

WESTCOTT VILLAGE FORUM

Minutes of Village Forum Group meeting held at 7.30pm on 4th September 2013 at St Johns Chapel, Chapel Lane, Westcott.

Present: Alex Segal (Chairman)
See list of attendees appendix (I)

1 & 2. Welcome and Apologies.
See list of apologies appendix (I)

7.35 Graham Clark Arrived

3. Minutes from last meeting.
The minutes from the meeting 18th June 2013 were approved.

4. Approval of New Members
Tim Way was approved as a new member by the Forum.
Removal of following members (having resigned): Stuart Glass; Nicky Rowling.
Removal of following Forum Members for non-attendance: Libby Witt; Vere Druce; Andy Wadey; Frances Robinson; Virginia & Dennis Downes. (These memberships can be reconsidered if desired).

5. Election of Chairman.
Alex Segal explained his decision to step down as Chairman and then invited nominations for Chairman of Westcott Village Forum . Andrea Gabb nominated Tim Way. Seconded by Mike Flower. Tim Way accepted. Tim Way unanimously elected by all Forum members (Voted & Agreed).
James Friend thanked Alex for all his leadership & hard work since the setting up of the Forum and wished him well in the future.

7.40 Alex Segal then left the meeting; Tim Way took Chair.

6. Matters Arising from 18th June 2013. No matters arising other than covered on Agenda.

7.45pm Debbie Aston Arrived

7. Village Survey: Updates.

a) The Survey (Appendix 2) – Chris Smewing

The Survey is being enhanced to include ecology aspects & village amenity provision, both of which were highlighted in feedback received from the recent distribution to Forum members.

JL: Will there be a dummy run on completion of the Survey to test it's user-friendliness?

CS/AG: Yes, this was planned.

Action : Working Party

b) Distribution/collection process – Andrea Gabb

All deliverers are being invited to briefing sessions. These will take place from 12th Sept to 16th Sept, to ensure the survey delivery teams understand their role and are confident in what needs to be done including the on line completion of surveys. Anticipated Survey distribution date: week commencing 16th September; collection completed by 18th October. After this date the Survey Design & Analysis working party will collate the data.

DFJ: How are we promoting completion?

AG: Sept Parish magazine article; Posters around village to coincide with delivery; school posters & flyers; Banners at optimum points on A25. Suggestions from members welcome.

JL: Press release in local press?

AG: EG writing press release for Dorking Advertiser mid September & Parish magazine article for October issue.

HW: What steps have been taken to help residents unable to read or write?

AG: collectors will offer support in completing/reading/writing survey where appropriate.
Forum members voted unanimously that survey can be distributed.

Action : Working Party

8. Greenbelt Boundary Assessment (appendix 3).

Tim Way introduced Appendix 3 as the first draft of our Greenbelt Boundary review. In order to meet its Housing targets over the next 10 years, MVDC is re-assessing its Greenbelt Boundaries & has invited Westcott to undertake its own Review. Photos; walks; and benchmarking with MVDC will be used to help TW & MF prepare a comprehensive review paper which will be reported on at the next Forum meeting for discussion & vote. A meeting between Jack Straw and Sarah Nelson (MVDC), TW & MF is scheduled 18th September 2013 where our methodology will be discussed. The project needs to be completed by December at the latest to fit in with MVDC's timescales for delivering the District Greenbelt Review.

PW: Time frame sounds rushed. Can you clarify?

TW: MVDC want our assessment ASAP but there is some leeway. We will need to present a comprehensive case as our Greenbelt is complex & deserves a full and thorough assessment.

Sarah Nelson commented: Nov/Dec 2013 is our target as MVDC is consulting on draft District document in Jan/Feb 2014.

MB: How does the NDP & Greenbelt review tie together? & Which one takes precedence in future?

Sarah Nelson commented: Greenbelt review forms one aspect of the evidence base used in the development plan (NDP). eg. If no Greenbelt Boundary changes occur, all requirements and development needs identified in your NDP will have to either remain unmet, or met on unreleased land (ie: Greenbelt). we suggest that a balance should be struck between the need for more housing and protecting our greenbelt from encroachment.

AJ: Is the conservation area under review?

Sarah Nelson commented: MDVC advice is not to review the Westcott conservation area through the NPD process. We can, but if this is the case we would need to pass any reassessment back to MVDC to be processed legally as Conservation Area law takes precedence and is dealt with under different rules.

MB: Who requires the Greenbelt review? Is it just so we can find land to build on?

Sarah Nelson commented: MVDC has adopted a Core Strategy which forms the ground rules for development. The requirement within Mole Valley is 3760 dwellings be built up to 2026 the current net balance being approx 1000 properties to be found on sites currently designated as Green Belt (this figure will change and is merely an estimate). Timing for MVDC is now critical in order for MVDC to prove it has 5yr housing land supply. Currently it can prove 3.9 yrs and without the Greenbelt Review this leaves them vulnerable to development on unplanned locations. Two applications have recently been refused by MVDC in such areas & were also refused at appeal because MVDC is working on the Greenbelt review, thus enabling them to stave off unplanned development.

