



Biggleswade Town Plan

Minutes of Steering Group Meeting

**Tuesday 29th July, 7.30 – 9.00pm
Biggleswade Baptist Church Rooms 1 & 2**

Present

Jemma McLean (BRCC)
Zoe Ashby (BRCC)
Doreen Evans
Mike Scott - Coomber
Gerry Lawrence
Jean Simmons
Sheila Grayson (Biggleswade Town Council)
Janice Buckle
Stephen Bailey
Helen Horner

Apologies

Anne Philp
Paula Brazier

Welcome & Introductions

Everyone was asked to introduce themselves to the group and a contact details sheet was sent around the table.

Short recap on what a Town Plan is & what is involved in producing one

A short recap was given on the Town Plan presentation which was delivered at the open meeting on 1st July. The results of the likes and dislikes post it note exercise, carried out on the evening, will be brought along to the next meeting.

The idea of the Town Plan is to consult with as many residents as possible so that they have the chance to express their views on the future of the town, looking forward for the next 5 – 10 years.

The process involves mapping out the key services and facilities already in the community, are they meeting everybody's needs and being used to their full potential? Identifying features and local characteristics that people value and looking at how these can be safeguarded for the future and Identifying local problems and opportunities. This information is pulled together to produce a local Action Plan

Draft timescale for discussion & funding

A draft timescale was presented to the group for discussion, the timescale has been put together as a starting point, based upon the work done by other Town Plan groups.

The draft timescale set out a process that would take up to 18 months to complete. There was a feeling amongst the group that it would be beneficial to complete the town plan in less time. We will look at drawing up a timescale that the groups agree upon over the next couple of meetings.

The Town Council will look at the possibility of funding the Town Plan at their August meeting and we will hear after this if it has been approved or not.

Introduction to different consultation methods

A handout was distributed to outline the different consultation methods that could be considered as part of the Town Plan initial consultation.

Consultation for the Town Plan should be focused in 3 key stages. The initial consultation (e.g. likes and dislikes exercises at popular locations, talks to community groups, community consultation events, youth consultation etc), some more focused consultation possibly through focus groups or by distributing a questionnaire and then the final stage would be consultation on the draft action plan.

The possibility of organising a Planning for Real event, where large scale maps of the Town are mounted onto polystyrene and people can put colour coded suggestion flags into the maps, was discussed and it was agreed that Jemma should order some maps. **ACTION JM**

It was discussed how important the group felt it was that the young people of the town were involved in the production of the plan. An effort will be made to involve the local schools (Stratton have already offered to involve their A Level students as part of their project work) and there has been an offer from the Youth service that they would also like to be involved.

The Town Council has very recently been approached by BRCC's environmental services team to produce a Green Infrastructure Plan for the town. The green infrastructure plan will help to look at and address many of the environmental issues and concerns in the town and will run alongside the town plan in partnership.

Ideas for community contacts, publicity and venues

It was suggested that a list of community groups could be obtained from the library. Steve Bailey has offered to look for this at the library and bring it along to the next meeting. **ACTION SB**

Community groups can also be identified from the reports section of the Biggleswade chronicle.

Suggestion methods of publicity / venues for events included: Stratton school newsletter, Holmemead school newsletter, letters in other schools bookbags, bus station, Asda (and other shops), the possibility of using an empty shop for publicity or an event, the leisure centre and chapter house.

It was suggested that a Town Plan stall is held at the Country Farye on Saturday 20th September. Information could be handed out about the plan and a likes and dislikes exercise could be carried out. Steve will find out if there is a possibility of us getting a stall and Jemma will email / write around for volunteers to help.

ACTION JM and SB

Possible venues for future meetings: Town council offices and Baptist Church were the most popular. Jemma would look into the availability for the next meeting and let everyone know. **ACTION JM**

Committee members

It was suggested that roles should be allocated within the steering committee. The following roles will be needed Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Publicity Officer. Shelia has volunteered to be Treasurer as Jemma suggested it may be simpler if a member of the Town Council took on this role as the money for the production of the plan would be held in the Town Council bank account. As there were no immediate volunteers, the other roles can be filled over the next few meetings.

Date & location of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 19th August at 7:30pm at Biggleswade Town Council Offices**