

Foxton Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee

Minutes of Meeting, 18th May 2015

In attendance

Committee: David Chambers, Elizabeth Cockbill, Bernard Rice, Adele Rogers, Mike Ward, Margaret Wright

Consultant: Colin Wilkinson

Members of Public: Jon Fox

Apologies

Meryl Cumber, Maureen Fox, Julia King

Declaration of Interests:

Mike Ward: Foxton Society

Margaret Wright: Robert Monk Foxton Charity, Foxton Society

1. **Election of Chair.** Margaret Wright elected, proposed by David Chambers, seconded by Elizabeth Cockbill.
2. **Funding.** Margaret affirmed that our grant application had been successful and requested that someone take over as first point of contact with Groundwork (that acts on behalf of Locality). Bernard Rice agreed to do this.

Action Margaret, Bernard

3. **Initial analysis of feedback from main questionnaire (with some input from previous exhibition).** Colin gave his initial findings:
 - a. **170 returns** which is very good for the size of our parish.
 - b. **Limits to development**
 - i. 38% felt development should remain within current limits to development.
 - ii. 32% felt development should remain within new, expanded limits to development.
 - iii. 21% felt development should be within new, expanded limits to development but outside current limits.
 - iv. 9% felt development should be outside existing limits with no expanded limits.
 - v. 3% felt all limits to development should be removed.
 - vi. Some replacement limits were drawn but mainly very minority views except that 19 respondents supported creating new limits around Fisher's Farmyard.
 - c. **Scale of housing development.** 59% supported the suggested level of 27. Other suggestions ranged from 0 to 50+. ****
 - d. **Individual development sites.** Larger potential sites supported for development included site 2 (Middle Street / Vicarage Drive) and site 21 (Fishers Farmyard).
Site 3 (Hog Lane / Vicarage Drive), site 22 (between 16/28 Main Street), site 25 (Old Court House outbuildings) and site 28 (immediately behind 42 Main Street) were also supported for development.
 - e. **Green spaces.** Most sites currently designated as Important Open Land were supported as Open Green Space. In addition, there was overwhelming support for protecting site 9 (land between canal and rear of properties on Swingbridge Street), site 18 (nature reserve at end of Softwell Lane) and site 20 (land bordered by Swingbridge Street, canal, school footpath and Gallowfield Road). Several other sites were also suggested for protection.
 - f. **Traffic.** Overwhelming support for Parish Council taking on traffic as a project. Much concern regarding traffic/parking problems and many suggestions as to how to deal with it.
 - g. **Conservation and design.** Most residents value the conservation status of Foxton and the majority favour new buildings to be of traditional style and materials. Many areas suggested as particularly attractive look and feel.

- h. **Infrastructure.** Shop, pubs, community spirit, bus links and slow growth all important. Concern expressed about future of school and the capacity of the village drainage system to cope with additional development. Strong feeling against further street lighting. Several other concerns/requirements were raised.
- i. **Environment and climate change.** Protection of trees and hedges important. Concerns over noise pollution. A few objections to large solar panels but none to photovoltaic roof tiles or heat exchange pumps. Some other points were raised.
- j. **Businesses.** Support for small businesses. No heavy industry. Encourage canal, farming and tourism related business.
- k. **Tourism.** Some additional comments.
- l. **Feedback from young people (12 – 15 yrs).** 5 respondents gave their opinions which centred around the “lovely” village, sports-oriented activities and facilities. Only 1 of the 5 would like to live in Foxton after school/university.
- m. **Conclusion.** Key issues are: rural character must be retained, housing needs met, open spaces protected, key services retained, traffic problems resolved and Foxton Locks development progressed with care for local feeling.

i. Areas of broad consensus:

- Limits to development retained but modified.
- Support for 27 houses to 2031. ****
- Sites for development clear.
- Parish Council traffic management initiative.
- Traditional design.
- Street scene important, along with views in and out of village. Concerns over loss of space around existing homes.
- Previous assessment of traffic, infrastructure, environment, climate change and business endorsed.
- Mixed views on Foxton Locks.
- Young people like Foxton although they don't think they will live here post-education.

4. **** **Note on 3c and 3m. Scale of housing** prompted much discussion, especially in light of HDC reluctance to advise us on a sensible level, with possible figures released in mid-June. It is not expected that these will be very helpful. Concern was expressed that HDC may be withholding their figures because of lack of officially suitable sites (access and flooding problems) in the hope that we produce a higher figure than they could justify.

It was, therefore, decided that we do not consider agreement on an official figure for development growth yet.

Action: All.

5. **Technical assessments** must now proceed on the 6 larger potential development sites (sites 2, 5, 12, 19, 20 and 21 - suitable for 5 dwellings or more) to ensure that they, possibly with extra input/contributions from landowners, are developable within regulations. This involves arranging assessments of highways access, flood risk, archaeology, environment, ecology etc.

Action: Colin.

6. **It is also necessary to assess the credentials of the proposed green spaces**, relative to Govt. guidance. This can be carried out by the committee, using some of the original assessments made by HDC on a list of Green Spaces submitted by the Parish Council. There are also official guidance notes on this.

Action: Colin to email guidance notes;

Action: Mike to email previous assessments of Green Spaces;

Action: All to start work on assessment.

7. **It is now possible to begin formulating policies** based on areas of broad consensus. It was agreed that Colin should start this.

Action: Colin.

Next meetings:

- **Working group** to work on green space compliance, informal. **Monday, 1st June 2015 at 7.30pm**, 34 Swingbridge Street.
- **Committee Meeting. Monday, 22nd June 2015 at 7.30pm**, Robert Monk Hall, meeting room.