

HINGHAM

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP MEETING

Held on Monday 21 February 2022 at 7.45pm in the Lincoln Hall

Present

Rachel Leggett - (NP Project Manager, paid consultant contracted to Hingham Town Council for this project)

Sam Coster, Laura Handford, Anne List, Rufus Philip, Virginia Twentyman and Austen Williams – (volunteers from the community)

Steph Amey, Paul Roberts, Steve Thompson – (Town Councillors)

Alison Doe - (present in capacity of Hingham Town Council Clerk)

Peter Eldridge - (present in capacity of Chairman of Hingham Town Council, in order to meet the Steering Group)

1. Introductions

This being the inaugural meeting, those present introduced themselves and gave a brief outline of their backgrounds (including work and how long they have lived in Hingham), skills and interests and explained why they wanted to help with the neighbourhood plan work.

Reasons for wanting to help with the Neighbourhood Plan included:

- to see Hingham change in the right way in future
- to protect and maintain Hingham's green spaces
- improve road and pedestrian safety
- preserve and enhance wildlife
- protect and support sustainability for the environment
- represent local businesses
- ensure appropriate and suitable future development
- to make Hingham an accessible place to visit
- work with developers rather than have conflict, in order to obtain beneficial development for Hingham

Rachel explained her role as Consultant and advised of her associates roles, who would also be working on Hingham Neighbourhood Plan. Rachel's background is in Local and Regional Government, planning and as a Geographer. Her colleague Andrea Long had been a town planner and colleague Emma Harrison has expertise in the Environment. The team had assisted with over 30 Neighbourhood plans. See www.rachelleggett.co.uk/neighbourhoodplanning for further reading.

Pete Eldridge withdrew from the meeting as he had attended only in order to open the meeting, meet the volunteers and introduce Rachel to the group.

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest forms were passed to all present and Rachel requested that these be completed as fully as possible showing not only the individuals but also any possible relevant interests held by family members, including property ownerships. The completed forms to be passed to Ali Doe, who will store them on behalf of Hingham Town Council (HTC)

3. To elect a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary

Sam Coster was nominated and accepted the role of Chairperson, Anne List was nominated accepted the role of Vice Chairperson and Steve Thompson offered himself and was accepted as Secretary. The post of Treasurer is to be held by Ali Doe as she is HTC Town Clerk and will in any event have to deal with the finances relating to the grants and any spending by HTC on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Town Council accounting and audit purposes.

4. Terms of Reference

Copies of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the NP Steering Group were given to each member. These are based on a standard ToR supplied by SNDC and adapted by Hingham Town Council to suit the Council's payment procedures.

5. The Neighbourhood Plan process

Rachel described the process to the group. Members were advised to read the guidance from Locality, 'Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap – A Step-by-Step Guide 2018 edition' that had been handed to them. She expected the timescale to take about 18 months. She then explained a diagrammatic roadmap. This showed the stages to proceed through in order to produce a NP.

Designate the Plan area.

This had already been completed and South Norfolk Council (SNC) had accepted the plan as covering the full Parish boundary. This had been done in order to make grant applications before the financial year ends.

Recruit the Steering Group.

This had now been done and resulted in this inaugural meeting. There had been much interest and the HTC Neighbourhood Plan Working Party had selected the members based on not just skills but also on likely availability for regular meetings and the ability to give additional personal time as the project progressed. HTC had been advised by their consultants to keep the group to the present size. It was felt by HTC that the steering group had a good balance of volunteers. There had been several other volunteers who although not selected for the group, it was hoped they would remain in a position to assist the project in a supporting role such as with events and delivering material to properties or being able to step up to the Steering Group if required. Soft skills and enthusiasm were as equally important as technical skills. The process had included a skills audit.

Drafting a project plan for the NP

Including covering the questions of 'Who, what, where, when and how' the NP would be produced.

Knowing the Local Plan and emerging plan (currently the GNLP) and the National Planning Policy Framework

Members were advised to read about these online as it would be useful information during the NP process.

