

Neighbourhood Plan (“NP”)

In attendance; Shon Sprackling (“SS”) Parish Council Chairperson
Elizabeth Brown (“EB”) Parish Council Vice-chairperson

Circa 60 Parishioners

Introductory remarks

SS opened the meeting as Chairman of the Parish Council. He provided a brief overview of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and, for those parishioners not present at the inaugural project meeting on 7/5/13, an introduction to the process and the discussions that took place at that meeting. SS stated that it had been deliberate not to set any agenda for the evening’s meeting as it was intended as a broad and introductory discussion on starting the NP process. He stated that tonight’s event was intended to capitalise upon the broad engagement and agreement that had taken place on 7/5/13 where more than 100 parishioners had participated.

The relationship between the NP and the Parish Council was discussed at length. The outcome of this debate was that the NP was a community project, a community process and a document to be produced by the community without direct input from Parish Council. A draft NP document would be submitted to the Parish Council to ensure that it was compliant under the National Planning Policy Framework, under Chichester District Council’s Local Development Framework and under frameworks currently in process with the South Downs Authority.

SS then introduced Paddy Walker (“PW”). Paddy Walker had volunteered at the 7/5/13 meeting to co-ordinate the NP process for the Rogate & Rake Parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan process (NP Process)

PW noted that he was speaking this evening as an un-elected parishioner who had volunteered to lead the NP project and that there might be others either in the audience or not present who might be as qualified for this position. PW’s presentation was therefore being made on the basis of the mandate given on the 7/5/13 meeting and in the absence of any other party coming forward at this time.

PW noted that more than 60 parishioners were attending what was the NP’s second meeting and that the meeting had been publicised by the Council, by the 5/7/13 meeting and by a series of “Your Parish Needs You” posters fly-posted throughout the parish. It was noted that the two meetings’ attendance was very encouraging but should not yet be construed as being representative of the whole parish. PW suggested that this issue was critical and would be revisited later in the evening’s discussions.

PW suggested that the getting a NP started was inevitably a daunting process but that the evening’s deliberations were “draft” as the Parish Council was not yet quite decided how it wanted to proceed on the whole NP matter.

PW stated that it was clear from the meeting that the parish wished to build on the excellent energy and participation from the earlier meeting and therefore suggested the following agenda for the evening's meeting:

- Discuss a possible process;
- How such a process would be run;
- Rules, governance and procedures for the process;
- Discussion of practicalities and how it might work within the Parish.

Process

PW suggested that writing an appropriate NP for the Parish might be a relatively simple process given that many local precedents (Petersfield, Milland, Kirdford, Fernhurst) now existed, that several outside agencies had now formed to provide assistance and that much on-line guidance was available to help parishes complete these documents. The process was also helped by the flexibility given to the process by the government's statutory framework.

PW discussed the governance structures in place with these parishes that had already started their own community-led NP processes. Petersfield, in particular, was well advanced in its planning for a NP and PW suggested adapting, with permission, the format of their website, their own governance as well as their system of committees and several levels of communication with their 14,000 parishioners.

The Neighbourhood Plan document

While any NP cannot conflict with the Local Plan nor be used to prevent development that is included in Local Plan, PW suggested the following key criteria for Rogate & Rake's NP document:

- Develop a shared vision for the neighbourhood;
- Choose where new homes and other development should be built;
- Identify and protect important local green spaces;
- Influence what new buildings should look like.

The role of NP Project Leader

PW stated that he had volunteered to lead the NP process for several reasons:

- The NP project was an interesting opportunity for the Parish to get agreement on a wide spectrum of issues that might otherwise remain thorny local issues;
- Good precedents already existed (at Petersfield) and no need therefore to re-invent the wheel;
- There was a clear way forward in terms of process;
- 104 had attended the NP's 1st meeting and there was an obvious will throughout the parish to engage in the process;
- It was not often that a parish was widely consulted and then have this consultation given proper teeth through the referendum and adoption of a formal NP;
- The NP had to be overseen and completed by someone.

PW also stated that he was properly un-conflicted. He had lived for 3 years in Rogate, 13 years in Cocking. He had no external interests in the parish and no land. He confirmed that he had never attended any local association meetings and was not a Parish Councillor.

PW was asked to discuss his planning experience through his work at Chichester's Roussillon Barracks, Poundbury in Dorset for the Duchy of Cornwall and the several Enquiry by Design procedures that he had undertaken at these sites and at the building of the Olympic Sailing Village in Weymouth.

