

Teversal, Stanton Hill & Skegby Neighbourhood Forum

Forum Public Meeting minutes for 20th April, 2015.

Held at Brand Court, Brand Lane, Stanton Hill, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 3FZ, UK.

Chaired by Mike Vardy. Minutes taken by Alex Clements

Present:

Erica Patrick, Trish Phillips, Helen Smith, Lis Reid, Paul Roberts, Geoff Snare, Richard Hook, Cheryl Hook, Richard Goad, Robert Dabbs, L. Deakin, Sam Deakin, Kate Byrom, Ron Cox, Adrian Woodhouse, J. Townsend, Ann Billings, Angela Whawell, Beryl Perrin, Michelle Gill, Mike Vardy, Alex Clements, Helen Metcalfe

Apologies:

Sharon Craddock, Chris Hopkinson, Joan Barratt

Minutes of meeting - 12th January, 2015 and matters arising.

No issues raised from the minutes of the last forum meeting.

Amendment of Constitution

As discussed at previous mgmt committee meetings, Ashfield District Council had requested two minor amendments to the Constitution of the forum. The amended constitution was displayed and was approved by those present.

Designation of Forum

Ashfield District Council has formally designated the Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Plan Area, objections to the designation being dismissed by the Council. This means we have the mandate to carry on with our work to create a Neighbourhood plan for the area, and also makes us partly responsible for planning matters within the designated area. This is a massive step forward!

Treasurer report

Apologies were given from Joan our treasurer who was ill and unable to attend. Mike outlined the financial situation, which has improved substantially since the last public meeting due some hard work behind the scenes to secure grants from the following sources:

Vine Tree: £500

Awards For All: £10,000

Donations from Local councillors Ann Patrick (£100) and Tom Hollis (£600)

Current Balance: **£13,919.12**

This puts the forum in a healthy situation to carry on with its work to produce a neighbourhood plan.

Three members of the public then raised questions about Forum finances. The issues raised were:

1. that the money should be used for the improvement of Stanton Hill,
2. the accounts were flawed in an unspecified way,

3. the accounts should be audited twice yearly,
4. money is being wasted by being spent on consultancy fees,

The Chair and Helen Metcalfe explained as follows:

1. Grant money, whether from the Government or the Lottery Fund, for neighbourhood plans is governed by strict rules and can only be used for work on the Plan,
2. In the absence of a specific and substantiated claim concerning the accounts the Chair found it impossible to deal with the issue except to question the motivation behind the intervention,
3. It would be impossible to justify to grant funders the use of scarce grant money on unnecessary accountancy fees,
4. Helen Metcalfe is a qualified planning consultant assigned to work with the Forum by the Community Development Foundation as part of the government grant programme for organisations developing a Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst a number of Forum members have planning expertise, Neighbourhood Plans are a new concept with novel challenges, which is why the government has recognised the need for support for Forums and Parish Councils from an expert in neighbourhood planning throughout the process.

No one else voiced an objection about how the Forum is run or how its funds are spent.

Adrian Woodhouse admitted that he had organised the objection to the designation of the Forum dismissed by Ashfield DC. He then stated that the Forum was run or controlled by members of the Friends of Teversal. Forum members and members of the Management Committee from Stanton Hill and Skegby challenged this.

Mr. Woodhouse then went on to state that monies had been misappropriated by the Friends of Teversal and that an investigation into this was currently being conducted by Trevor Watson of Ashfield District Council. Richard Goad on behalf of the Friends of Teversal vehemently denied these statements replying that they were untrue and defamatory.

Forum members were uncomfortable with the heated exchanges that took place, many expressing bafflement as to the relevance of the issue to the business of the meeting, concern at the purposes underlying the intervention and at the interruption and consequent delay to business.

Report on Consultation Events

Geoff Snare gave an illuminating presentation of the data retrieved from the recent consultation events around the area. The figures and statistics gathered have been used to guide the policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. The results of the consultation so far can be viewed on the website [here](#). There are still some results to be input into the system, so there is further work to be done on processing the results.

Criticism was made of the number of completed questionnaires used in the presentation. Helen Metcalfe explained that the number of responses was in line with that experienced by other Forum and Parish Councils that had carried out the same exercise. She went on to explain that consultation exercise is intended to produce a snapshot of the issues concerning residents and businesses so as to help provide a focus during the drafting process.

Plan Framework and future progress including formation of working groups

Helen Metcalfe gave a presentation on how the plan now needs to develop, showing how we took the data retrieved from the consultation informed what policy areas we are to look at. Volunteers were asked to nominate a policy area that they would like to work on.

The areas we will be developing policies on first are shown below with the people who volunteered to take it forward:

Policy	Volunteer
Heritage	Lynn Henstock
Landscape	Paul Roberts
Business	Vacant - anybody interested please get in touch!
Housing	Helen Smith
Roads	Beryl Perrin/Angie Whawell
Stanton Hill Regeneration	Kate Byrom

Engagement of paid support

The majority present agreed that the Forum should continue to engage with planning consultants to help develop the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, the Forum wished to engage Natalie Cockrell from Bassetlaw District Council who has experience of project planning these sort of endeavours.

Further grant funding

This area qualifies for a further £14000 of funding from Locality from their next funding round, which we will be applying for to finance development of the Plan.

Any other business

None.

Next Meetings

20th May 7-9PM: Next mgmt committee meeting.

29th July 7-9PM: Next full Forum meeting @ Teversal Manor Room.