

## **Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council**

### **Draft Notes of the Abingdon NHP Steering group Meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30 pm via Zoom**

#### **Present:**

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

#### **1. Apologies**

None.

#### **2. Notes**

The Committee received and considered the notes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the notes of the meeting of the Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

Simon Hills confirmed to the Committee that the only thing outstanding was the completion of the PLACE assessments. Simon Hills asked Richard Eastham if the steering group were likely to be criticised for this.

Richard Eastham confirmed that this would not be the case, and that these could still be completed throughout the process, and that as long as they were completed by the first draft in Autumn, this would be sufficient.

#### **4. Focus groups feedback**

Richard Eastham provided the committee with feedback on how the themed focus groups had gone; confirming they had been largely successful with a good number of attendees and some interesting ideas shared. Members confirmed which ones they had been able to attend and agreed that they had been useful.

Simon Hills thanked Feria for keeping the meetings structured.

Hester Hands raised concerns that there was still a large audience that had not been engaged with and questioned whether the times of the focus groups had been an issue for some people as they had predominantly taken place during working hours.

Members also discussed some of the negative feedback off the back of a recent Facebook post and disappointment that some residents had not used the focus groups to share their ideas constructively. Richard Eastham confirmed that there would still be ample opportunity for residents to be involved.

Richard Eastham confirmed it would be a good idea to keep a list of groups contacted and where the focus groups had been advertised. Members agreed to send this information to the Communications, Marketing and Events Officer for compiling.

Members then discussed the two remaining focus groups; both were to capture the views of the youth. Richard Eastham confirmed uptake had been very poor with only two young people per group signed up. Members felt that this might be a result of the meetings coinciding with the return to school date and as a result it was agreed these groups would be cancelled and rescheduled to a later date. It was also agreed that schools would be contacted to see if they could assist with encouraging uptake.

Members felt that between them they had a good level of contacts with schools to carry this out.

Members reminded Richard Eastham that DAMASCUS Youth Project had submitted some comments and he agreed to look at these.

#### **5. Discussion with the planning authority**

Members discussed when contact needed to be made with the Planning authority, The Vale of White Horse District Council.

Richard Eastham confirmed that this was further down the process and that Fera would be compiling the report before hand to ensure there was something substantial to show them.

Members felt the main concern regarding the Vale of White Horse District was that they covered such a large area that it might be hard to get engagement from them on the Neighbourhood plan for Abingdon. Members also felt there might be issues around land ownership between the different councils.

Richard Eastham confirmed that in his previous experience engagement with the planning authority should be okay if sufficient work had been carried out beforehand.

## **6. Need for task groups**

Richard Eastham ran through his proposed task groups and his proposed next steps which were: Fera to compile the report from the work carried out so far which would include the details of the task groups and the work they would carry out. At this point they could then be advertised /organised.

It was felt that the next wave of publicity should be used to recruit people for the task groups which could then report back to the steering group on a monthly basis. It was agreed a main contact point could be established but Richard Eastham confirmed this did not need to be formal.

Hester Hands raised concerns about the lack of Traffic and transport so far and asked if more on this could be added. Richard Eastham confirmed that this would definitely be done, but this would come at a later stage in the process.

Jim Driscoll asked why we were waiting to begin the task groups and Richard Eastham confirmed that while this wasn't compulsory, having the report completed before beginning this process might encourage more residents to get involved.

It was agreed that one person from the Steering group ought to be in the task groups and that who this was could be established closer to the time.

## **7. AOB**

Richard Eastham suggested that BIO's of the Steering group members be added to the website. Members agreed this was a good idea and agreed to email their bios over to the Communications, Marketing and Events Officer who would add them to the Town Council Website.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

Members agreed the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 31st March at 7:30PM.

Meeting closed at 8:30PM