



Ruishton and Thornfalcon Neighbourhood Plan Meeting of Project Team

Notes of meeting held on 27th November 2017

Present: Steering group members – Mike Marshall (MM), Jim Claydon (JCI), Doug Lowe (DL), Roy Bulgin (RB), Dave Duke (DD) and Catherine Faulkner (Neighbourhood Plan Administrator)

Other volunteers: Stewart Thorne (ST), John Capstick (JCap), Bridget Dickinson (BD), Susan Sherry (SS), Andrew Lukes (AL) and Ian Tucker (IT),

1. Apologies

Judy Cottrell (JCot), Mike Hellings (MH), Jasmine Riches (JR), Jim Woolcott (JW) and Julia Curtis (JCu)

2. Declarations of Interest

Jim Claydon declared a general interest as he is the Chair of CCS (Community Council for Somerset).

3. David McCaffrey (DMc) – Wilkie May and Tuckwood (guest speaker regarding residential housing in the Parish)

DMc advised that within our Parish demand is outstripping supply. It is a mixture of families moving locally and others relocating from further afield as we are seen as a gateway to other places and comparably cheaper.

He advised that the most recent building in Henlade (Henlade Close) had 26 units – 10 x shared ownership for local buyers from within 5 neighbouring Parishes and 16 housing association rentals. Half of the 10 (5) had been sold to local people but demand dried up, so it was opened up to anyone within Taunton for the remaining 5. All 26 units sold to local people. The 10 units started at £70k and most were first time buyers who own 40% with options to increase their ownership. The criteria for the 10 units was anyone living or working in the Parish, or a close family member meeting the criteria. Resale must be on the same criteria. At the time of this development there would have been competition from CSM and Monkton Heathfield where affordable housing and shared ownership was also being offered.

There has not been much change to the Buy to Let market in Taunton so the impact on our Parish is negligible.

Houses in Ruishton/wider Parish sell quickly as these are good villages and properties sell well. It was asked whether the new CSM houses have affected our Parish? DMc explained that they have not seen as much come to market in Ruishton this year as in previous years. At CSM, they have not had a problem selling the higher end houses ie 4 bed/ 600sq. ft. for £300k+.

DMc said that our Parish has churches, pubs, good primary and secondary schools and good road access. Perhaps more amenities could be considered such as a shop.

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He explained that currently, no particular type of house was selling better than another within the Parish. People are moving up the ladder so there is a demand for everything. For comparison, at Killams, 2,3,4 bed houses are all selling at present and nothing is sticking.

He felt there is always a demand for bungalows, but no one builds them due to a lack of return on investment. A question was posed regarding what do the elderly do if they want to downsize within the parish if none are being built? DMc said that not many sheltered housing units are being built. At Firepool a 1 bed unit was starting at £220k with a service charge of over £2k per annum. DMc advised that there was not enough of a need demonstrated within our Parish to give incentive to build this.

DMc felt that a selection of a variety of houses should be built within our Parish. He thinks that what is being built at Monkton is likely to be what will be built in our Parish as it is likely a large national builder will have options on land. It will depend on the developer and size of the development as to what a builder is likely to do for a community. It could be funding towards a school or roads eg at Killams (320 units) there was a contribution towards a bridge to get in and out of the school.

Provision for parking is dependent on the developer but there is limited parking within schemes.

The Government has extended its Help to Buy scheme to 2020 as an incentive to buy therefore developers need to build.

DMc said that Trull and Staplegrove are being absorbed into Taunton so he thinks that, over the next 20 years, our Parish will be absorbed but there is a need for the infrastructure to improve.

4. Notes of the last meeting

It was agreed that the notes of the last meeting were accurate.

