**Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

**Notes of Meeting held on Monday 10th July 2017**

**At Crowhurst Village Hall**

**Present**: Ros Day (Chair), Willy Wilson, Tracy Hoad, Sonia Plato, Nicola Stell, Chris Davidson, Martin White. Fiona Taylor (minutes)

**In attendance**: 4 members of the public

**Apologies**: Pat Buckle, Gareth Bright, Diane Stainsby, Dave Howley, Cllr Gary Curtis

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 5th June 2017**

The Minutes were approved; there were no matters arising.

1. **Feedback from Survey Results**

Concerns were raised about the proposed site adjoining Forewood Rise – the survey results suggested the majority of residents supported this option. This would lead to noise and light pollution to residents of Forewood Rise, particularly if outside security lights were erected on new houses; one proposed access was via Forewood Rise which is narrow and busy, but also provides a green space and safe area for children to play. Ros Day confirmed the whole field was available, the actual site boundaries would have to be agreed and there would need to be a buffer between any proposed housing and the RSPB Reserve. Martin White confirmed that all the sites were still under consideration. Chris Davidson explained the two areas abutting Forewood Rise were in separate ownership but as they were contiguous it was deemed sensible to regard it as one area. It was not intended to send a message implying this was the most appropriate site for all 20 houses. The houses could be built across the sites.

More information was required from the landscape architect and the Highways Department before the potential layout could be confirmed; it was proposed to hold some workshops in August to discussed and get a greater idea of what could be possible.

Sonia Plato advised that the environmental group was focusing on issues including light and noise pollution and preservation of green spaces.

In response to a question about timescales, Martin White confirmed the plan covers 10 years and the requisite 20 houses could be erected over that timeline. Ros explained Rother District Council had stipulated 20 houses in Crowhurst and the Neighbourhood Plan enabled residents to have some say in this. No developers had yet made approaches. It may be worthwhile looking developers to work with who would be sensitive to the existing residents and environment. In addition, after 10 years RDC may stipulate further housing in the village, and the local plan could have a bearing on how best to manage future demands.

The village’s existing infrastructure would need reassessment in order to support additional housing. The workshops would be a useful forum to discuss the issues residents had.

Martin White said it was likely there would be a review next year of the regional and national quotas, which would probably filter down to villages. Should this be the case, there would be a reserve list of potential sites.

Comments from the survey had suggested planning permission had been refused for Combe Dell; however, no member of the meeting had memory of any planning permission applied for there. Ros confirmed landscape and heritage surveys had been commissioned to assess suitability of all the sites. It was generally agreed that residents enjoyed the peace and quiet, and the dark skies allowing star gazing, and this was the reason for living in the village. It would be important to try to get the right balance for all concerned.

The open meeting last Saturday was positive and well attended. Catherine Bright, who had undertaken the creation of the survey and its analysis, had done excellent work and the Steering Group wished their thanks and appreciation to be formally recorded.

Other issues arising included parking, traffic calming and lack of footpaths for pedestrians particularly on Chapel Hill. Sonia advised that it had been confirmed a strip of land had been passed to ESCC to allow for a footpath up Chapel Hill. The safety issues had not become sufficiently serious to warrant ESCC paying for this, but match funding may be possible.

Survey results suggested few people supported construction of a new village hall; the school was the biggest user of the hall so this could create a problem on both sides if it was moved elsewhere.

Sonia commented that only 3% of under 18s had responded to the survey so it would be important to have more consultation with that age group to ensure the results were more fully representative.

1. **Project Plan / Next Steps**

Ros outlined the way forward: there would be a stall at the fayre to provide information to residents, followed up by workshops in August for groups to look at different aspects – traffic, environment, etc – to feed into the plan, which , if all goes well be presented to the Parish Council in Spetember. There would follow a six week consultation period for public and statutory bodies to comment and modifications to be made. The final plan would be submitted to the Parish Council in December and to RDC for public consultation in January 2018. From there it would go to the examiner and RDC would then organise the referendum, which timescales would be led by the Council, but potentially the outcome could be known by May next year. RDC has staff issues in their Planning Department, so there may well be hold ups during the stages.

