

Minutes of Meeting Held at Arden Academy on 09.09.2015

Present: Jane Aykroyd (JA, Chair); Tony Abbott (TA); Tony Aykroyd (TAY); Ian Fisher (IF); David Gentle (DG); Gill Griggs (GG); Deborah Hope (DH); Bryan Hunt (BH); Neil Inman (NI); Martin Murphy (MM); Richard Newton (RN); Billy Penny (BP); Bev Robinson (BR); Martin Trentham (MT); David Wallis (DW); Adrian Woolmore (AW); Gwen Woolmore (GW); Valerie Woolmore (VW).

Apologies: Dave Fraley; Gill Griggs; Richard Grove; Lis Hedley; Louisa Jakeman; Ian Kay; Martin Lambert; Councillor Rebeiro.

1. Agenda Item 1 - Chair's Update:

Only three weeks since our last meeting, so a shorter update this time! Highlights are:

- a. We are now an officially registered company! - the certificate has just arrived from Companies House. It is very pleasing to have that successfully completed.
- b. The public consultation period for our Area and Forum Applications to SMBC closed on 27 August. Only one query was raised, regarding the rationale for including within the proposed Neighbourhood Area the small part that sits to the North West outside the M42 (the Forum has debated this on a number of occasions). Emma Tinsley-Evans will raise the matter with the relevant Councillors, but has assured us that, given we currently have no members from this area, any change will not affect our application.
- c. For Dorridge Day, two A1 posters, a postcard-sized handout (to be used at the gate) and an A3 map of the Area have all been produced – so we're good to go on that front.
- d. The best price we could find for customised, helium-filled balloons was £330 from BalloonHelium.co.uk (cost includes: 2-colour KDBH logo on 1000x10" latex balloons; helium for 290 balloons; pre-fitted valves and ribbon for 400 balloons). On balance, the Directors have decided to 'park' balloons for now, until we have a good view of all our budget needs.
- e. With membership growing well - now at 49 - IK has taken over responsibility (from JA) for distributing Forum documentation. This will ensure that we are always using the most up-to-date list. Please bear with us if there are any glitches in the transfer process.
- f. We were unable to secure a SMBC speaker for this meeting due to holidays. Emma Tinsley-Evans is confirming the speaker (re. Transport and Infrastructure) for our next meeting on 8 October.
- g. Looking forward, our top priority now is to gear up a campaign to formally launch the Forum and Plan across all parts of the community. This should start as soon as possible following confirmation of our SMBC Applications - expected at a Council meeting on 1 October 2015. JA proposed running the Launch Campaign from 7 – 15 November, ie. a window of opportunity that allows us good time to prepare and before everyone's focus is diverted by Christmas. To progress quickly on this, before the next meeting we will hold both a Steering Committee and a Directors' meeting to create draft proposals and consider budget. These proposals will be presented for review at our meeting on 8 October.

DECISION: The Forum agreed to hold a Launch Campaign from 7 – 15 November 2015.

2. **Agenda Item 2 – ‘The Voice’ – Youth Perspective**

BP summarised feedback and findings to date from initial discussions with other students regarding the Neighbourhood Plan / Forum (with apologies that Cameron and James were unable to attend today’s meeting). The approach taken to initial soundings has been to establish ‘what it means to have a youth voice on the Forum’. Key areas of feedback below:

Membership:

Many said that, while they understood and were interested in the work of the Neighbourhood Forum (particularly 6th Formers), they would not attend public meetings. This poses the question, ‘how will the Forum engage with youth?’. Whilst the Forum is attempting social media, a more direct approach might be achieved through videos, or, specifically for young people, through schools (assemblies, newsletters etc.).

One specific suggestion was that Minutes of meetings could be displayed on the website home screen (ie. rather than on the ‘Meetings’ page). Although a small point, it was felt that things like this can make the Forum more accessible to others.

Roads:

This topic was moderately engaging for young people, especially external students travelling into the area.

- External students enquired whether more localised public transport could/will become available in the foreseeable future (ie. as part of future development). There was a view that current bus stops are inadequate for the amount of people travelling.
- Otherwise, transport (e.g. trains) was thought to be adequate.
- There were some queries about parking for 6th formers and provisions for young drivers.
- Interest in including health conscious modes of transport in development considerations.