Suggested governance rules

PW suggested the following governance process for the drawing up of the parish's NP:

- The setting up of an independent **NP Steering Committee** comprised of 7 – 12 parishioners and other value-adding individuals who would contribute technical and oversight skills to the process;
- The setting up of a **NP Issues Committees** to take the lead on a number of broad but specific local issues (detailed below) that the draft NP document would cover;
- The writing of a draft **Questionnaire** to identify a list of draft issues that the community might want covered in the NP, that questionnaire to be added to/subtracted from as the Issues Committee publicised and received wide feedback on its initial list;
- The setting up of a **NP website** to disseminate the parish Questionnaire and to keep the community informed of progress and latest information;
- The process would be led by a NP Chairman whose role would be to coordinate the Issues Committee, its roles and responsibilities with all of this to be under the oversight of the Steering Committee;
- The Parish Council would be involved throughout from its membership of the Steering Committee (SS with EB as its alternate member);
- The Parish Council should receive a regular report from the NP Chairman and have the ability in conjunction with the Steering Committee to sanction the Chairman and any Committee if it was unhappy with progress, community consultation or governance;
- A draft NP document would be submitted to the Parish Council prior to any referendum in order to ensure the document's prior compliance.

Communications

PW then discussed the overarching importance of communication to the process. He confirmed that he had been in touch with Sam Farrow (Petersfield website) and Jamie Matthews (Petersfield coordinator and i/c delivery). He suggested that the Rogate & Rake NP process would be communicated through the use of a website, email updates for those who would like this means of communication, letter-box drops and on-line dissemination of a dynamic and updating Questionnaire, use of the village boards, shop displays and fly-posting in the parish.

The **Issues sub-committees** would be responsible for publicising and refining their own particular topics and for organising a series of issue-specific surgeries within the Parish as appropriate. Feedback and other responses would be formally logged throughout the process to ensure that proper consultation was happening, widening the consultation if this did not appear to be the case and to provide an auditable evidence trail that all views were both attributable and also reflected in the draft NP document.

Before considering draft topics for the NP, PW provided the following observations:

- It was key to the process that all possible conflicts of interest be removed;
- The processes outlined would ensure that the NP would be a Parish document and not a Parish Council document but that the Council would be updated regularly and would also have a position on the Steering Committee;
- The composition of the Steering Committee might include some of the following individuals and local resources:
 - Parish Council over-view by SS and EB = 1 x member
 - District Councillor
 - Architect
 - Council for the Protection of Rural England
 - Council/Environment
 - Jamie Matthews or similar – Petersfield NP
 - Chris Paterson or similar – South Downs National Park
- It would be necessary to appoint a Secretary for the NP process

Comments and questions from the public

PW then invited questions and comments from Parishioners:

Ken Freivokh emphasised that the NP should articulate what parishioners wanted as well as what we don't want. Saying 'no' is possibly even more important for the NP process.

PW agreed that the NP would be not less than a 15 year plan which decides where new houses should be built, identifying and protecting green spaces, influencing design standards and taking into account transport and access issues for any building mix. A key advantage for the Community is that the NP would build on Rogate & Rake's excellent 2007 Parish Plan to develop our shared vision for our Parish. This confirmation was welcomed by the meeting.

Roger Mowll pointed out that the NP process could therefore start with an audit of our old Parish Plan and then proceed to the NP. **Stephen Taylor** explained that the major actions to emerge from the Parish Plan were that the Village Hall Committee and RPC should work together to create the RAP Children's Play Area near the cricket ground. He also informed the meeting that the CDC Planning Inspector at the time had listed the key village features relevant to planning as being a shop, a church, a school, a pub and the "village green" or similar communal area.

PW then introduced in draft the **8 broad areas/topics** which the NP might consider, each of which would then be "led" on by an NP Issues Committee member. It was agreed that any interim Chairman and Steering Committee would first need to define what the NP should cover in order to get the NP process started. He suggested the following initial headings:

- **Scale, mix and location of development**
- **Affordable housing**
- **Business and the Local economy**
- **Traffic**
- **Environment**
- **Young and old**
- **Community and recreational interests**
- **Other parish-specific issues**

The following Q & A then ensued:

Nick Jacobs identified a problem of getting stuck on the primary issues of development and affordable housing which might delay further progress. He commented that the issue of Community Assets was perhaps the most important issue as it touched on the matter of the village centre and Rogate's history. He noted that the Community's young people were insufficiently represented at the meeting but that there were several ways that the NP might involve them and other people.

Rev Edward Doyle, Rector of Rogate, commented that the NP's hot topics were development and housing but, by looking in detail at the matter of Community Assets, we might better understand our community, the future needs for housing leading to the whole NP being a more cohesive document. This was agreed by the meeting.

David Ewing commented that it was important to include policing in the NP.

