

## CRANBROOK & SISSINGHURST PARISH COUNCIL

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Dear Sir/Madam,

15 December 2015

A Meeting of the

### **Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee (NDPC)**

will be held in the  
Council Chamber, Vestry Hall, Stone Street, Cranbrook

**At 7:30pm on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015**

The business to be transacted at the meeting is shown on the Agenda

Yours faithfully,

Clerk (No clerk present)

#### **Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:**

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk. **None declared.**

**Apologies:** Patricia Fermor, Bradley Franks.

#### **Terms of Reference:**

***Aim: To facilitate delivery of a sustainable Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and all supporting policy, design and ancillary documentation, recognising the distinct local character and aspirations of the communities of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst.***

MH wanted an accurate definition of NDP right at the start.

JS referred to the briefing pack issued by the Clerk in June.

#### **NDPC membership at inception:**

Alison Bunyan AB (present)

David Cook DC (present)

Patricia Fermor PT

Bradley Franks BF

Linda Hall LH (present)

Matt Hartley MH (present)

Tim Kemp (Chairperson) TK (present)

John Smith JS (present)

**NDPC to undertake the following (*proposal for discussion*):**

1. Frequency: to meet on the second Monday of each month at 19:30h.  
Discussed at length with some members highlighting conflict with existing commitments; consensus was to *meet as necessary* at the general convenience of committee members.
2. Scope of NDP: formally designate the extent of the NDP with the LPA (TWBC). Application to be submitted by mid January 2016. MH and LH argued that, under the Localism Act, it would be appropriate to produce separate NDPs for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. JS and AB, as Sissinghurst residents, did not agree. TK asked what clear advantages that would bring. The concern is that the needs of two distinct places are met by the NDP. It was pointed out that the Neighbourhood Area (NA) could cross administrative or parish boundaries provided that it didn't overlap with another NA. Broad consensus was in favour of designating one unified NA for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst; in this scenario working groups from each parish may develop ideas in parallel for a given task/zone. There is a 6-8 week public consultation period when residents can raise concerns but none are anticipated. On that basis TK proposed to prepare the application letter for submission by mid January 2016 (subject to approval from Full Council).
3. Consultation: tender, interview and appoint a specialist consultant to lead a critical public engagement, advise on, organise and prepare all necessary public workshops, charettes, media-wide alerts and feedback, graphic and policy documentation etc, etc. Invitations to Tender to be sent out in mid January 2016. TK cited the Hawkhurst experience where they had regretted delaying the appointment of a consultant as everything they needed to understand about the process was learnt in the process itself as it played out. LH argued for the need to engage the public fully in the process including the production of a character assessment, in order to get the public to look more closely at their localities in order to better understand what works or doesn't work. The character assessment would be vital to generating interest in the NDP as well as identifying policy and design criteria. It was argued by TK that whilst this task was essential to the process, it may be better organised within the consultant's brief, in order that the event is properly converted into evidence for the NDP documentation. DC argued that we should research the matter thoroughly before committing to a contract; if there is work that we can progress before the (consultancy) clock starts ticking, then we should advance the process as far as we can before employing a specialist.
4. Quantify what it is we need to produce in order to define a resilient NDP; our brief to the lead consultant. TK cited the concerns of an urban practitioner (Angela Koch) that an NDP would only be robust if very tightly worded. In the design world words *with* images or diagrams are the way to achieve this and in the discussion a scenario was identified where four components might ideally be commissioned including:
  - (i) NDP policy document (policy compliant mainstay).
  - (ii) Conservation Area Management Plan CAMP (effectively a conservation design manual).
  - (iii) Urban design manual (for architecture, street and public space).
  - (iv) A master plan to map out (i) to (iii).

5. Quantify resourcing in terms of time and money for item 4. Obtain a grant as necessary from DCLG and seek sponsorship from leading local businesses.  
TK suggested that, on submission of the NA designation application, the 8 week hiatus be used to identify and consult with urban designers to draw up a shortlist for interview; the process needs to be quantified in temporal and financial terms as quickly as possible and make a plan. Concerns were raised that the process should not be rushed into, given the risk and expense involved. TK pointed out that speaking to the consultants early on was an opportunity to harvest information up front before signing any contracts. A conversation with Hawkhurst had identified a sum of £30,000+ in order to commission an inclusive NDP engagement and production package; government funding of approx £7,000 was available, but we need to examine funding closely before committing to a particular procurement path. AB pointed out that we would need to get full council approval on finances/costs before deciding the way forward – this would of course be easier once we had received quotes from suitable consultants to take on the task.
6. Interview residents and invite eight members of the public to join the eight councillors on the NDPC (five for Cranbrook and 3 for Sissinghurst); giving particular attention to expertise *and energy!* JS suggested that all committee members might think of a list of suitable candidates, but it was also suggested that an advertisement might be posted in order to widen the reach.
7. Limit the number of members to eight councillors and eight members of the public (*based on the experience of other NDPCs this number should, if anything, fall as large bodies tend to become unwieldy*). Lessons cited from NDP seminar.
8. To engage the schools right at the very start in order to develop the process in parallel with the core curricula. DC not convinced of the viability or benefits of this for the youngest although he thought there might be some benefit to come from engaging the sixth formers; LH concurred.
9. To identify and engage with businesses, landowners and stakeholders from the start and to liaise closely with the LPA as ideas emerge.
10. To learn from neighbouring parishes wrt their experiences of procuring an NDP in order to reduce production time wherever possible. TK cited his attendance at the Kent Design NDP seminar and subsequent contact made with the Clerk at Hawkhurst PC. Julia Newman had given an articulate and insightful presentation at the seminar for Hawkhurst and encouraged other PCs to learn from their experiences. AB brought copies of the designation application letters for Hawkhurst, Paddock Wood and Sandhurst as working precedents. MH also brought an example of a character assessment of Oxford and waved it about for a moment. (None of these documents were reviewed at the table).
11. To work in close partnership with established local and national bodies such as CPRE, High Weald AONB unit, The National Trust, Design South-East, The Prince's Regeneration Trust, CCAAC, WKPS, English Nature, RSPB etc in order to inform the public engagement with proven knowledge and strategies for economic regeneration by bringing residents, landscape and business closer together.

**Nomination for Vice Chairperson.**

TK nominated JS.

MH nominated LH.

JS suggested that joint vice chair's could serve each parish ie JS from Sissinghurst and LH from Cranbrook. There was general support for this outcome given the respective expertise and experience of the two candidates.

**Actions:**

1. MH to define NDP.
2. TK to draft NA designation application letter for approval.
3. TK: round-robin to confirm next meeting date and collate meeting notes.