Communications Plan

Louise Sta-Anna, a Hingham Town Councillor had the IT skills and facilities to assist. She had set up and was maintaining a website for this project (see www.hinghamplan.org.uk). Members of the group were also advised to read other Neighbourhood Plans, maybe of an area they are already familiar with.

Funding

HTC has already applied for and received grant funding from Locality (£7855) which needs to be spent before the end of the financial year, and SNC (£6,000). More funding can be applied for next financial year from Locality.

Rachel explained that the group need to think what they want to achieve and that the process ends in a public referendum and hopefully formal adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan (the referendum must achieve a majority in favour, for the plan to be adopted).

In preparation for the first public “drop in”/consultation session (19th March 2022), PLACECHECK had been set up, which she encouraged the use of to indicate by use of Drop Pins, places of merit or dislike in the Parish and where improvements were needed, (see www.placecheck.info/app/maps/hingham)

Emma has been putting together a data profile to be used and Rachel had commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment from Locality/AECON.

Rachel will be undertaking a building/character appraisal commencing next week with a walk around Hingham on 1st March commencing 10am at Lincoln Hall and she encouraged the group to join in.

There was a need for design ideas. The community may want the plan to allocate land for development/housing/carpark etc.

The only statutory requirement is the 6 week Statutory Consultation (pre submission consultation on the Draft Plan), however it is important engage with the community throughout the process to ensure the community’s views have helped shape the plan. It was hoped that a draft plan would be ready to submit in about 12 months’ time.

It was queried how the NP would affect the GNLP. Rachel explained that whilst it could not contradict the GNLP it could look to the future and influence further versions of any Local Plans.

6. Drafting a Vision

Rachel explained that the NP is primarily about the use and development of land and buildings. The plan cannot ask for things outside of a planning issue such as dealing with dog mess, the use of a village hall or obtaining a bypass for example. Drainage, lighting etc can be added if they can be justified. An example would be a policy of ‘Dark Skies’. The general question to ask regarding subjects in an NP is “Does it require planning permission?”

Rachel asked the meeting to consider two questions:

- a. What do you love about Hingham?
- b. If you had a magic wand (i.e. lots of money) what would you do to make Hingham better?

One idea used in other plans was to ask primary school children these same questions to obtain ideas. Rachel would be progressing this with Hingham Primary School.

She also asked the group to consider “What do we want our Parish to be like in 20 years”? After an open discussion and suggestions it was suggested that generally that some of the top issues to consider might be:

- a. Appearance of housing, its mix and scale

- b. Character, heritage and preservation
- c. Community Infrastructure
- d. Protecting green spaces
- e. Sustainable development and infrastructure
- f. Town Centre parking
- g. Improving public transport
- h. Safe footpaths, cycleways and bridleways

The 'Vision' wording should be something aiming up to 2043. Rachel showed the group various versions of 'Vision' statements from a number of other Parish NPs and asked everyone to highlight what words or phrases they liked. A discussion then took place to draft an agreed 'Vision' statement for Hingham.

"The parish of Hingham will continue to be a thriving community – an attractive market town with a distinctive Georgian centre, within a beautiful rural landscape. It will have a range of housing types and tenures to suit all ages and incomes, supported by community infrastructure and employment opportunities. Housing will be integrated and reinforce the existing character. The town's local heritage and green spaces will be protected, whilst maintaining connections with its rural environment. Development will be sustainable, well designed and suitably located, with sufficient public and private parking. The area will continue to be a desirable place to live, work and visit for current and future generations."

7. Consultation

A flyer had been designed to be circulated to the community in the last few days of February via the Parish magazine. This advertises a public drop-in event on 19 March.

Rachel explained the use of Placecheck (see explanation in section 5) and asked that the public also be encouraged to use it. Then she can draw ideas from the suggestions.

The drop-in event gives the community the opportunity to give ideas and it was important to have as many group members as possible available on the day to assist. It may also be advantageous to have some members at the Craft Fair being held on the same day at Hingham Sports Centre.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting set for 29 March 2022 with venue still to be notified.