that an Open Day could be held in conjunction with an SOSPub event to benefit from increased attendance footfall. PB is trying to contact Lisa Nash about this.

- It was agreed hold two identical displays on Thursday 8th March (probably 10.30-3.30) and Saturday 10th March (10.30-5.00) (the SOSPub have a quiz evening that evening). Doing the same event twice, it is hoped to get a wider range of people calling in.
- Details of the events need to go to the Parish News by 16th February to be included in the March edition.
- As the KNP doesn't have a website (RO did say he could do this), CG offered to put something on the Parish Council website if she is given the prepared content. CB is to do this. The newsletters on the PC website then feed in to Facebook and Twitter.
- GD offered to help RO with planning the events. RO has everyone's email addresses.

6. Summary of Actions Required and Outstanding Actions

- The Housing Needs Survey will be delivered with the Parish Update in early March. RS is to update the form.
- Funding applications need to be made for facilitation with technical support. CG is to contact PW.
- Help is required to create a strategic plan ("master plan") taking a holistic view to include infrastructure.
- Detailed information on traffic and transport is required.
- Quotes for professional help are to be sought. PB is to contact a previously mentioned company to find out what they can offer. CG will find out information from a company that helped with some locals NP, possibly Walkern, Buntingford and Bishop's Stortford.

7. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 13th February, 2018, 8pm Village Hall