

## Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Lawshall Neighbourhood Plan Team

### The Swan, 24/08/15, 19.30

**In Attendance:** Ric Edelmann (Lawshall Green); Laura McClelland (Lawshall Green); Tom McClelland (Lawshall Green); Jamie Whatley (Lambs Lane); Martin Edgar (Bury Road); Trisha Edgar (Bury Road); John Kent (Melford Road); Lucy Kent (Melford Road); Bryan Adams (Golden Lane); Andy Irish (The Street); Debbie Thomas (Hall Mead).

**Apologies:** Apologies were sent by **Nigel Hughes** (Lawshall Green) and **David Page** (Harrow Green)

- Ric invited the group to introduce themselves to one another. Ric reported to the group that he, Laura and Tom had been researching the various options for plans for the village. Ric explained that they had a meeting with **Tony Shepherd** who is chair of Lavenham's Neighbourhood Plan (NP) team, and a meeting with **Douglas Chivers** who is vice-chair on Hartest's NP team. The NP's of both villages are nearing completion. In light of these meetings and wider research on-line, Laura, Tom and he are recommending that if the village goes ahead with *any* plan for the village, it ought to be an NP.
- Tom explained why, in light of the research done thus far, pursuing an NP is advisable. He reported that all the other plans beside the NP – the Village Design Statement, the Parish Plan and the Community-Led Plan – are less effective and would not have any legal influence on future development in Lawshall. In contrast, NPs are very effective documents with legal force. An NP, if ratified, would enter a suite of documents that developers must address when proposing a development. Any proposal that contravenes an NP will be rejected by the planning council.
- Tom suggested that the work and costs required to produce an NP are both feasible. He explained that producing an NP would require a process of public consultation and sensitivity to a number of legal requirements. Tom outlined the acts of public engagement required: an initial consultation in the village hall; a questionnaire for all residents; a referendum on whether the NP developed should be adopted. Tom outlined how an NPT would be supported by: the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC); the Town and County Planning Institute; a 'champion' at Babergh who would be the NPT's point-person at the district level; and possibly a paid consultant who would guide the NPT through the process.
- Laura outlined the likely costs of developing an NP and how those costs could be met:. Regarding costs, Laura reported that: a) **Registering** as an NPT is **free**; b) **Key documents** would be supplied by Babergh for **free**; c) **Printing** would be a key cost, particularly for the village questionnaire; d) **Software** for making the questionnaire available online and for analysing questionnaire results would, if used, require a **small licence fee**; e) An NP must include a Housing Needs Survey. Hartest paid **£2000-£2500** for their Housing Needs Survey; f) A professional consultant, if hired, would be a significant expense. Hartest paid a one-off fee of **£8000** to their consultant, Mr Ian Poole, and reported that Hartest strongly recommended using a consultant.
- Regarding funding, Laura reported that: a) **The Department for Communities and Local Government** has funded a support programme worth £22.5 million from 2015 to 2018. Lawshall can ask for a grant of between **£1000 and £8000**; b) the **Parish Council** could make a donation to the plan but emphasised that they would not be bearing the brunt of the costs; c) the **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** can be used to contribute to an NP *under certain circumstances*; d) Richard Kemp's **locality fund** can supply funds and have done so for Hartest and Lavenham; e) the **Lottery Fund** can offer grants and have done so in support of Lavenham's NP.

- Ric opened the floor for any questions: Malcom asked whether procuring government funding would be as easy as it seems and noted the possibility of regulations changing.
- Bryan enquired whether anyone had precise figures on the extent of development encouraged by Lawshall's 'hinterland village status'. Ric noted that he'd had contradictory information on this.
- **Action: Ric to ask contact at Babergh for precise and up-to-date figures on the development encouraged by the hinterland status.**
- Andy noted that the Parish Council (PC) would be concerned about whether there is an adequate level of commitment from the group to see through an NP. The group reported that they are willing to help though would need guidance on what exactly is needed of them. AI reported that having an NP would mean that the PC would be given 25% of any future S106 money. This would increase PC funds and give the PC much greater power over how those funds are spent.
- Debbie asked whether issues besides housing could be addressed by an NP. Ric reported that they could be and explained that Lavenham's NP pays attention to such issues on the grounds that they give context to any conclusions regarding housing.
- Bryan suggested that all members of the group will have some vested interest in an NP and stated his own vested interest of having a patch of land he is considering for development.
- **VOTE: Ric asked the group to vote on whether Lawshall should pursue an NP. Of the 11 members in attendance, there was a unanimous vote in favour of an NP.**
- Ric asked Andy what the group should do to make the case for an NP to the PC. Andy suggested that the PC would need: i) a rough budget; ii) would need to know more about the circumstances under which S106 funds could be spent on an NP; iii) would need a record of the addresses of all members of the group to ensure that the group represents the whole village; Andy to be cc'd on all NPT emails.
- **Actions: Laura to draw up rough budget for the next PC; Laura and Ric to find out more about the availability of S106 funds; Tom to include addresses of all group members on the meeting minutes; Andy to be cc'd on all NPT emails**
- Bryan enquired whether the group had a map of the parish boundary.
- **Action: Ric to ask the PC Clerk whether she has a map of the parish boundary**
- Andy suggested he talk informally to PC councillors about the NP to councillors, and that someone from the group should give a 10 minute presentation at the meeting to make the case for the NP. Andy also suggested that he be sent a bulleted summary of the presentation prior to the meeting.
- **Action: Andy to talk to councillors about the NP; group member to present case for NP at next PC meeting; Andy to be emailed bulleted summary of presentation prior to PC meeting**
- John asked whether it would be advisable for as many members of the group as possible to go to the PC meeting to show their support for NP. Andy suggested this wouldn't be necessary.
- Andy predicted that if an NP could be shown to be financially viable it would be supported by the PC
- Deborah asked whether SALC might offer training sessions for NPT members
- **Action: Laura to ask SALC whether they offer relevant training**
- Ric raised the question of when the next NPT meeting should be and suggested the week beginning **Mon 12<sup>th</sup> September**. Tom agreed to set up an online poll to this end. All members of the group were asked whether they are happy for their contact details to be shared to this end, and all members stated that they were.
- **Action: Tom to set up online poll for timing of next meeting**
- **MEETING CONCLUDED AT 20:50**