Learning and Community Facilities:

The prospect of developing community facilities was of most interest for young people.

- Libraries are OK.
- Whilst some public facilities are good, many in Knowle and Bentley Heath (and to a lesser extent, Dorridge) are dilapidated. For example, the Knowle Community Hall, where anticipated investment associated with the Waitrose development is now on hold.
- With investors looking to develop sites in the area, the view was that they should make significant contributions to building new or improved community facilities to meet increasing public demand and demonstrate that developments are actually benefitting the area.
- The idea of a youth centre was liked by younger years. The former Youth Centre in Knowle has now been turned into classrooms, with nothing to replace it. So, for example, why not create one large, new community centre incorporating a youth centre?
- The idea of a new school site wasn't properly understood and needs greater clarity, ie. making it clear that this is only a plan, and then welcoming suggestions.

Youth Action

- Still need for get more input with regard to establishing a youth voice in Dorridge, which has not really been covered in feedback to date.

KDBH Neighbourhood Plan Limited

Neighbourhood Forum

- The aim is to encourage awareness of the Forum - not necessarily for the very young, but targeting involvement from, say, years 9-10 (14-15 age range).
- With all three current youth Forum members now being in year 13 (final year at school), another important aim is to identify timely replacements so as to ensure continuity.

Forum discussion points arising:

- A number of members thanked BP for his clear and well-constructed presentation which provides a very helpful first step in building the Forum's understanding of the youth perspective. JA encouraged BP and the other student members to continue developing their research and actively feeding into development of the Plan.
- DG explained that the main issue is with the funding of Youth work in the current economic climate. This means that the church now leads much of the youth work.
- It was noted that it would be worth following up with the neighbourhood policing team to understand their perspective on youth needs in the area.
- In terms of sporting activities, very few are central to our Area. Most require travel.
- We should bear in mind that Arden's 6th form intake draws in students from further afield, ie. beyond our Area map. A concern is that, where siblings of 6th formers are joining lower down the school, this could mean that local children may not be able to get into the school. We should consider what this means in terms of the school essentially being there to serve its local community and as a centre for community activity.

ACTION: MM/Learning & Community Facilities Group to contact Neighbourhood Policing Team to gain their thoughts on the youth perspective.

3. **Agenda Item 3 – Dorridge Day (13th Sept, 12 noon – 4pm).**

JA thanked DW for agreeing to act as Team Leader, with BH, IF, GG, KA and Richard Perry (Sainsburys Manager) in support. (*Editors note: Bill Lally also joined the team on the day.*)

We will be sharing the DDRA's new stand and using one of their displays for our three posters. One of the team will hand out the small flyer at the gate, encouraging attendees to visit our stand. Once at the stand, visitors will be able to take away any of the three one-page handouts used at our 'new members' session last month. Plenty of Membership Application forms will also be available, either for completion on the day or to take away. Alternatively, after the event, people can choose to sign up on line.

So, all we need to do now is keep our fingers crossed for a sunny day to bring out the hoards!

4. **Agenda Item 4 – Focus Group Updates**

BH briefly updated the Forum with regard to the overall Plan. He has reviewed the Hampton-In-Arden Plan and will be create a short presentation for the next meeting. In summary, the Hampton plan was essentially put together by 8 people (6 Councillors) over a period of 4 years. In many ways, it is a good example, with Hampton having a similar demographic to us. One area we should look to improve on is to ensure that all our policies are actionable – some of the policies set out in the Hampton Plan are perhaps not prescriptive enough.

Housing Group - GG

From its review of various existing plans, the Housing Team has identified the Woodcote Plan as providing the closest 'template' to what we should be aiming for. Woodcote is an Oxfordshire village. Although smaller scale to us, its Plan sets out really clear Housing policies.

The team has a challenge, in that SMBC does not currently have an agreed housing target (this part of the Local Plan having been rejected), so they are working in a policy vacuum. The West Midlands Authorities are undertaking a cross-boundary housing need assessment, but it will be some time before any specific targets are set. Getting accurate data for our specific Area will also pose something of a challenge, as Ward boundaries extend into Hockley Heath.

