**Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

**Notes of Meeting held on Monday 7 January 2019 at 7.30pm**

**in the Village Hall, Crowhurst**

**Present:** Gareth Bright, Chris Davidson, Ros Day (Chair), Dave Howley, Sonia Plato, Martin White, Willy Wilson, Pat Buckle

**Apologies:**  Tracy Hoad, Diane Stainsby, Ann Wilson

**In Attendance:** 2 Members of the Public

Ros Day opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

1. **Declaration of Interests**

1.1. All present declared an interest as residents of Crowhurst.

1.2 Item 3.2 - Land Use Task Group - Martin White declared a personal interest as owner of Church Paddock, Crowhurst.

2. **Notes of Previous Meeting** held on 5 December 2018 - Approved.

3. **Task Groups Reports**

3.1 **Finance –** Nothing to report.

3.2 **Land Use Task Group**

A member of the public questioned why the NP contained a proposed car park at Church Paddock when the land at the corner of the village hall car park had already been put forward as a possible car park many years ago. The meeting agreed this was the case but there had been no progress over the years on taking this forward; and the NP survey completed by residents showed that parking in that area was a real issue. The proposed car park in part of Church Paddock was therefore included in the NP to try to alleviate parking issues on this dangerous bend and to protect parents and children when crossing to the school. Chris Davidson updated the meeting on progress of the Memoranda of Understanding sent to landowners of the proposed sites in the NP. Martin White reported that he had been in contact with Network Rail regarding the proposed site by the station. He was informed that an internal assessment had been carried out but it did not yet meet the Network Rail criteria for disposal of sites. Network Rail still wanted the site included in the NP as it will become more viable in the future.

3.3. **Street Champions**

The meeting expressed its appreciation of the Street Champions delivering the exhibition leaflets to all households in the village.

3.4. **Communications**

Valerie Groves has put all the information about the consultation on the website, as well as the poster for the design workshop.

3.5. **Research/Heritage**

Dave Howley stated that Upper Wilting was part of the Crowhurst heritage and any proposed developments should be watched carefully. The village needs to be more proactive in protecting Crowhurst and should develop relationships with other villages, particularly Robertsbridge, Sedlescombe and Battle. He raised concerns about;

* the possibility of Rother District Council (RDC) resiting it’s Bexhill depot to Upper Wilting;
* the serious deterioration of Adams Farm which is part of the historic heritage of the village. He has raised concerns with the Friends of the Countryside Park CIC suggesting the property could be a useful social asset;
* the Hastings Borough Council’s proposal in it’s Local Plan to site a solar farm at Upper Wilting will be discussed at Parish Council. Ros Day stated that the NP did not contain any business allocation but would expect any such development to meet the NP environment criteria.

3.6 **Environment**

Sonia Plato reported that this Group continues to meet and grow and its activities are extending and enlarging. On 29 January 2019 the Environment Agency Flood Officer is giving a talk on the Powdermill Stream, and there is a village wildlife walk on Saturday 12 January 2019. Mantel Farm has been offered as a meeting place and the Group is mentioned in it’s newsletter. The Battle Wildlife Group, with the backing of Battle Town Council, has invited the Group to attend its meetings, has offered help with photographs of verges, etc., and a wildlife poster which it would print off for Crowhurst to use. It is also including Crowhurst when applying for a grant to plant wildlife seeds. Maintaining verges needs expensive machinery which Battle Town Council own and it may be able to offer this service to Crowhurst. Sonia Plato emphasised the importance of regularly recording and photographing verges and wildlife areas as this is important information for protecting the environment of Crowhurst. The Group needs to improve its recording and it was pointed out that logging such information takes much work and time. The Group has received £600 from Crowhurst Parish Council to assist in continuing its work.

4. **Consultation Events**

The meeting confirmed arrangements for the remaining events being held on Saturday 12 January 2019 between 9.30am and Noon, and Sunday 20 January 2019 between 3.00pm and 6.00pm, both in the Village Hall. Ros Day reported that RDCs comments on the NP would be presented to the RDC Cabinet meeting on 14 January 2019 and if agreed would be submitted to the Independent Examiner at the end of the consultation period on 25 January 2019.

5. **Design Workshop**

Sonia Plato reported that Ian McKay, Director of BBM Sustainable Designs Ltd., would lead the workshop to be held in the Village Hall on 10 February 2019 from 11.00am to 3.30pm where a pre- bookable free lunch would be available. The event would include a talk by Ian McKay, followed by discussion and Q & A. BBM are providing posters advertising the event, and a representative from the High Weald AONB Unit is being invited. Sonia Plato reiterated that the village cannot state what it wants but knowing what is available and possible is a good start to working with future developers. It was acknowledged that it is important to look at innovative designs which could be of interest to certain developers.

6. **Neighbourhood Plan Forum Meeting**

Ros Day reported that the latest meeting of the Forum was again well attended and included feedback from David Marlow, Senior Planning Development Officer, RDC, with an update on the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Any NP that is not at Reg 16 by 24 January 2019 must conform to the new NPPF. David Marlow stated he was pleased that NP’s had been received on time and will therefore have some protection against the Government formula for housing allocation which could see a doubling of the allocation for Rother. It was reported that the housing development at North East Bexhill had been delayed as the developers were not confident that the units would sell at the present time. David Marlow announced that the RDC Development and Site Allocation Plan (DaSA) will be sent for examination in early 2019.

7. **Neighbourhood Plan Independent Examiner**

Ros Day reported that 4 possible examiners were put to the Steering Group and after researching them, the Group’s preferred choice was either Liz Beth or Edward Cousins. RDC is happy to appoint Liz Beth, with Crowhurst Parish Council’s agreement. The Steering Group was happy to endorse this. It was confirmed that RDC engage and pay for the examiner.

8. **Art Project**

Chris Davidson updated the meeting on the progress of the Project, which was to reflect the importance of the NP and to keep it alive. The next step was a feasibility discussion between Valerie Groves and Denis Wilson. The design will consist of a spoked wheel and it was hoped that the spaces between the spokes would contain information from village organisations.

9. **Date of Future Meetings**

**Steering Group** – Monday 4 February 2019 in Crowhurst Village Hall at 7.30pm.

- Monday 4 March 2019 in Crowhurst Village Hall at 7.30pm.

- Monday 1 April 2019 in Crowhurst Village Hall at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.