

**MINUTES OF A STEERING GROUP MEETING**   
**held on Thursday 25th June 2015**  
at 7.00pm at The Blackbourne

**Present:** Marian Abbott, Philip Blissett, Julie Cole, Peter Dow, Peter Edmonds, Mary Feeney,  
 Terry Garner, Peter Goodridge, Sarah Mansel (Ch.), Fred Pallett, Ann Richards,   
 Julia Taber.  
**Guests**: Gillian Benjamin of CAS  
  
1 Apologies were noted from Shaun Pratt, Lesley Reed and Jane Storey

2 With minor amendments, the Minutes of the last meeting on 28th May were approved as a  
 true record.

3 There were no matters arising from the Minutes and not dealt with as an Agenda item.

4 Peter G gave a feedback presentation on work he had done with Ann re demographics culled  
 from the Parish profile. He offered to circulate a copy of the text to members. Key points  
 included:  
 Increasing population (has risen by 10% to 4000 residents since 2001) and due to increase by  
 another 10% with Bacon factory development  
 All age groups rising except 15-24 which is falling.  
 Housing – higher than average proportion number of detached houses . Very few terraced  
 houses and flats leading us to ask: is there too little affordable housing in the village  
 Over 90% are satisfied with local area as a place to live.  Very low crime. Higher than average  
 employment prospects. Good facilities in village/nearby.  
 High level of car ownership (especially multiple cars) and commuting via A14. We need to  
 ensure adequate parking in future developments.  Also again highlights need for a relief road.  
 There was general discussion centred on the fact that which it emerged that the Relief road  
 remains as an almost universal aspiration and that there was an obvious lack of single  
 bedroom flats within our housing stock.

5 Gillian provided feedback from her session with Fred, & Peter D towards identifying the key  
 issues raised in the questionnaire returns. In no particular order these are: Expansion beyond  
 the current settlement boundary, Tenure of any new housing stock – Council / private rented /  
 owner occupy / HA etc, Parking provision for  vehicles in residential areas, Traffic problems –  
 HGV  traffic / parking on pavements / level crossing queues / pedestrian vehicle conflict etc, Environmental problems – noise / pollution / bad parking etc, Use of public transport, Need for  
 a relief road (91.2% support), Local GP health service, School able to cope with expansion?  
 Environmental factors in new development – POS, recreational or natural / trees etc.  
 There was general discussion regarding the 50% concern regarding the ability of Woolpit  
 Health Centre to cope with expansion over the 25 year period of the Plan and the perceived need for more single bedroom flats and sheltered accommodation.

6 Julie tabled the returned questionnaires from Thurston School and was thanked for  
 having organised this exercise.  Ann agreed to input them.  
 Julie reported on the feedback from SCC regarding the ability of Elmswell Primary School  
 to accommodate the inevitable expansion of population as a result of development of the  
 Bacon Factory site. The most up-to-date figures available to the public are 12 months out of  
 date (Summer 2014) and do not take into account the proposed 190 houses.  These figures  
 state a capacity of the school as 315 pupils and, without development, this capacity would not  
 expect to be reached before 2020 at the earliest.  
 The Resource Manager at SCC is, however, fully aware of the proposed development and has  
 worked these into new figures which will be available soon.  Their prediction is that 190  
 houses will result in 45 primary aged children with an average of 6 or 7 per year group. They  
 assume that the 190 houses will not be fully occupied until 2019 - at which point the current  
 school buildings would be at capacity.  
 As a rule of thumb it was suggested that 1000 new houses requires a 1 form entry primary  
 school.

7 Peter E reported that he had personally distributed the business questionnaires to all the  
 obvious candidates and invited suggestions as to any smaller enterprises which he might have missed. Peter D agreed to insert a piece in the Newsletter inviting further involvement .

8 There was discussion towards the next steps based on Rachel’s suggestion of a ‘ Vision  
 Workshop’. PD undertook to liaise with Rachel and with Dave Chetwyn to firm up on the  
 arrangements for a session and to circulate members accordingly.

9 When any other business was invited the following was noted :  
 9.1 Framlingham, a town with a similar population to Elmswell, has attracted just 9.8%  
 returns on its Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire. GB confirmed that Elmswell had  
 done very well in this regard.  
 9.2 Parish Councillors present confirmed that the Council Chairman had used her veto to block funding for the professional advice towards completing the Plan, despite  
 assurances that the grant aid to cover the costs is almost automatic. This had been  
 accompanied by a thorough critical attack on both the make-up of the Steering Group  
 and the validity of the questionnaire process. Peter D urged members not to be dispirited by this ill founded criticism which was, effectively, a procedural glitch and was  
 driven by other agendas. He expressed the wish that the Group would not take the criticism as being in any way representative of the general public perception of their having so successfully taken on this essential task as volunteers driven only by the  
 desire to do what is right for Elmswell at a time when the community is under severe  
 development pressures.

10 The date for a next meeting was not definitely fixed. PD is to arrange for a consultation  
 session with Rachel or Dave and it is hoped that feedback from that can be presented to an  
 ordinary Group meeting on 22nd July at 7.30.

11 The meeting closed at 9.10.

**Peter Dow  
11.07.15**