

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Notes of the Abingdon NHP Steering group Meeting held on Thursday 21st January 2021 at 7.30 pm via Zoom

Present:

Louise Brown	Comms, Marketing and Events Officer for ATC
Grace Clifton	Abingdon Town Cllr
Richard Eastham	Feria
Jim Driscoll	
Hester Hand	
Simon Hills	
Angharad Saunders	
Robin Tucker	
Paul White	
James Wigmore	

1. Introduction

Attendees introduced themselves and explained why they were interested in the Neighbourhood plan and wanted to be a part of the steering group. They highlighted any experience and expertise they had that would help with this project, but all were attending in a personal capacity as residents of Abingdon.

It was agreed that Simon Hill would be chair of the steering group and he began chairing the meeting.

2. Feria Update

Richard Eastham provided background information on the company Feria and why they had been appointed; outlining the experience he had, working on neighbourhood plans, and how he saw this initiative progressing.

Richard shared his screen to run through a small presentation about the detailed aspects of a Neighbourhood Plan and the steps it would need to go through. He outlined the part a steering group would play in this and what the next steps were. He ran through an estimated timeline; confirming this was a guideline and flexibility was available.

There was a chance for everyone to ask Richard questions and ensure everyone was clear on the aims and procedures.

Jim Driscoll asked Cllr Grace Clifton why the council had decided to initiate the Neighbourhood Plan now, and Grace confirmed the Current council felt the Neighbourhood Plan would be a valuable asset to the town and fit in well with the current council's core aims and values.

Simon Hills asked Richard Eastham what Ferias part would be in the Neighbourhood Plan. Richard confirmed Feria would assist with moderating and coordinating events and discussions, helping to incorporate as many different groups within Abingdon as possible. Advising on the structure of the plan and supporting on the research angle.

Simon Hills asked Cllr Grace Clifton how she felt schools could be included. Grace confirmed it would be valuable and beneficial to have their ideas but warned against approaching schools to take on any more work during the current lockdown and the already increased pressure on schools. She suggested perhaps looking at youth groups and Scouts/Brownie groups for incorporating the younger voice of Abingdon for now. When the lockdown lifted and the pressures eased, she felt it would fit nicely within the national curriculum. Key stage 2 and 3 Geography covering these issues.

Richard Eastham suggested everyone think about the network they have and the best way to tap into this. He asked everyone to think about what event activities they would like to be managing or organizing, He encouraged everyone to bring these ideas back to the next meeting so that a series of network and event ideas could be reviewed.

Hester Hand felt it would be helpful to have a clearer understanding on the scope and final outcome to be able to effectively network.

Richard Eastham felt it was likely to be a mix of protecting policies and enabling policies and that once feedback had been provided, the steering group would be in a better position to decide the values and aims from there.

Robin Tucker agreed the best approach was to gather as many inputs as possible to cover a wider variety of perspectives.

Attendees discussed further ideas about how to include the youth and Richard Eastham confirmed that, in his experience, the best course of action would be to hold a specific meeting for this as bringing young people into a group of adults often caused them not to fully engage.

The proposed Terms of reference were shared (and would be circulated after the meeting).

Cllr Grace Clifton confirmed the next Town Council meeting was next Wednesday 27th January, so it was agreed that everyone would email any concerns or issues over to Louise Brown by Monday (25th) lunch time. Then they could be taken to the Town Council meeting on the 27th to be formally agreed. Simon Hills also asked if everyone could confirm to Louise Brown that they were happy for their email addresses to be shared with all other members of the steering group.

Robin Tucker asked how to ensure the PLACE Assessment is completed as there were currently still gaps. Richard Eastham confirmed this could be covered in the next meeting.

The group agreed to meet again in a fortnight at 7:30 PM on Wednesday 3rd February and then after that move to meeting Monthly.

Meeting closed at 8:30PM