

## **SWANTON MORLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

A meeting of the Swanton Morley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was held in Swanton Morley Village Hall on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The meeting commenced at 7pm.

**Present:** Mr S. Vincent (ABZAG – Neighbourhood Plan consultant)  
Mr R. Atterwill (Swanton Morley Parish Council)  
Mr S. Westbury (Swanton Morley Parish Council)  
Mr S. O'Dowd (Swanton Morley Parish Council)  
Mr K. Tidman (Swanton Morley Parish Council)  
Mr B. Marsham (Swanton Morley Parish Council)  
Mr R. Brownlow (Keith Road resident)  
Mr S. Taylor (Liberator Close resident)  
Mrs C. Taylor (Liberator Close resident)  
Mr T. Dockerill (Bennett Road resident)  
Ms L. Battle (Woodgate resident)  
Mr G. Curran (Keith Road resident)  
Mr L. Brooks (Keith Road resident)  
Mr J. Rodrigues (Local Businessman)  
Mr J. Keith (Local Land Owner and Businessman)  
Ms Y. Hendry (Greengate resident)  
Mr G. Palmer (Rectory Road resident)  
Mrs F. LeBon (Clerk to Swanton Morley Parish Council)

### **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Mr Vincent welcomed everyone to the meeting and allowed time for all present to introduce themselves.

### **2) To Elect Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Chairman**

Both Mr Atterwill and Mr Keith advised that they were prepared to stand for the position of Chairman. Following a vote, it was agreed that Mr Keith should Chair the Steering Group.

### **3) To Elect Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Vice Chairman**

It was agreed that Mr Atterwill should be the Vice Chairman for the Steering Group.

### **4) To Receive Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mrs B. O'Dowd (Swanton Morley Parish Council)  
Mr A. Sommerville CPM  
Mr R. Peck

### **5) To Receive Declarations of Interest**

Mr Vincent explained the declarations of interest process. He advised that all members are likely to have properties within the Neighbourhood Plan area (the parish of Swanton Morley) but stressed the need for people to declare areas of land in their ownership. Both Mr Keith and Mr Brownlow identified areas of land in which they had an interest in.

### **6) To Receive Terms of Reference**

Mr Vincent explained that the Parish Council had adopted the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group. Ms Hendry was concerned that this group was only a small proportion of the village as a whole. Mr Vincent explained that this group was a very good cross section of the village, including parish councillors, local business owners, landowners and householders from different areas of the village. The group was well advertised and all parishioners had had the opportunity to join.

Mr Brownlow queried whether the group would need to find additional funding to ensure that Mr Vincent could continue as consultant until the end of the project. Mr Vincent responded that he was already funded until the conclusion of the project, however the Parish Council would appreciate any additional sources of funding should any members be aware of them.

Mr Keith stressed that the committee should be representative of the parish, but it is important that the committee not grow too big as it becomes unwieldy, difficult to manage and loses its effect. He requested that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group minutes be published on the Parish Council website. This was agreed.

## **7) Neighbourhood Planning – Process and Approach**

Mr Vincent gave a powerpoint presentation on Neighbourhood Planning, and Swanton Morley's progress to date. He explained that:

- Neighbourhood Planning formed part of the Localism Act 2011
- Neighbourhood Planning is a community led plan promoting change to benefit the whole community.
- It is not about stopping housebuilding, but guiding development.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area for this plan is the whole parish of Swanton Morley
- The Neighbourhood Plan is a legal document used by the Local Planning Authority (Breckland District Council) to determine planning applications in Swanton Morley.
- The Neighbourhood Plan sets priorities for infrastructure and facilities.
- There are 6 aims of the plan, which have been agreed by the Parish Council. These are:
  - To promote positive change that will benefit the whole community.
  - To create an integrated approach to development to help provide and maintain a positive rural village feel for Swanton Morley.
  - To keep a sense of community value in a village setting while engaging in a positive approach to future development.
  - Enabling a strong community voice to shape future development and direction of growth so as to maintain community spirit and enable the integration of new residents into our thriving community.
  - Take steps that safeguard our local wildlife and protect their habitats to enhance our natural environment whilst enabling local residents to continue to enjoy them.
  - To positively influence development to being about better design and types of housing that meets the future needs of Swanton Morley.
- The Group needs to collect evidence for the plan
- There are basic conditions that the plan must meet. These are:
  - The plan must meet the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
  - The plan must contribute to sustainable development (as defined by the NPPF). There are 3 elements to this and they are 'Economic', 'Environmental' and 'Social'.
  - It must conform with the Local Area Plan (but Breckland District Council's Local Area Plan does not yet exist).
  - It must comply with Human Right regulations.
  - It must comply with EU regulations which are fundamentally associated with habitat and habitat protection). Natural England will assist with this.