In the interests of time, PW then focussed on the single issue of development in order to highlight what **sub-topics** might be covered in due course by the Issues Committees and form the basis of a First draft Questionnaire:

- Scale, mix and location of development
- How development pressures might affect the character of our Conservation area
- Interface with Chichester District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF)
- Acknowledgement of 16 additional units being required by 2018
- The precedent of the Rogate 2007 Parish Low cost starter homes?
- Down-sizing units
- How might issues of density be dealt with
- Proximity of new development to village centre, road access, amenities
- What is important in siting new housing?
- Traffic congestion?
- Development in hidden locations?
- Building that increases ribbon development?
- Rake and Hill Brow
- Affordable housing?
- Conversion of existing housing to multiple occupancy?
- Shared equity ownership schemes?
- Retirement houses?
- Building heights?
- Effect on existing infrastructure?
- Infrastructure levy?

The Q&A then moved on to discuss general communications for the process. PW addressed the matter of email addresses and confidentiality. The majority of those attending the inaugural NP meeting on 7/5/12 had provided their data freely. PW had checked data protection issue with Solomon Taylor Shaw (lawyers) and confirmed that he would be asking again for basic email data in order to communicate with those attending on the single matter of the NP. As acting Project Leader, this data would be securely kept by PW. Once the Chair was confirmed then he/she would be responsible for this data so that those attending and recording their interest could be sent Minutes, updates and reminders thus keeping the whole Community fully in the loop. This was agreed by the Meeting.

Roger Mowll emphasised the need to include the Community's young in the NP process and offered to communicate the process to the Youth Club (which he helps run). He was also keen that we should also address energy issues. **PW** suggested that this conveniently belongs in a Sustainability topic. It was decided by the meeting that Sustainability be a 9th and separate issue for the NP that would also consider the appropriateness of various technologies that make a development Code 4 Standard compliant. Welcoming the topic, **Nick Jacobs** also suggested that any such review ensure that the underlying cost of sustainable resources be made clear.

Ann Arnold noted from the inaugural meeting that both Chris Patterson and Andrew Triggs of SDNPA had clearly stated that the NP is the peoples' plan and that the Council's only role is to ratify and pass to CDC for examination. Ann noted that the parishioners present on 7 May were unanimous that we now go ahead. She then asked **SS** to confirm how the NP process was now going to move ahead and what would be the definition of **PW**'s position as NP chair.

Jenny Kaplan confirmed her understanding that the Council should not be involved in the writing of the NP. She noted that everyone at the meeting of 7/5/13 was happy that **PW** should chair the Parish's NP process and wondered therefore why the matter of the NP's lead and chairing was being held up tonight. **PW** said that it was key to bring the Parish Council along on the Community's decision and invited **Cllr Paddy Cox** to present his comments to the meeting.

Cllr Paddy Cox: As SDNPA said at launch, RPC is responsible for applying for a grant and for submitting the NP to the Inspector together with a statement confirming community consultation. He also stated that it was necessary to ensure that all appointments are made by community consultation. It was not, he said, up to the Parish Council to exert any influence on the content of the Plan. He also confirmed that the Parish Council had already taken a lead in confirming that a NP would be written and that it would be for the Council to administer the grant to support the process for the Community. **Cllr Paddy Cox** pointed out that it would be necessary to demonstrate conclusively throughout the NP process that the Community had been widely and properly consulted.

PW stated that being able to demonstrate that deep Community consultation had taken place would be the backbone of the whole NP exercise. It was to the Community's advantage that it was made up of only 1,500 Parishioners (versus the 14,000 within the Petersfield NP process). Rogate & Rake's certificate of engagement would come from responses to the website's Questionnaires, from the attributable filling-in of paper Questionnaires to be letter-box dropped throughout the Parish as well as questionnaires distributed from the Shops, Pubs and other appropriate buildings.

Cllr Paddy Cox restated that the NP needed to show it was covering the concerns of the whole community. **Ken Freivokh** concluded this part of the Q&A summarizing that the Community had to start somewhere, even if we ended up changing things. This was agreed by the Meeting.

Cllr Paddy Cox emphasised Chris Patterson's comments from the 7/5/13 meeting that NPs tend to succeed and get consensus if they first focus on smaller number of topics. **Sue May** suggested that the NP start by looking at the village centre and then move out. This was agreed by the Meeting. **David Ewing** confirmed his worry of having too many initial topic groups but that this could be mitigated by refining an initial list of topics as the process got underway.

Rev. Edward Doyle then summarized the ensuing discussion about starting the process with immediate effect by proposing an initial 6-month term for **PW** as Leader of the NP process, an appointment which would then be reviewed after that time. **PW** suggested that the vicar head that meeting (Laughter).

Harvey Morgan (ex-chair of FTB) stated to the Meeting that if we wait any longer, we'll lose the momentum gained so far from the meetings' excellent attendance and engagement. This was agreed by the Meeting.

