

LAZONBY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2015 AT LAZONBY VILLAGE HALL

Present

Lazonby Parish Council

Councillor Chris Hill, Councillor Virginia Minihan, Councillor Peter Minihan, Councillor Gordon Nicolson, Councillor Chris West.

H & H Land and Property

Tom Woof, Katie Jones

Local Residents

Andrew Blair, Roger Campbell, Martin Hodgson, Elizabeth Howe, Neil Kennedy, Gordon Malcolm, John Nicol, Gary Watt,

Apologies for absence

Councillor John Judson, Angela Watson Brown and Peter Watson Brown.

Introduction

Councillor Virginia Minihan, Chair of Lazonby Parish Council took the Chair. A round of introductions was completed. The Chair outlined the purpose of the meeting as updating those present on developments re the Lazonby Neighbourhood Plan, introducing Tom Woof and Katie Jones who would be working with the group on the Neighbourhood Plan and to provide those present with the opportunity to make a contribution to the developing arrangements.

In response to questions about the publicity given to the Plan in recent months and in particular to the appointment of the consultants it was explained that updates on the progress of the plan had been given in the minutes of the Parish Council which were in the public domain and information had been provided in the monthly Parish Council Newsletter which was circulated with Lazonby Lines. The consultants had been selected following a competitive tender in accord with Parish Council procurement arrangements. The names of those invited to bid had been obtained from a list supplied by RTPi. Councillor Virginia Minihan offered to circulate information by email to all members of the Steering Group so that everyone was fully aware of the progress being made, going forward.

A question was raised about the status of the group and the role of the Parish Council in the preparation of the Plan. The chair explained that the Parish Council, as a recognised accountable body, was eligible to apply for and account for public funds.

However it was important that the community were fully involved in the development of the plan. It was agreed that the name of the Parish Council would not be shown in future agendas and minutes. It was made clear that the Steering Group is an equal partnership between the Parish Council and Parishioners.

It was agreed that it may be necessary to form sub groups in the future as it was felt that the current size of the Steering Group was quite large for productive progress and that once the results of the consultation were known it may be possible to divide the work needed for the plan between sub groups. Tom Woof agreed to supply sample terms of reference for Neighbourhood Planning Groups from elsewhere.

Project Plan, Timetable and Outputs.

The project plan and timetable was outlined. Funding of £5.632 had been secured to complete phase 1 of the project. Phase 1 would involve production of an issues and options questionnaire and public consultation exercise. Phase 2 would involve drafting the plan and taking it through the formal processes of consultation, public examination, referendum and finally adoption. It was anticipated that Phase 2 would commence in April 2015 and conclude in December 2015.

Information on applications for funding in 2015/16 was awaited.

The Characteristics of Lazonby

Information on the characteristics of Lazonby was circulated. This included a map of the Parish, data on the population and patterns of development and information on current planning consents. A number of detailed questions on the characteristics of the Parish were raised. It was agreed that there was a need to compile lists of local employers, local land owners and local voluntary organisations and clubs and societies as all would have to be considered for inclusion in the consultation and public engagement arrangements. It was agreed that it would be useful for members of the Steering Group to have a copy of the Village Design Statement and a copy of the Views of Residents resulting from the first public meeting in March 2014. These would be circulated by email by Councillor Virginia Minihan.

Current Planning Regimes

Tom Woof outlined the current planning regime. He added that there had been considerable changes in recent years and that a Neighbourhood Plan was required to be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF], National Planning Policy Guidance [NPPG] and the policies of the Local Planning Authority. He referred also to very recent changes to the national policy on developer contributions to affordable housing and to permitted development rights for barns and former farm buildings.

Vision for the Plan

Earlier meetings had identified a number of possible topics for the plan including housing, employment sites, open spaces and conservation. Traffic management had been identified as an area of concern but as this was not strictly a land use issue, careful consideration of treatment within the plan would be required. It was stated that consideration should also be given to relationships with neighbouring villages, Renewable Energy included within the Conservation topic, and the Kirkoswald – Lazonby footpath included in the Open Spaces topic. The exact topics to be included would become evident when the results of the questionnaires were analysed.

Housing was regarded as a major issue for the plan. The draft Eden Local Plan did not allocate specific numbers of new houses to Lazonby. Lazonby had been identified as a location for development given its local services. It was agreed that a neighbourhood plan should look to identifying sites and numbers for housing and should also consider aspects of design, density and house types and styles. The last named was important as older residents may wish to downsize and remain in the village. However the plan should seek evidence of housing need and present proposals for public consultation.

Producing a vision for the plan is an essential part of the process and equally, the vision and the plan should be developed exclusively for the parish of Lazonby. A central question was “what sort of community should Lazonby be?” A variety of answers were offered. Those present recognised that many residents commuted to work from Lazonby, that there appeared to be a high proportion of elderly residents, that the Lazonby settlement lacked a central focal point like a square or village green and that the village supported a number of voluntary groups, clubs and societies.

Common ground for articulating a vision was around sustainability, maintaining existing services, setting out appropriate arrangements for development and possibly aspects like the public realm and the general appearance of the area. It was noted that the plan should embrace the needs of settlements at Lazonby and Low Plains as well as the small settlements in open countryside.

Public Engagement

It was agreed that a questionnaire would be developed to obtain views on planning issues with the Parish. Tom Woof would develop the questionnaire. It would be circulated to all properties in the parish, residential and commercial, and would be returned to boxes at the Co-op, Lazonby School and Low Plains. Questionnaires will be numbered to enable follow up. However, the identity of respondents would not be disclosed.

Enquiries will be made of Eden District Council to secure maps of the Parish showing addresses. This will assist producing delivery rounds for volunteers.

The timetable for the questionnaires is:

- Questionnaires issued by 28 February 2015
- Questionnaires returned by 7 March 2015
- Follow up visits 9 March 2015 to 14 March 2015
- Consultation closes 14 March 2015

A public meeting will be held on Thursday 19 March at 7.30pm at Lazonby Village Hall. Light refreshments will be provided. Details of the conduct of the meeting will be announced later. However it is recognised that it should be an active meeting with opportunities for residents to comment and record their views on matters identified within the consultation exercise. It was also suggested that members of the Steering group should visit the Primary School, WI, Pre-school playgroup, Bells and Princes' Water Plant to talk to them about the Neighbourhood Plan and give them an opportunity to comment before the consultation closes on 14 March. Posters about the Plan process and the public meeting will be produced and placed around the parish. Tom Woof agreed to produce a draft questionnaire for consideration, which will be circulated to all members of the Steering Group before the final questionnaire is issued to parishioners and also the Posters to be displayed around the village.