

Neighbourhood Planning Group Meeting January 20th 2015

NP - Neighbourhood Planning
 NPG - Neighbourhood Planning Group
 HDC - Harborough District Council
 RCC - Rural Community Council

Notes of the Meeting,

Venue: the Club Room of Houghton Village Hall. Meeting start 19.30.

Ian Hill opened the meeting and with no other volunteers, subsequently took the chair. He asked for someone to take notes of the meeting and Ann Sleath volunteered.

Apologies Dave Kirkwood, Judy Read, John Siddons, Danny McSweeney, Barbara Scase, Paul Hart, Mike Welsh.

Attendees were invited to introduce themselves

Attendees

Roger Bettles	Houghton School Governor, Church Development Group
Linda Clarke	Treasurer Hot Friends
Steve Goodman	Houghton Field Association Chairman
Sue Hart	
Mike Hearn	Parish Plan Group 2001 -2004, Village Broadband Project
Ian Hill	Village Hall Chairman
Michael Hopkinson	
Marion Keene	Houghton Scouts, Group Scout Leader
Peter Lutman	Parish Councillor
Mark Newman	Houghton School Governor
Isobel Oldham	Secretary of Houghton Helpline standing in for Judy Read
Bill Scott	Hot Friends
Jim Sharman	Chairman Hotfriends
Ann Sleath	Vice chairman of Parish Council, Houghton Scout Group Committee, Village Hall Committee

Initial Exploratory Discussion

In total there are 19 members of the Group. The meeting discussed how representative they might be of the village community. Although it was recognised that representation from community groups was a good thing, all village groups could not be represented on the committee due to numbers. It was agreed that all members should be working for the broad benefit of the village and not promoting the interests of any specific group, though their combined knowledge of many different community groups would be of benefit to the project. It was suggested that the cricket club might like to have representation as a village landowner. Also there could perhaps be some mechanism for communication with the businesses based in the village, and there was a clear majority of “mature” citizens in the group so more, younger (sub-50!) members would be welcome.

It was agreed that it is important to be open and to engage villagers in the NP process. As an initial step Dave Kirkwood has produced a Web page for the Neighbourhood Planning Group so that information can be shared with villagers. Ian Hill had written a short article for Houghton News which would direct people to that website. Village meetings and distribution of leaflets or questionnaires could also be used both to spread awareness and to encourage contribution to the project from the wider community.

It was explained that the legislation governing the Neighbourhood planning process required the Parish Council to take the lead and that the NPG will report to the PC who in turn will play their part by contacting HDC with the proposals. Ian Hill reported that at the last Parish Council meeting the PC had been very supportive of the Group, had agreed to appoint two councillors to attend each meeting, and to budget for some expenses for the group.

Mike Hearn had brought printed copies of the Houghton Parish Plan, and distributed them to the members present. The various options available to us were explained;

- do nothing,
- prepare a village design statement,
- update the Parish Plan
- prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

The only option that would have legal status is a NP. There was general agreement that the group should progress to a detailed consideration of the work involved and the timescales for producing a NP, and it was agreed that the Parish Council should be informed. A document defining the structure and remit of the Group should be drawn up and sent to the Parish Council, in time for their next meeting (February 12th). All members of the group present agreed to contribute to these proposals.

Consideration of the broad scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

After continued discussion the following points were agreed.

- All of the Parish area would be included in the plan and neighbouring areas would also be included (It needs to be established if specific areas adjacent to, but not within the Parish can be included)
- Village facilities, services and infrastructure are all important considerations that should be addressed in the NP.
- It was agreed that there should be discussions with the Parish Council, HDC, and Hungarton PC about the setting up of this Houghton NPG, and consultation with Billesdon PC about their experience in producing their NP.
- Members of the group are encouraged to attend meetings that will help in the formulation of the NP. Expenses for travelling need to be sorted out with the Parish Council.
- The Group should aim to meet at monthly intervals, between PC meetings, to maintain momentum in their activity. Sub-groups could meet as/when needed and papers would be circulated electronically as required.
- On completion of the NP, there would be a need for periodic reviews and updating of the plan. This requirement must be included in some way for the long-term maintenance of the NP.

ACTION PLAN:

- Ann Sleath would write up the notes of the meeting.
- Roger Bettles would draft a structure and remit document for the NPG to go to the PC.
- Ian Hill will contact Steve Derry to ascertain if it would be appropriate for him and Mike Hearn to go to HDC for discussions and advice regarding the NP process.
- Mike Hearn would arrange to attend the Neighbourhood Planning Forum held by LCC at County Hall on 10th February. Roger Bettles would also attend if possible.
- Ian Hill will add some content to the NP page of the village website.
- Ian Hill will set up a doodle poll check committee member's availability for the next meeting to be held on February 24, 25, or 26.
- Lists of background information sources, mostly web-based, could be circulated amongst the members, to provide context to the discussions in the next meeting.

Objectives of the next meeting:

- Report back and consider results of contacts with HPC, HDC, LCC and any other relevant bodies.
- Consider major topic areas which would form important elements of the NP
- Form sub-groups to start compiling information on each topic, 4-5 people per sub-group. It will be important to read any papers that are circulated within the topic group and make sure they are correct before being presented to the committee.
- Ann Sleath is to contact RCC to ask if a representative could attend our next meeting to explain how they could assist us; and what costs would be incurred for their services.

The meeting closed at 21.30.