

**Summertown & St Margaret's
Neighbourhood Forum**

Minutes of 2018 AGM

**7.30pm Tuesday 6th November 2018
Woodstock Rd Baptist Hall**



1. Present

Steering Group Members: Sam Clarke [Chair], Bob Colenutt, Shamus Donald, Neil MacLennan, Martin Roberts, Henk van Es [Treasurer].

Natasha Robinson [minutes secretary]

Councillors: Paul Buckley, Mike Gotch, John Howson, Tom Landell-Mills.

36 members of the Neighbourhood Forum [NF] were also in attendance

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Gant

The meeting commenced at 7.35pm. An introduction to the format of the evening was given by Sam Clarke, Chair, and would include an opportunity to ask questions of the Steering Group following their reports.

2. Minutes of 2017 AGM.

These were available for review. They were **APPROVED** by a majority show of hands with 2 abstentions and no objections.

3. Chair's report for 2018

The draft **Neighbourhood Plan** [the Plan] was submitted for examination shortly after the last AGM [2017]. The Steering Group had been invited to select the Independent Examiner, whose review regrettably resulted in significant changes being required, with the loss of some very significant content. It was decided that the amendments would be made and the plan resubmitted to be subject to referendum, in order to benefit from those policies which remained and could thus protect the neighbourhood. The Chair drew the meeting's attention to a list of policies submitted. Policies addressing key worker accommodation, protection of family dwellings, sustainable construction, HMO's, dwelling size had all been removed at the request of the Examiner. It is likely that this was due to a lack of harmonisation with the Council's own Local Plan which remains under development, and there *may* be similar recommendations contained with the Local Plan. The Plan will shortly be taken to Council Executive Board [CEB] in December where it is hoped it will be accepted and a referendum called in early 2019.

We have worked with Wolvercote NF, whose plan is at an earlier stage of development, and Headington NF whose plan has already been subject to referendum and adopted.

We have considered the possible use by the NF of funds from **Community Infrastructure Levy** [CIL] but found that these are not readily accessible.

We have considered the **future role of the NF**. We are required to 'redesignate' as a body with the Council in January 2019 as we have been in existence 5 years. Once the referendum is called we will seek to mobilise voters and supporters, who will be required to renew their NF membership, and a new organisational structure will be developed. Chair displayed a list of those currently serving on the steering group, and those providing active support. [see later]

Alexandra Park: A group led by Henk van Es [with Geoff Randell and Deborah Bryceson, and Cllr Andrew Gant] has been addressing the possible development options for Alexandra Park. User surveys have been undertaken by ourselves [online, face to face and through meetings] and by the Council. A vision has been developed to include the needs of all age groups and a range of different activities including tennis, dog-walkers, seating, performance space. This will require close liaison with the Council Parks dept who currently have insufficient funding to implement a significant development but may have enough to make a start between now and 2019. The NF only has sufficient funding for design and will need to access CIL and fundraising for the full proposal.

4. Treasurer's Report for 2017-18

HvE described the finances over the past year as being very quiet with few payments/receipts.

We have spent c£16k over the past 5 years, mostly on planning consultant advice, IT/website, and document preparation. We will need to raise a further £3k over the next year to cover ongoing costs including the referendum expenses. We will also have to fundraise for individual projects, which is easier to do. These projects will be codeveloped with Forum members.

There is no statutory obligation to have the accounts audited, and it was suggested that this would therefore not be undertaken.

It was proposed/seconded that the accounts be **APPROVED**. This was agreed unanimously by a show of hands [no abstentions or objections].

It was proposed/seconded that no audit would be undertaken. This was **AGREED** unanimously by a show of hands [no abstentions or objections]

5. Forum Future

Re-election: Bob Colenutt was unanimously re-elected to the Steering Group

Election: Liz Wade was unanimously elected to the Steering Group

Sam Clarke announced that he would be standing down today as Chair, and that Shamus Donald would be taking over as **Chair of the Steering Group**, with the Group's agreement.

Shamus thanked Sam for the enormous amount of work that he had done whilst Chair, getting us to the point that we were able to submit a Plan which would receive approval and proceed to referendum.

We are currently in the pre-referendum phase. Our plan will be received by Oxford City CEB on 18th December and if approved we expect a referendum date in early 2019.

Alongside this we need a project list to engage our community and encourage participation. We need pairs of hands for specific roles and responsibilities, and we need to be representative of our whole community. Different skills [eg financial, HR and communications] will be valuable. Potential projects include the development of Diamond Place, Alexandra Park, protecting our natural environment, managing air quality, transport planning, the Summertown retail centre, and responding to new developments including tall buildings. Oxford City plan includes the possible development of tall buildings in areas such as Summertown.

Questions:

- Have we considered 'parishing'? A: yes, and decided that we did not currently have the infrastructure to move to this position at present, but this might be appropriate for the future should there be a Unitary Authority with insufficient local representation for our neighbourhood.
- Why were some policies rejected? A: this was anticipated as some of our policies would conflict with the Council's Local Plan. It was noted Headington had the same experience.
- How can we prevent inappropriate future development such as the Easy Hotel? A: we cannot be certain to do so, but some of the policies in the Plan will help provide a strong basis for rejection of inappropriate development as planners will recognise that they represent the views of the local community.
- Can we influence planning outwith our neighbourhood [eg Oxford North]? A: only aspects such as transport which directly affect our neighbourhood.
- Please can we have more information available on the website
- How will we develop projects for implementation? A: there will be publicity at the time of the referendum, we will invite suggestions, the website will be a point of contact, and we welcome all offers of help and contacts with other local community groups who wish to join in.

6. Presentation: Rob Lloyd-Sweet [Historic Places Adviser for SE England, and previous Oxford City Council Conservation Officer]

RL-S gave a lively and wide-ranging presentation which explored the history and role of conservation areas, and his own role in providing advice and support to communities who wished to go down this route – eg Summertown, or parts of it. Oxford has 18 conservation areas including the Greyhound Racing Stadium! There are more stringent rules about development within a conservation area, but these are unlikely adversely to affect property values or overall community development, and are generally a positive influence. The process itself is quite lengthy and has costs attached. Toolkits exist. It maybe better to start small with a manageable area rather than try and cover all the qualifying parts of Summertown at once, as there are some very different areas which have different heritage significance. It is essential to have the support and agreement of the Council. There was time for a few questions at the end, and some informal discussion with interested individuals.

The meeting closed around 9.30pm.

Signed: _____ **[Chair]**

Date: _____