Mr Vincent explained that the group will run events and workshops for the community to attend and give feedback. The group will also develop the vision and the associated policies. The plan will then be submitted to Breckland District Council who will publicise it (but cannot alter it). The plan will then go to an independent examiner, who will be a choice of 3, and the Parish Council will have a say in who is chosen. The Examiner will then recommend any changes to the plan, and after the plan has been accepted by the examiner, it goes to referendum. This will be run by, and paid for by Breckland District Council and will be run in the same way as an election in the village, with voting cards being distributed to all registered electors. If the majority of those voting agree with the plan, then it is deemed as being 'made' and it is adopted by Breckland District Council.

Mr Brownlow queried who the Independent Examiners are. Mr Vincent replied that they are planners who are trained in Neighbourhood Planning, but our examiner cannot have a link with Swanton Morley or Breckland District Council

*Mrs O'Dowd (Swanton Morley Parish Council) Joined the Meeting*

Ms Hendry queried whether Breckland District Council is obliged to use the Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Vincent responded that they are because it is a legal document. They can go against the policies within it but in doing so they must justify why. But it is rare to go against the plan.

Ms Hendry queried if there are other local parishes with completed plans. Mr Vincent advised that there are none in the Breckland area with completed plans, but there are several parishes in the process of creating one.

The Clerk queried that with Breckland District Council not having a current 5 year housing land supply, its current policies are deemed 'out of date', would the Parish Council's policies in the Neighbourhood Plan also be deemed out of date? Mr Vincent responded that the Neighbourhood Plan policies would still be in force.

Mr Marsham raised concerns that the parish has a current need for affordable housing, but if only small developments were put forwards, then there would never be a contribution to this. The Clerk advised that there were other ways to achieve affordable housing in the village, such as rural exception sites, and these could be written into the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Atterwill raised concerns about the increasing number of sites being put forward in Swanton Morley at present, as Breckland District Council does not have a valid Local Plan and the parish does not have a Neighbourhood Plan at present, the plans will be looked upon favourably because Breckland District Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply. The village is currently very vulnerable.

Ms Battle queried whether the village would still receive benefit such as affordable housing, if the developer developed a site in stages. Mr Vincent responded that it would be deemed as a cumulative development, unless the site is sold to another developer.

Mr Atterwill queried whether a developer could develop outside what has been agreed in the Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Vincent replied that permission could be granted for this if the five year housing supply had yet to be reached.

Mr Keith asked whether infrastructure improvements could form part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Vincent replied that they could if there was evidence to support it. Unfortunately Breckland District Council has not adopted a CIL policy, therefore the community has less say in how funds received from development are spent. Planning conditions are not the best ways to receiving infrastructure improvements, however contributions in a s106 agreement are legally enforceable.

Mr Atterwill reported to the meeting about the problems that Swanton Morley Parish Council were having with the enforcement of the planning conditions and Section 106 agreement on the Rectory Road development. He raised concerns about how effective the Neighbourhood Plan would be if the LP constantly fails to have a 5 year housing land supply. Mr Vincent agreed that a poor Local Planning Authority could cause problems.

Mr Atterwill advised that developers are now having planning conditions reversed as they are being deemed not 'economically viable'. Mr Vincent advised that the NPPF has introduced a viability clause for developers, but for the developer to use this, they must produce their accounts. The viability report is assessed by the District Valuer and not Breckland District Council.

Mr Atterwill advised that he would like to see affordable houses in the village going to Swanton Morley people or those with a connection to the village, but Breckland District Council only has a district lettings policy. Mr Vincent advised that this can be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan with a local lettings policy, which can apply to a proportion of the affordable housing within a development.

Ms Battle queried whether developers could be requested to build more starter homes. Mr Keith responded that it is more profitable for a developer to build 4+ bedroom executive houses, than it is to build 1-2 bedroom starter homes. Mr Vincent confirmed that it is market forces to determine the size of housing.

