

Minutes of the meeting held May 25th 2023

Present: Sam Goldney-Neate, Neil Hayward, Rose McGrath, Terry Webb, Elaine Horton.

Via Zoom: Louise Kirkwell

Apologies: Pete Yates, Luke Baxter

The meeting welcomed new member Terry Webb.

Launch Event

The launch event on May 7th was agreed to be a success with 44 attendees. People were interested in the work of the NDP group, but also came to express concerns about future development in the village. Questions were asked about a planning application at The Headlands, and concerns about a field behind Glebe Rise. Comments were received regarding the results of the Housing Needs Survey, which highlighted the need for smaller or lower cost housing such as bungalows for down-sizing. Some reaction was that people wanted development that would keep house prices up.

One person had come to query the legality of someone operating an Air BnB, but this was not under the jurisdiction of the NDP. Others were concerned about windfall developments, i.e those with fewer than ten houses. There was a curiosity/comment among some attendees about the work/purpose/effectiveness of the NDP. EH and NH to consider what, if any, other comments and concerns were raised by attendees during the course of the launch event, and if any general trends were observed.

To satisfy requirements regarding discrimination, the committee considered whether all best efforts were made to include or inform everyone in the village re the event. These efforts included distribution by hand of a flyer advertising the event/questionnaire to every dwelling in Austrey, promoting and circulating the event/questionnaire via information on social media and the Parish Council website, and information/questionnaire being on display in the village shop.

Questionnaire

So far 25 questionnaires have been received via the online form, none in hard copy to date. SGN will post again on social media, to remind people that anyone can fill in a questionnaire (i.e not limited to one per household) and also to remind that the closing date is May 31st.

SGN to circulate the online responses to the group for further analysis and review before the next meeting. In the meantime she reported that comments covered light pollution, the preservation of ridge and furrow fields, protection of green spaces such as Bishops Field, and preservation of views. LK stated that it was important to identify such trends in the questionnaire responses – i.e what is important to people and why.

Review work so far on the Draft Plan

RM reported that she had made the relevant changes to the plan, and would circulate the amended document for review in detail at the next meeting.

Funding for NDP for the tax year 23/24 was not yet open for applications, but LK felt confident that it was likely to continue. Funding comes from Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. (DLHC).

AOB

TW mentioned use of Design Codes, and it was agreed that use of Design Codes to limit scope/style of future development could deter larger developers and keep any successful planning applications within the style and scope of the village. As the main finding of the Housing Needs Survey was that starter homes and bungalows were the most needed, design codes could play a great part in keeping development in line with that goal. Funding for Design Codes – this is from ACOM which the council supports. DCs would consider sustainability, compliance with climate change protocols, and seek 'high quality, contemporary design', along with style and design appropriate for the area.

TW also suggested involving the school in future development challenges, as lack of available places in the school may be a way to limit future development.

NH mentioned the practice of 'Listing'. This is not the same as a building being 'Listed', but aims to protect valuable resources (such as the village hall or the shop) from being sold to outside interests. It could also include ancient hedgerows, and other things/buildings worthy of protection. There is some legislation to support this, EH to research and table for discussion at the next meeting.

TW asked if an RSPB survey of the area had been carried out recently, as this can also be a protection against development if rare/migratory birds had been recorded. RM mentioned there had been one when Norton Rise development was first in planning, EH to contact RPSB to enquire further.

Green space – any requests to include new green space as an asset of community value in the NDP has to go to consultation, and land owners must be contacted.

The next meeting was set for Tues June 20th at 6.30pm.