KF: Are there Landbanks in MV? Is there double counting or exclusions in MVDC figures?

Sarah Nelson: There are no landbanks. MVDC has a good knowledge of their position and speaks regularly to developers and landowners.

AJ: What happens if Westcott NDP determines that there should be no Greenbelt boundary amendments?

Sarah Nelson: As long as Westcott has a robust NDP, backed by evidence, has consulted on it, and can demonstrate that removing land from the Green Belt in Westcott is inappropriate, then the document will have weight.

GC: If we make adjustments to the Greenbelt we demonstrate that we're being realistic and also demonstrate we're providing areas to fulfil needs established in the NDP. This would be beneficial rather than adopting a 'NO' attitude which leaves us vulnerable to developers putting dwellings in sensitive areas.

MB: Will robust evidence protect against development within Greenbelt once NDP is approved?

Sarah Nelson: Yes, as applications in the Green Belt will be treated accordingly and strict criteria applied..

JF: How many communities are being asked to do this?

Sarah Nelson: 10 villages in total (Bookham, Ashtead, Ockley, Westcott, Fetcham, Beare Green, Capel, Brockham, Charlwood, Hookwood, in addition to Dorking & Leatherhead).

(Item 8 cont.)

JF: Does this equate to 100 residential properties per community?

Sarah Nelson: No, The shortfall of 1000 homes is a target for the whole District and there are no set expectations for any individual village.

AG: Do you take into account it's ecological value?

Sarah Nelson: The Green Belt designation is not related to the lands' ecology/landscape value – it's purpose is solely to protect openness, to prevent London sprawl. This must be kept very separate and clear. We advise you not to bring ecology issues into your Greenbelt assessment; it will clearly be of importance for consideration as part of any sustainability appraisal / site assessment work

MB: Is the AONB untouchable?

Sarah Nelson: No, Westcott is entirely washed over by the AONB but development is permitted within the village. Although it is not necessarily part of the Green Belt analysis (although you may wish to consider it as part of your assessment of setting and character) it is a key consideration as part of any sustainability analysis and site assessment process. .

MB: Are SSSIs protected?

Sarah Nelson: Yes. SSSIs & National Trust land are considered by the Council as showstoppers.

JL: Funding for communities – What share of section 106 agreements come to us for development within our village?

Sarah Nelson: At the moment the amount is variable, but once the Council has the Community Infrastructure Levy in place and the NDP is adopted, 25% of the tariff goes to the community (managed by the District Council).

The Greenbelt assessment work lead by MF and TW to be undertaken by Forum. Voted & approved by all members.

9. Any Other Business.

a) JF commented that it was important to stress that we are positive about accepting development as a village. TW added that people seem happy to accept development of the correct type in the correct location. It is very obvious that Westcott has a rich mixture of housing and putting in a new housing estate would currently be viewed as being very much out of place.

b) KF reported that he was checking the program schedule which is on the web. All members can have access to this & are encouraged to email Kevin at: kevinafuoo@gmail.com to ask for access. TW asked members to take a look so they can digest the project size and identify areas where they might be able to volunteer for tasks as they come up. KF highlighted that Data Gathering is undermanned at the moment and asked for members come forward to help here.

Action : ALL

10. Questions and Answers

MF: At 20th March meeting on Sustainability (in relation to NDP) a document covering Data Gathering had been produced. MF asked that this doc to go to all Members to demonstrate size of the task in hand.

**Action : MF
Member Services**

11. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm Monday 18th November 2013, **St John's Chapel**. This meeting will focus on greenbelt + outline initial survey response.

The meeting was closed at 8.45pm.

Action: Member Services Group

Westcott Village Forum Meeting 4th September 2013.

List of attendees

Kevin Foo	KF
Stuart Ryland	SR
Andrea Gabb	AG
Heather Woods	HWo
Sue Winch	SW
Hazel Watson	HWa
Graham Clarke	GC
Debbie Fenton-Jones	DFJ
Pamela Wilson	PW
James Leaver	JL
Madeline Brooks	MB
Mike Flower	MF
Alex Segal	AS
Debbie Aston	DA
Rond Salter	RS
James Friend	JF
Chris Smewing	CS
Alan Jonas	AJ
David McCombe	DM
Lois Cremmen	LC
Natalie Foo	NF
Geoff Woodward	GW
Willy Forster	WF
Heather Forster	HF
Tim Way	TW

Guests:

Sarah Nelson MVDC

Item 1:

List of apologies

Apologies received for meeting 4th September 2013

Geoff Muge
Nicky Rowling
Andrew Gordon
Naomi Wye
Ruth McBain
Hugh Broom
Martin Percy
Matthew Bazylewskyj
Laura Bazylewskyj