- a) DD to set up Dropbox access for AL, JCI, MM, JCap, MH, SS, BD and RB - completed
- b) AL to consider the conservation area in Thornfalcon and the lack of appraisal and advise the Project Team in due course – AL presented the report which had previously been circulated. It was agreed that no further action was required at present however, it could be revisited as part of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) process if the NP group had concerns about something of value to the Community. **Action:** The Administrator to add the Thornfalcon Conservation Area report to Dropbox
- c) The Administrator to email both Deane Councillors and our County Councillors sending them information from our Household Survey to keep them informed and ask what input they would like to give to our Neighbourhood Plan –the Administrator explained that she had exchanged emails with John Thorne, County Councillor, who had said that he would support the NP process however we needed and was being briefed each month through the Parish Council meeting. He would endeavour to ensure he makes the group aware of any relevant information he obtains. The Administrator had had brief contact with Councillor D Durdan but had not heard from him since his holiday and she had not heard from Councillor K Durdan. After a discussion the Administrator said that she would contact the Deane Councillors again if the NP group needed help on any TDBC issues.

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5. Where we are now and future policy development

JCI updated that two meetings had now been held with developers, Persimmon and Summerfield, as part of our consultations and further meetings will be held with other developers who have interests in our Parish. The feelings were that a lot depends on the outcome of the A358 and how much land it opens up, however, once the changes to the road are concretely planned we can expect planning applications all along our Parish. It may also be that Nexus 25 is used as an argument to build. TDBC's 5-year supply of housing is being tested through a planning application and appeal by Gladman which Persimmon is watching. Taylor Wimpey have an interest in a large area of land over the other side of Nexus 25 which they will look to open up. TDBC will be deciding Nexus 25 on 12th December 2017 and SCC's Regulation Committee will consider junction 25 in February 2018. HE has said it will be consulting again on the A303/A358 in early 2017 with a decision by the end of 2018.

JCI explained that regarding our Project Plan timeline, if TDBC lose the argument of the 5-year housing supply, then we will have to move very quickly on our NP. However, if TDBC win then our timelines are ok. It appears that Gladman have applications in across the country and are known to take this position. It was discussed whether the NP group should be promoting this situation to our parishioners however it was felt that it is already being fought strongly and that we would not make any difference.

SS asked who is responsible for ensuring all infrastructure is suitable? It was explained that in the planning process the organisations responsible are contacted and if they do not object then that is it.

JCI explained that we had appointed a consultant, Stuart Todd Associates, to help us with the next stage regarding the review of the need for a Housing Needs survey. The report had only just been received, so it had not yet been fully read, and will be looked at by the Steering Group at their next meeting. Stuart Todd had also undertaken a gap analysis of all the data collected so far.

JCI updated regarding the Housing Needs survey. He explained that we were embarking on doing one when the Government announced that it was consulting on a new way of working out housing needs. The Government will not be reporting on it until sometime next year. The proposal is arbitrary and not helpful to us. Should we proceed with a survey, funding is available.

To consider the future, JCI led a workshop on "What do we think the future, in 2037, will be for our Parish; what will it look like?". JCI led everyone through a template which everyone completed based on the evidence they had gathered so far for their project groups and their own thoughts. **Action:** JCI to complete a summary of the Vision, Policies and Projects templates and the Administrator to then circulate it to the Project Team.

6. Update from Project Groups (if applicable)

Business Survey – The Administrator updated that 56 surveys had been sent out to businesses within our Parish and 11 had been returned giving a return rate of 19% so far. The closing date is 1st December 2017, so all businesses should be encouraged to

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return their surveys. The top 3 things so far were the need for improvement to the roads, there was not a need for housing for employees and better internet connection.

Environment – SS was working on a paper explaining the effects of the Air Pollutants. **Action:** SS to complete the paper on the effects of Air Pollutants and send it to the Administrator for circulation to the Project Team.

7. Project Plan review

MM explained that we are on target in relation to the Project Plan. He had met with the Chair of Creech St Michael (CSM) Parish Council and the Steering Group will be meeting with their NP group in the New Year. MM advised that he had also spoken to Stoke St Marys PC Chair and the Steering Group will meet with them in due course as well. **Action:** The Administrator to arrange a meeting with CSM NP group in the New Year.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting, will be set at the next meeting of the Steering Group for a date in January 2018.

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