

MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTIES TOWARDS THE PARISH DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

HELD IN THE CHURCH ON TUESDAY APRIL 1ST 2014

Persons present: Councillors Mrs Jane Vann, Ralf Dahm, David Durran, Adrian Timms.

Gaynor Barnacle, Mavis Jeffery, Paul Chawner, Brian Cross, Philip Poncelet, Martin Reynolds, Chris Swaine and Nigel Walker.

Councillor Mrs Vann opened the meeting by explaining that this was not a council meeting, but a meeting for the working parties to report on progress.

Group 1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF CYCLE LINKS WITH ARNESBY AND OTHER VILLAGES, by Jane Vann

1. County Hall was contacted, but we were informed that County is focussing on Hinckley and district for the next few years. It was also pointed out that any proposed cycle track financed by County had to show:-
 - a) Value for money
 - b) A high level of use.
2. The group had contacted Sustrans, a charitable organisation which supports safe cycle routes.(Sustainable TRANSport) They indicated that a route between Arnesby and Shearsby would cost about £100,000-00. Thus there is no way forward at this time.
3. It was mentioned that landowners can permit a footpath to become a cycle track, but the cost to maintain such is still a problem.

GROUP 2. FOOTPATHS. By Adrian Timms.

1. On behalf of the group Adrian had contacted the County Footpaths Officer, Nigel Dunmore, who came out to Shearsby and walked all the footpaths with Adrian, assessing their state. Three places were noted for improvement, where gates could replace stiles, two in the field at the top of Fenny Lane behind Elmsbrook, and one at the end of Church Lane. However the two under consideration by County are on the much used paths from Fenny Lane to Bears' Hole and towards Mill Lane
2. Adrian also reported on the fact that the new owner of Ashbrook House had improved the footpath over his land a great deal with an easy gate and no difficult stile by the stream. Adrian had, on behalf of the Council, thanked Mr and Mrs Smith for the improvements they had made.
3. The footpath over the Pieces, which now finishes in the middle of the field, was discussed, and Mr Dunmore asked for evidence of its use to be recorded. Mrs Jeffery had provided a 1930's 1 inch O.S. map showing the footpath and Mrs Burton had found a 2 1/2 inch O.S. map dated 1904 also showing the footpath. Mrs Jeffery had often walked the path in the 1980's when Mrs Shipman owned the field, with Mrs Shipman's acknowledgement. When the field was sold on the death of the Shipman's, the footpath was ploughed and walking became difficult. Mr Reynolds said he had walked the footpath. The forms regarding this footpath are on the website. Please print them off, fill them in and return to Adrian.

GROUP 3. VILLAGE GREEN AND OPEN SPACES. By David Durran

David mentioned that there are strict criteria governing designated open spaces. They concern:-

- a) Sport
- b) Recreation
- c) Conservation of wildlife, flora and fauna.

The group had looked into three spaces in particular:-

1. The Village Green, which is owned by the community in perpetuity, and used by the community for all kinds of village functions, children's play area, parties, fetes, etc. It is also there for villagers and persons passing through to sit and enjoy the area.
2. The green area on Welford Road. This is aesthetic rather than functional. (The septic tank, now filled in was under this area). It is mown by the council as a verge, but it enhances the area with its trees and flowers.
3. The field at the top of Fenny Lane, behind the bungalow called Elmsbrook. Whilst this is owned privately it is of significant importance to the village. It has two footpaths across, one of which leads to Bear's Hole where the village children have played for generations. The field and Bear's Hole are very rich in flora and fauna. For many years it was a wild flower meadow and grass snakes woodpeckers, toads, frogs, newts, bats and many species of birds live in this area. The footpath from Mill lane provides a pleasant rural setting to the village centre.

GROUP 4. LAND USE WITHIN THE PARISH AND THE CONSERVATION AREA . By Ralf Dahm.

Everyone present was given a copy of the group's report and asked to view the maps which illustrated it.

1. LAND USE

- a) Ralf briefly mentioned the conservation village with its mix of housing and the fact that there was very little space left for further building within the conservation area.
- b) Land within the parish is mostly used for agriculture but it is of note that Willowbrook Farm is organic with all fields under the stewardship of Natural England at the highest level. There are also five fields on Thorpehill Farm which are under the stewardship of Natural England at entry level. The group would like to think that more fields might be entered into this stewardship.
- b) The area lacks woodland and the group has identified an area of 3 acres, above Bear's Hole. It is landlocked and accessible only by footpath. At some time this might be purchased and planted.

2. HOUSING

The housing in the village has been noted and extends from historical listed building to modern new builds. The group is aware that affordable housing is lacking and this will continue because as private houses are purchased and improved they increase in price. Housing Association Development seems to be the only sensible answer. The group identified an area at the northern end of the parish on the Arnesby Lane, where a few affordable homes might be built. It is a safe road and within easy walking distance of Fleckney's shops and regular bus service.

3. BUSINESS

The seven small businesses within the village were listed, as were the five businesses on the Saddington Lane. It was felt that the dangerous crossroads needed improvement before any further development took place, but it was also pointed out that the electricity cable supplying the area has reached its maximum.

GROUP 5. USE OF THE VILLAGE HALL, BROADBAND, NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH.

1. THE VILLAGE HALL by Martin Reynolds

This is maintained by the Charitable Trust. Each day is split into three sessions and for villagers, each session costs £12-00.

The group suggested that the hall would benefit from a projector and collapsible screen. It already has a sound system.

At present the hall is under used but suggestions for our community were:- Bingo, afternoon teas, ethnic eating, first aid lessons, poetry readings, bridge club, chess club, gardening club etc. Lots of ideas, but each of these needs an enthusiastic organiser.

2. BROADBAND by Phil Poncelet.

The Shearsby area is in the 2nd phase of roll out for the faster speed and it is unlikely to improve for the next two years. Even then if we are linked with a copper cable rather than fibre there will be little improvement.

We could apply to BT for gap funding to get a green box in the village but this is likely to cost the village more than £15,000-00. Could Council consider this. The whole matter needs to be pushed until it is achieved.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH by Paul Chawner

The email contact was set up several years ago, and the "No cold calling area" was established.

It was suggested that the Street Warden system and the Neighbourhood watch leader could be re-introduced. These persons could also be used as contact points and be in charge of gritting in severe weather conditions.

It was also suggested that an on line communal shopping experience might be beneficial to some villagers.

CONCLUSION.

Mrs Vann thanked everyone for working so hard at the various investigations and said that Council would now look thoroughly at each report and find a way to proceed. The working parties will be notified when they are required to help again.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

M.J. 03.04.2014