**a) To Receive Neighbourhood Plan Progress Report**

Mr Vincent reported that Neighbourhood Plan progress reports are created for the Parish Council. Five have been produced so far. The Clerk is to put the progress reports on the website. Mr Palmer requested reports be placed in the Link Up Magazine. These should be sent to the editor by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**b) To Consider Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives**

Mr Keith stressed the need for a vision to be 'punchy'. After a proposition from Mr Atterwill and a second from Mr Keith, the following vision was agreed:

*'Swanton Morley is, and will continue to be, a great place for our children to grow up and make their homes, with a real sense of community.*

*To preserve and enhance the history, rural aspect, natural environment, attractive outlook, village atmosphere and unique natural beauty for all the community to enjoy, whilst embracing a prosperous and sustainable future a place where people choose to live, work and visit'*

After a proposal from Mr Palmer and a second from Mr Atterwill, the following objectives we agreed:

- a) Involve local people in an ongoing basis in the process of plan-making, monitoring and delivery of development.*
- b) Protect the countryside and farmland surrounding our village; promoting green space, woodland and support nature conservation.*
- c) Preserving the character of the village, including the spatial balance between the rural and built environment, historical assets, character and ethos whilst improving design based on local vernacular styles.*
- d) To support new housing that meets the local needs, is affordable and made available to 'Swanton Morley people' first.*
- e) To support a housing growth strategy tailored to the needs and context of Swanton Morley, where development is sensitive, in keeping whilst protecting and enriching the landscape and built setting.*
- f) To promote the integration of new housing development into the social and physical fabric of the village. Ensuring infrastructure improvements are made to roads, sewage, healthcare, Broadband and mobile communications.*
- g) Enhance the provision of, and protect, the existing small business, retail, light industrial and farming activities in and around our village.*
- h) To develop and improve local community facilities and services (such as education, medical and recreation) for all age groups.*
- i) Reduce the negative impact (speed, safety and volume) of traffic on all our roads and support enhanced public transport infrastructure.*

**c) To Consider the Sustainability Appraisal Terms of Reference**

This was distributed to members in the meeting. Mr Vincent reported that the Sustainability Appraisal was a technical document. In order to complete the Sustainability Appraisal a scoping report must be created. The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan must be tested against the framework created in the scoping report.

The Sustainability Appraisal goes to three Statutory Bodies for consultation, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England. Whilst not statutory consultees, it should also be sent to Norfolk County Council, Breckland District Council and Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

**8. Communications**

**a) To Consider Neighbourhood Plan Communications Strategy**

Mr Atterwill raised concerns that there was too much emphasis on the Link Up Magazine and not enough on the Mardler. The Mardler is delivered to every household in the village (excluding the Barracks) and is free of charge. The Link Up has a limited distribution and requires payment from subscribers.

It was agreed that The Mardler should be added to the Communications Strategy and the Clerk is to ensure that Mr Vincent has a copy of the most recent edition which focusses on the Neighbourhood Plan.

**b) To Feedback on Newsletter Edition One**

Concerns were raised by some members that they had not received the first newsletter. Mr Vincent assured members that he and his team had personally delivered the newsletters to each household in the village, including the barracks.

The draft second edition newsletter was distributed. It was agreed to add the website and social media contacts and to correct the distortion in the map. The date for the next Community Event will also be added when agreed. Mr Rodrigues offered to assist with distribution through his network of newspaper deliverers.

**c) To Feedback on Community Workshops**

It was agreed that the next Community Workshop will be on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February, between 10am and 1pm at Swanton Morley Village Hall. This will focus on feedback from the previous meetings and the creation of policies.

**9. To Consider any Further Matters Relating to the Neighbourhood Plan**

Mr Atterwill queried to what extent the group should consult with Norfolk County Council over infrastructure improvements and their viability. Mr Vincent responded that this is normally done as part of the site allocations which is the responsibility of the Breckland District Council. However, the group can decide to take this on if it so wishes. Mr Atterwill advised that Capita (Breckland District Council's planning contractor) has emphasised that the Steering Group will have sole responsibility for liaising with Norfolk County Council over infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Vincent advised that the Breckland District Council has a legal obligation to produce a Local Plan which consists of site allocations and the required infrastructure improvements to make these allocations work. He urged that Swanton Morley drive Breckland District Council to do their job.

The Clerk is to send the link to Breckland District Council's Preferred Options consultation to the group, so all can respond to the current sites as individuals should they wish.

**10. To Agree Items to be Considered by Swanton Morley Parish Council**

None raised

**11. To Agree Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that this should be held at 2pm on 13<sup>th</sup> February (after the Community Event has finished). It will be an open meeting for attendance, but discussion will be limited to the Steering Group.

Mr Keith thanked the group for their confidence in electing him Chairman and thanked the Parish Council for their work on the plan to date.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman) \_\_\_\_\_ Date