

Stogumber Parish Council.

Draft Minutes of a public meeting held in Stogumber Village Hall on 9th October 2013

The meeting started at 19:30

Present

J. Spicer T Simpson C Matravers J Danson M Symes

K Rew C Bramall

J Leeming, Clerk, A Trollope-Bellew (District Councillor)

30 members of the public

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft Neighbourhood Plan – Statement of Needs and Wishes which has been drawn up by Stogumber Parish Council with the help of representatives of the Village Hall, Church, School and the elderly residents. Stogumber Parish Council felt that a public meeting would give residents a chance to air any views or ask questions prior to completing a survey.

Paper copies of the Statement of Needs and Wishes were circulated at the beginning of the meeting. These are also available online. The survey to collect people's views of this Statement can be completed online or on a paper copy which were made available during the evening.

Various points were raised regarding certain aspects of the draft plan. These were as follows:

10 Transport and Right of Ways

10b A traffic free route from Pickpurse Lane to Hill Street

A group of people present were against this proposal, the reasons given were: extending the footpath to Deane Close would mean a path in front of garages; the land is owned by Magna; expense of making a path and the possible necessity of unwanted lighting; Hill Street has a lot of traffic, there is no footpath so increasing pedestrians, buggies, bikes etc. would increase dangers on that stretch of road; dislike of the idea of a made up path in a country setting.

Disappointment was expressed that a plans for a private piece of land had been included in a public document without consultation.

10e Create more passing places.

Some people supported the idea of more passing places but not widening the road as they thought this could cause more problems with speeding.

10f Encourage a commuter service on the railway

It was envisaged that if a mainline operator could lease the line from WSR for a morning and evening slot this would relieve the traffic problems on the roads to Taunton / Minehead.

A couple of people expressed concerns that: signalling on the line would not up to national standard and the track would not be fit for speeds greater than 40 mph; stations aren't close to the centre of populations which would cause parking problems at the stations; at the speed the trains would be allowed to go it wouldn't be any quicker than driving.

10g Support community transport schemes.

One person asked why the bus service was stopped, and said that some people in Deane Close moved to the village because there was a bus service and don't have their own transport.

JS replied that SPC can't affect county provided services and that bus services which hadn't been well used had been cut to save money.

One person requested traffic calming measures on Station Road as the current speed limit is 60mph and cars approaching the village drive at high speed which is dangerous to residents and users of Station Road.

JS responded by saying that the parish council intends to revisit the problem but are aware that speed limits which included lots of signs and lighting was not popular when previously investigated.

3 Housing

Several people expressed various concerns about the level and types of housing set out in the Statement: housing supports all the services in the village and 14 new houses over 10 years is too low; to support the school, new development is needed to encourage new families to the village; infill houses in the centre of the village could spoil the character of the village; each application should be decided on its merit and the outlying areas should not be restricted.

One person felt that the type of housing built could be determined by these restrictions. Infrastructure costs would be higher for infill properties as opposed to larger developments, this could mean that higher end properties would be built not smaller affordable houses.

JS explained that WSC local plan was more restrictive on housing limits and SPC felt this would be insufficient to support the services of the village which is why the levels are higher in the draft...

13. New buildings to respect the character of the village through the use of building materials.

A couple of people felt that the materials for building shouldn't be listed as there is no flexibility; building materials should be left to the planners.

TS said that the planners could prescribe all buildings to be identical resulting in plain boxes rather than have mixed materials.

A question was raised regarding the need for a drainage assessment before any new houses were built...

JS responded that an assessment would be part of the planning process

5 Encourage, support and protect the shop, post office and pub.

There was general support for these services but a couple of people were against including the statement that 'planning permission for change of used should not be granted.' The comments raised were that: it is a private property and SPC has no right to dictate what the owner could do; the post office side of the business is controlled by the post office itself, if that were to be closed it would severely affect the viability of the shop; 10 years a long time to put limits on these businesses.

JS responded by saying that the WSC local plan states that the last shop or pub would not be granted planning permission for change of use, these applications then usually go to appeal and win so long as the applicant can show that the business has been marketed as a viable going concern for 6 months but been unable to sell.

A request was raised for the parish council to look again at getting brown signs on the main roads to advertise the services in the village. It was agreed to add this to the next parish council agenda.

6a Village Hall

Several people agreed with the statement regarding a larger village hall, either by building a new one or extending the existing one. One person suggested that the snooker table could be moved to the cricket club and a MUGA sited there to have all the sports facilities in one place, the village hall could then extend into the snooker room. One person suggested that the church should be approached to buy the hall for the school's use and build a new hall with the proceeds.

15c Small scale hydro-electric schemes.

A question was asked as to whether there was sufficient flowing water for a hydro-electric scheme

JS responded that there is enough flow for a small scheme; there have been working mills locally using the stream for power before.

12. Identify and safeguard a site for a new graveyard

One person thought that an extension would not be needed during the term of the plan because there was still plenty of room in the existing churchyard. JS confirmed that there is still an option on land offered as an extension to the churchyard and if that option was to be taken up then access to it would need to be considered and planned for.

8 Employment and business.

It was confirmed that there is a working quarry in the parish. One comment was that the plan couldn't encourage the use of local stone if it didn't support the businesses providing the stone.

Comments regarding increasing the number of businesses were: greater economic activity is good but needs to be balanced with increased traffic; that local businesses should try and employ local people but people coming into the village to work would still use the services of the village; there are more businesses than you would think in the village already; would not be happy with large businesses; increase in live / work or disused farm buildings building being converted would be supported; high speed broadband will increase the opportunities for businesses in the area, businesses in the future will change immensely with high speed broadband reducing the need for offices close to central support services.

7 Car parking.

A couple of people raised the question about where a small permanent car park could be placed. JS responded that further discussion would be needed about the placement if it was agreed one was needed. One person suggested that if a new village hall were to be built, the existing site of the village hall site could be used as a permanent car park. A couple of people responded that the school uses the village hall and the field behind the hall.

JS asked that surveys be completed by the end of October.

There was thanks to SPC for organising the meeting and thanks to JS for the work he has put in so far on producing the plan.

The meeting closed at 8:40pm. The next meeting will be at 7:30pm on Wednesday 13th November 2013 at Deane Close Common Room.