Debbie Harwood agreed that there were lots of people not here who'd like to contribute. **PW** trusted that the NP process could start to address this through the website and questionnaire with all responses being logged. **Miranda Montagu** commented that various mothers, for instance, can't get to evening meetings and that it would be good to find different ways of reaching out to people as well as varying the timings of on-going meetings once the NP process was underway. This was agreed by the meeting.

Discussion turned to the spread-out nature of the parish (**Nick Jacobs**). **Elizabeth Eveleigh** was concerned that Rake not be excluded given the frequent emphasis is placed on Rogate centre. **Elizabeth Brown** commented that she was delighted that so many Rake residents present and that it was important to stress all sections of Parish in the NP. This was agreed by the meeting.

Stephen Taylor commented that the 7/5/13 meeting had unequivocally been set up by RPC to launch the NP. The NP project needed a project leader. At the 7/5/13 meeting an overwhelming consensus of those present accepted PW as the project's leader. He therefore proposed that the PC be informed that the residents have chosen PW as NP project leader. This was seconded by **Ken Freivokh**.

Cllr Paddy Cox proposed that a questionnaire be sent out to parishioners as he thought that the previous meeting had been solely to inform parishioners about the NP and not to select a Chairman for it. He commented that the two NP meetings of 5/7/13 and 22/5/13 could not be construed as representing the whole community and that other candidates might yet come forward to lead the NP process and to suggest themselves as members of the NP committees.

Harvey Morgan pointed to the vicar's earlier suggestion that PW be appointed interim Project Leader for 6 months, subject to a Community meeting and review at that time. **Mairi Rennie** suggested that the NP has not been ratified because the Council's AGM last Monday was cancelled without reason. **Susi Batty** stated that the Community was sufficiently represented by those present at the 5/7/13 meeting and the meeting tonight and that the meeting should now vote PW as the NP's Chair. **Marcus Batty** then proposed PW be voted Chair. **Mairi Rennie** seconded the proposal.

A debate involving **Diana Taylor**, **Marcus Batty** and **Ken Freivokh** commented that PW had now been voted by the Community and that both meetings were widely advertised. **SS** then suggested that PW be adopted as interim NP Chair, that PW establish the procedure to move the NP forward if that is what the meeting wanted. PW agreed but commented that he would feel happier if the Parish Council confirms this in short order. **Rev Edward Doyle** questioned why any need to advertise another meeting to elect a Chair. **Stephen Taylor** agreed and stated that the meeting should be able to vote on the Chair now. **Rev Edward Doyle** agreed calling this the Interim Committee which should start the process and to be reviewed in 6 months. This was agreed by the Meeting and backed up by **Ken Freivokh and Marcus Batty**.

Anne Rayner stated that the Parish were fortunate to have a volunteer to lead the NP process and that the NP process should now start straightaway.

Cllr Paddy Cox re-emphasised being able to ensure that the whole community is consulted. **PW** agreed with this and commented that the NP process is deliberately left fluid within the Localism Bill in order to allow different parishes to adopt the approach best suited to their needs. **Cllr Sarah O'Brien-Twohig** also confirmed that the Localism Bill does not make any specific requirements on process.

Gerry Devlin said that **Cllr Paddy Cox** had made a good point on Community Consultation. At a 2-day NP workshop, it had been stated that everyone from every corner of the community needs to be consulted. He confirmed that information on this had been passed to the Parish Council. One of the key messages from other Parishes is also not to rush getting the document out. The process needed to include all groups, including the parish's youth as, he observed, most people here are over 40. **Cllr Paddy Cox** agreed that inclusion of the parish's young was vital if the NP was to succeed.

Nick Jacobs agreed with this observation but reiterated **Stephen Taylor's** summary that the NP starts from this meeting. The NP Chairman, he added, should report back to a Community meeting in 6 months with a general progress report on the NP process and an update on the formation of both an appropriately independent Steering Group and an Issues group who will be responsible for reaching out to all others in the Community.

Interim Project Leader

Stephen Taylor confirmed the meeting's consensus on **PW** as interim Project Leader and that the parish should proceed on that basis. Following **Rev Doyle's** observation that the large size of the two meetings allowed this course, **Stephen Taylor** proposed **PW** as interim Project Leader, the post to be agreed when the Council next meets and the decision to be recorded in the Minutes of this meeting. **Greg Carter** seconded this motion.

PW confirmed that he would now start the NP process subject to the Parish Council's endorsement. He noted that nearly all of those attending had again given their email and telephone details and that the meeting's Minutes would be distributed this way the following week. It would be helpful if the Minutes could then be spread as widely as possible within the Parish as this would publicise the NP process, the need for the broadest participation throughout the Community. It would also unearth candidates for the Committees and all posts of the process and, picking up on **Cllr Paddy Cox's** earlier comments, that this was to be welcomed.

SS then formally ended the meeting.

22nd May 2013