

## **Minutes of Meeting 8 to discuss Neighbourhood Plan**

**6.30pm Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023, Hoath Village Hall**

**“An oasis between the sea and the City of Canterbury”**

**Present:** Imogen Morizet, chair of Hoath Parish Council

Councillor Karen Johncock, Hoath Parish Council

Councillor Sandy Sinclair, Hoath Parish Council

Plus 7 members of the public (Sarah Cassidy, Pam Hardiman, Gill Johnson, Mike Johnson, Mark Wilkinson, David Williams, Carl Wright)

Councillor Morizet welcomed everyone and outlined the next steps for creating a neighbourhood plan.

She described the meeting she and other members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had had with Richard Eastham, of Feria Urban, who has been employed by CCC as a consultant to assist parishes in the preparation of their Neighbourhood Plans. The group had taken a walk past Hoath Church and into the Nethergong Valley.

MJ, who had attended the meeting, said that Richard Eastham wanted to improve footpaths and bridleways. The group had looked towards Rushbourne farmstead and the woodlands, where the clay soil allowed trees to grow. The group had talked about the parish's rivers and streams and how it runs from a high point at Derek's farm all the way down to the valley and across to Sarre.

MW described an organisation called Place Check which has developed an app to enable groups such as the NP Steering Group to make a photographic record of their village and its features. He said the app would be ideal for recording design features in Hoath and could be very helpful in preparing Design Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan.

He suggested that interested members of the Steering Group go round the parish as a group, recording features. Look at all these things. What is good about something? What is bad about something? What do you like about it? What don't you like? The app allows us to document it in a structured way. The app is free for an organisation like this. We could look at the Church, any wildflowers that are growing, we like this window or we don't like this uPVC window. The app puts everything together in an ordered way. We could form groups of 3-4 people going round a particular area of the parish.

GJ said that Richard Eastham had proposed the closure of the road outside Hoath School during drop off and pick up times. Apparently, lots of schools in Maidstone had done this with great success.

MJ said that Richard Eastham had said of development R27 in the Draft Local Plan [for 17 houses on farmland opposite Hoath School] that the community needed to be proactive. Instead of a shop, what was needed was a community centre. If a community centre was sited there it would create a community hub.

GJ He said that in other areas the Parish Council had been given their own housing allocation

MJ We need to pinpoint all areas [in the parish] which have been developed in the last 10 years.

CW said we needed to focus on Hoath's distinctive character or being a rural settlement with a great deal of biodiversity rather than being defensive on housing we need to ensure that any development fits with the character of the area.

MJ said that Richard Eastham had been "very firmly on the rural side". He was very clear that we are a rural environment and that any development needs to fit in with that.

IM said she had asked Richard Eastham if he would moderate meetings with residents [as part of the NP process] Richard Eastham said he would need to check funding he received from CCC as he was still negotiating his contract with them. He was now not under planning but under Andrew Thompson. Andrew Thompson would be having a zoom meeting with the PC on 27<sup>th</sup> July to talk about development R27 in the draft local plan. IM said the idea of a pop up building as a community benefit would be discussed.

Residents highlighted the problem of water shortage in the area which they said could not support 17 new homes.

IM said that R27 would drain into the Nethergong Valley which was a contradiction to the talk about nitrates.

CW said the steering group should identify the key issues: environment, history, infrastructure etc and link them to ideas in the draft local plan. From there the group should develop ideas for the short (5 year), medium (10 year) and long term (until 2045). Each member of the steering group should take a topic and report back at October's meeting.

PH, Hoath's tree officer, said she had started to register trees that could be of local and national significance. She highlighted a rare Black Poplar on Marley Lane, just outside of Hoath village. Black Poplar are one of the most endangered trees in the UK.

Locality funding: (third round still to open not available yet.

Headings were updated for the first draft of Neighbourhood Plan and topics updated for members of the steering group to work on between now and October's meeting.

1. History, heritage (IM)
2. Environment, biodiversity and climate: including landscape (CW) trees (PH)
3. Infrastructure to include roads, transport including footpaths and bridleways (GJ, MJ, KJ), water (DW), IT, schools, energy, renewable energy (MW),
4. Housing: design codes (MW)
5. Community facilities: use of village hall (IM, GJ, MJ)
6. Employment and Economy CW + DW

**Update on action points from previous meetings:**

Data to give insight into Parish demographics still to come from CCC. IM reported CCC had confirmed they were not using Mosaic anymore and would send link to access new evidence resource.

Next meeting: 6.30pm 25th September 2023