

Bures Neighbourhood Plan Group
Minutes of the Meeting held 7.30 Monday 3rd July 2023
The Dennis Ambrose Barn

Present: Robin Hamilton, Richard Shackell, Gill Jackson, Ken McAndrew, Sandra Scott, Ken Jackson.

Guests: Lee Parker Babergh District Councillor Newton Green and Barry Coleman Chair, Newton Green NP Steering Group.

1. **Apologies for absence** Richard Adams, Susan Sills
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** Minutes of the meeting held on 30th May 2023 agreed by email and circulated
3. **Lee Parker and Barry Coleman – NP experiences in Newton Green**

Lee spoke as a strong proponent of Neighbourhood Planning, a position which he held when Babergh District Councillor for Bures St Mary. He explained that 14 parishes in Babergh have formally made plans, 4 are at referendum stage and 2 at Examination stage. 16, including Bures, are underway. Three of his parishes have 'made' plans and one is at referendum stage. He felt that the situation for Bures differed slightly as it is a designated core village. Lee's observation was that core villages have been slower to commence the process.

Barry Coleman suggested that Bures is at the most difficult stage. A lot of work has been carried out and we are wanting to appoint a consultant. Keeping the committee together is key. There was a group of ten at Newton with some changes during the process but they did keep the number up. Barry suggested going out to the village to see if there is anyone who will bring something new to the group. He suggested that the consultant will be the ally of the group and will provide scrutiny of the draft. We need to keep the shared vision at the forefront. Newton made sure it was what the village wanted. They sent out a monthly newsletter but with only 250 properties that was more manageable than it would be in Bures. It is very important that the 'Vision' is that of the village and that it is not imposed by a small group. The consultant will check that the policies are robust. The Newton NP has 20 policies, some are standard. Barry advised keeping it simple as the Parish and District Councils need to understand it without having to try to work out what is meant. Babergh had a 5 year housing supply in place when the Newton NP was made. Lee reminded the group that the HNS number for housing includes those in the pipeline. For Newton the number was 35 dwellings as a minimum. Newton had identified sites within their plan. The Newton NP fell down over an application where the applicant paid for his own HNS. It used district wide need. The Babergh planning officer said that because this data was more recent it should be used rather than the data in the NP. This was an error but the application was approved. Babergh District Council Planning dept. has acknowledged the error but has not apologised. The planning application that caused anxiety was DC/22/05206. An example of the same strategy from a developer in the Colchester area was discussed. In this case the officer was against the application and was supported at appeal. Subsequent applications in Newton Green where the NP policies led to refusal were DC/23/01144 and DC/23/01760. The Local Planning Authority and the Neighbourhood Plan determine the applications not the developer.

Most Examiners would advise if data needed updating before the NP proceeds.

Babergh currently has 6.78 years supply of housing land.

The question of funding other than the central government route was asked. CIL money may be used for Neighbourhood Planning. Bures St Mary does not currently have any CIL money available.

Lee and Barry were both very sure that it is worth having a NP. Appeals against refusals by LPAs are being upheld on the basis of the NP. The guests left the meeting at this point.

4. Funding update

There is still not news from the DLUHC, Groundwork and Locality on the funding for 2023-4. Jan Stobart has written to all MPs involved in the DLUHC asking for the decision to be made.

Action: SS agreed to let all members of the group know as soon as she heard any news.

4. Responses from Consultants

Quotes had been received from DAC and CCP. The DAC quote was higher than CCP. However, DAC has helped to produce a number of plans in the Braintree area. DAC are well known to the Braintree planners. CCP have experience of a NP across a county boundary in Diss. A decision was not taken on which consultant to use as funding is not yet available. It was agreed that all members of the team would score the applications.

Action: SS to produce a score sheet to be used. RH to contact Diss to ask about their experience of working with CCP. GJ to do the same for DAC in Coggeshall. GJ to send holding emails to DAC and CCP.

5. HNA update

KMc advised that he had met with GJ to agree the wording to be added to the Built Environment section. This includes the suggested figure of 48 dwellings from the HNS. This figure is for the whole period of the plan and includes any agreed but incomplete developments. It was agreed that these additions would not be formally added to the draft NP until discussion on the matter had taken place with a consultant.

6. Changes to the Draft

RA has written the additions on Climate and Sustainability. It was agreed that, as previously suggested, these will be woven into the plan. RA wishes to be sure that these aspects of the plan are what the village wants. It was proposed that a diverse group be formed to discuss the issues.

7. Public engagement

The monthly newsletter as issued by Newton Green was considered unsuitable in Bures. A further newsletter will be issued when the funding is known. This will include details of progress, of the consultant appointed and will ask for new volunteers to join.

8. Dates of next meetings

Wednesday 2nd August 7.30 Dennis Ambrose Barn. A meeting will be held earlier if news on funding is received.