For now, therefore, the team's approach is to determine:

- a. What housing do we currently have (eg. no. of bedrooms; age of property etc)?
- b. How many apartments / flats?
- c. What are the current issues?
- d. How well does the existing housing meet local needs?
- e. Household survey
- f. Opportunities and constraints for new housing
- g. Brownfield opportunities?
- h. 'Windfall' developments.

Points from discussion arising:

- Estate Agents and Developers could also be useful sources of data and worth following up.
- There is a new study that suggests 2,000 houses for Solihull?
- HSBC is moving its Head Office to Birmingham - impact?

Learning & Community Facilities Group - MM

Here too, defining an appropriate and robust approach to surveys and data collection (establishing the 'evidence base') are key considerations. A meeting with Emma Tinsley-Evans is scheduled for 24 Sept, as the team believe there are a number of existing surveys and data sets that could be adapted and used for our purposes. The team also aims to identify a 'template' plan, again with a focus on actionable policies.

Points from discussion arising:

- We need to follow up to be clear on how far we can go re. school places and buildings.
- Re. the High Street (nothing on this included in Solihull's Local Plan).
Do we want to prevent loss of more shops, eg. via policies deterring or preventing change of use?
What do we need to do about protecting the distinctive character of Knowle's high street within a conservation area? For example, Nat West is the only business in Knowle with illuminated signage (not sure how this got approved). Do we need to formalise a policy to prevent this re-occurring?
- We need to consider whether to identify specific assets of community value, eg. pubs, and create policies to protect these – for example, using a 'Community Right to Bid'.
- Should we be including policies to protect eg. open spaces?

Transport & Infrastructure

No update (none of the team present).

5. **Agenda Item 5 - Membership Update**

Member numbers continue to grow and now stand at 49. We look forward to boosting this number as a result of Dorridge Day.

6. **Agenda Item 6 – Treasurer’s Update**

DW outlined the grant application process, which can start once our Forum status is officially confirmed. We will then have 30 days to complete and submit the application. This requires us to create supporting documentation giving a budget breakdown of how we intend to spend the money. DW suggested that we apply for the funding available in six-monthly chunks.

Thus, it is likely to be well into November, at the earliest, before we submit the application. It would make sense, therefore, to apply for the first tranche of central funding to start from the new financial year in April 2016. This assumes that, between now and then, we will be able to draw on the funding set aside within the two Ward development plans (a total of £3,000). This latter is just dependent on us having a nominated bank account to receive the funds.

ACTIONS:

- DW to follow up re. Ward funds with Kath Hemming (Emma Tinsley-Evans’ boss in the Places and Neighbourhoods Directorate).
- DW to check with Locality what technical support they can provide to us as a ‘complex group’, eg. for assessments.
- Directors to develop outline budget proposals for presentation at the next Forum.

7. **Agenda Item 7 – Launch Events in October / November**

Covered in previous items.

8. **Agenda Item 8 – Minutes and Actions from Last Meeting**

Update on outstanding actions below (all other actions included in the minutes of the last meeting have been completed).

- **JA** to create a short powerpoint communications ‘video’ covering the NF / NP that any Member can then use. **CARRIED FORWARD**
- **BH** to liaise with Emma Tinsley-Evans to identify Focus Group contacts. **CARRY FORWARD:** Contact for Transport & Infrastructure still to be confirmed.

9. **Agenda Item 9 – AOB**

As part of the Launch Campaign, we should consider use of Parent Mail, which goes out to 2,000 families.

10. Agenda Item 10 – Agree Date and Focus for Next Meeting

The next Forum meeting will be on **Thursday, 10 October, at Arden Academy, starting at 7pm.**

The agenda will include:

- Update from Dorridge Day
- Guest speaker: SMBC Transport / Infrastructure liaison
- Proposals for Launch Campaign, inc. marketing and communications material
- Outline budget and grant application proposals
- Developing the Plan framework / template

Dates of Forum meetings through to the end of 2015 are:

- 4th November
- 3rd December