Once further information is received from the landscape architects, this will assist with visualising housing styles, settings, landscaping, environmental impact, access, etc. These issues can be discussed in more detail at the August workshops, so hopefully the reports will be available by then.

1. **Task Groups Reports**

**4.1 Finance**

Tracy Hoad confirmed the 3rd grant has been paid.

**4.2 Land Use (Call for Sites)**

Chris Davidson reported the survey results had been awaited before progress could be made. There is a meeting arranged for the end of this week to review and decide on the next steps.

**4.3 Street Champions**

The Steering Group wished to thank all those who had assisted as street champions.

**4.4 Communications**

David Marlow, Planner for RDC, had been invited to attend tonight but been unavailable. A convenient meeting with him would be organised to discuss the technical issues. Sonia suggested dates for the forthcoming meetings should feature in the Crowhurst News planner; these would be agreed and forwarded for insertion in the next edition.

**4.5 Research/Heritage**

Nicola Stell has contacted the Park Lane Group as they are currently offering grants, with a view to submitting a bid to assist with financing the Heritage Powdermills Trail. Sonia confirmed Dave is still waiting to receive information and maps from Casper Johnson, the County Archaeologist. The group would welcome any old photographs or information about Crowhurst’s history and heritage. Ros is trying to obtain a mastermap of the parish and is awaiting design information from the landscape architects. It was agreed that the character of the properties was an important issue. Members discussed the information which was awaited and how to accelerate this. Ros said Aecom had offered to share a report from a similar sized parish which would be useful – she will follow this up.

**4.6 Environment**

Sonia advised there had been two meetings in the last few weeks and the draft environmental report had been circulated. Further work would be carried out on environmental health and wellbeing, which would include the benefits of green areas, lack of light pollution, etc, with the theme of connectivity between the areas people live in, wildlife access, etc. Another big topic is the traffic – it will be necessary to produce evidence of the amount of traffic particularly in the pinch-points in the village. It was agreed that the environment group would take forward investigating with the traffic sergeant how best to carry out a traffic survey and recruit volunteers to assist. It was appreciated that the survey should be carried out in early September to include the school traffic as this was a major factor.

1. **Documentation for Draft Plan**

Gareth has started an introduction, comments from the survey will be built in, together with the draft environmental report. Ros has drafted a foreword. The land use group confirmed that the badger setts had not yet been mapped. Sonia described a biodiversity report which should flag up more important issues. Although part of the heritage, the gunpwder trail could also be referenced under Health and Wellbeing. Chris agreed it would be essential to pick up the principles and issues of the site development and cross reference with environmental aspects including light, air and noise pollution.

Sonia also noted that comments had been raised about the farming aspect of the village; this had been shown to be important particularly to young people in the village and it was vital to ascertain the issues of the farming community and build these into the plan.

It was agreed generally that getting evidence is not straightforward, and that the results of the latest survey didn’t always show a clear preference. It was vital to continue to maintain communication with residents to ensure interest did not wane and encourage more people to attend the steering groups and become involved. The fayre will be a good time to publicise this and the forthcoming workshops.

1. **Risk Assessment**

There were no other measures to be taken at present, although the potential slippage was a concern.

Tracy asked if the site between the Christian Healing Centre and Brakes Coppice was a viable option. This had been inspected and it was not ideal, primarily due to traffic in a 60mph zone. There was also the consideration of mains drainage to the potential sites. Site assessments need to be written up with concerns to ensure these are recorded accurately.

1. **Dates and Planning for next Meetings**

7.1 There is money in the budget for the stall at the Crowhurst Fayre. Members discussed providing strawberries and cream and activities for children/visitors.

7.2 Workshop dates –

* Sunday 20th August at 3.30 pm for about 2 hours
* Tuesday 29th August at 7.30 pm

It will be essential to advertise these and stress their potential. They will need to be planned and structured, with small groups each containing a steering group member to provide focus.

7.3 Steering group meetings on the first Mondays of the month:

* 4th September
* 2nd October
* 6th November (possibly in the church room)

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm