

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Wednesday 22 May 2019 at 8pm in the Village Hall (small room)

**Attendees:** Ruth Bryer, James Tizzard, Pauline Gardiner, Bruce Parker, Louise Peace, Mike Willoughby

**By invitation:** Sally Chapman (Planning Consultant)

**Apologies:** Ray Blake, James Carlyle, Mike Jones

### **Minutes of the meeting of 24 April approved**

Sally Chapman was welcomed to the meeting

#### **Progress of Work on the Neighbourhood Plan**

- James T. has created a document listing topics to be appear in the Plan and actions to be taken.
- Mike W. was drafting a brief history of the village as an introduction to the character assessment.
- Pauline has created a spreadsheet of the parish's streets detailing housing types, to which further information could be added.
- Ruth has created an update for the website. We plan to contact residents through Facebook and other means to ask for input on the character assessment. The website will provide further information and a revised form for submitting feedback.
- Bruce has begun looking at land ownership using the Land Registry. Mike J. has developed a record of current amenities and green spaces. These aspects may come together as the basis for proposals aimed at enhancing the appearance and functions of Ickleford – especially at its centre.

#### **Background of Sally Chapman**

- Sally, who lives at Wing, Buckinghamshire, previously worked as a policy planner in Bedfordshire. She first worked on neighbourhood planning in Central Bedfordshire, then in villages near her home in Aylesbury Vale. She was now contracted to neighbourhood plan groups in Flitton, Meppershall and Lower Stondon. She is a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

#### **Sally's contribution**

- Sally's first comments were on housing. She discussed how the Fairfield development had used design codes to give it a certain look. Ickleford has a wide variety of housing types so we thought layout, height and housing density were likely to be areas we would focus on. She said that there was a tendency to move towards standardised neighbourhood plan policies in some areas. She was against this, thinking policies should be specific to the places they were for. In terms of what was acceptable, different examiners take different approaches. She felt it was better to have too much in a plan and have some taken out, than to take a cautious approach.
- We are at the stage of gathering evidence. We need to write down what has been discovered. This can then be presented in different ways, e.g. a scoping report, a character assessment, or other documents. We might include reports on housing and layout, green spaces (Sally was keen on designating green spaces), amenities and traffic. She suggested we include details of new housing outside the emerging Local Plan. Some details could be pulled together now, e.g. what we have learnt on traffic issues. Our information on Ickleford could be useful if planning applications come

through before the Neighbourhood Plan is completed. Parish Online was mentioned as a useful online mapping service.

- Any site assessments need to show the logical steps taken to make them clear to an examiner. Site constraints are the key aspect of such assessments.
- Work on our consultation document should be started now, evidencing our engagement activities. This could include pictures from our stalls at events, details of Facebook and other communications, and screenshots of the website. We also need to give feedback to residents on what we are doing.
- Rather than one large household questionnaire, she suggested we may prefer to do a number of different exercises on different aspects of the plan. Questions from other neighbourhood plan groups had numbered anywhere from 5 to 70. Many groups undertook questionnaires without outside help using tools such as Survey Monkey. Analysing results could be time consuming.
- She emphasised the importance of distinguishing between fact and opinion at all stages.
- Sally was very encouraging, she felt we were making progress, doing the right kind of things.
- As to the cost of her services, Sally would charge £70 for attending a meeting and £525 for a full day's work. She would email us details of packages commonly requested and their cost calculated on this basis. At this stage it was difficult for her to estimate the cost of her assistance over the total period of the project. Different groups require different amounts of input. In terms of submitting a grant application to Locality, if this were to include the costs of writing the plan, we could expect her contribution to absorb up to £7000.

On leaving the meeting Sally was thanked for making the journey, answering our questions, and providing us with so much guidance besides. After her departure we discussed her presentation and concluded unanimously that she had made an excellent impression. She clearly had a long experience of neighbourhood planning and much enthusiasm for it. We discussed the need to follow due diligence before employing a consultant and the likely need to obtain three quotes. We will discuss Parish Council requirements and our next steps with Danielle.

### **Finance**

- Louise circulated a report giving details of past receipts and the budgeted spend so far. Locality has agreed to us transferring unspent funds into this financial year. There were now funds amounting to £63.49 for room hire, and therefore for three public meetings after this one.
- Applications can now be submitted for grants and technical support in the current financial year. We therefore have to estimate the cost of projects we can expect to complete, and of consultant help we might incur, by 5 April 2020.