

Malmesbury Neighbourhood Planning Forum – 09-01-12 – Meeting Notes

9th January 2012, 7pm at Malmesbury Town Hall.

In attendance:

Simon Killane	Wiltshire Council	SK	
Patrick Goldstone	Malmesbury Town Council	PG	
Charles Vernon	Malmesbury & District Conservation Group	CV	
Paul Baker	Malmesbury & District Chamber of Commerce	PB	
Georgina Clampitt-Dix	Wiltshire Council	GCD	
Bill Sykes	Residents' Association	BS	
Tristan Cork	Malmesbury Primary School	TC	
John Thompson	Wiltshire Council and Area Board	JT	
Barry Dent	Civic Trust	BD	
Tim Gilson	Malmesbury Secondary School	TG	
Bob Tallon	Brokenborough Parish Council	BT	
Roger Budgen	Malmesbury St. Paul Without Parish Council	RB	
David Grogan	Primary Care Centre		DG
Frances Goldstone	River Valleys Trust	FG	
Hugh Pitman	The Villages	HP	
William Allbrook	School Governors	WA	
Jane Macey	Wiltshire Council	JM	
Chris Wilton	Malmesbury Primary School	CW	
Ruth Jeffrey	Minute Taking		

SK opened the meeting and provided all with The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment (PF) Memo of Understanding and also the minutes of the previous meeting, which are to be signed off at the next meeting.

SK introduced Mark Greaves from the PF who gave a presentation on their work, as one of 20 charities of Prince Charles and based in London, although Mark himself is based in Glasgow. They are made up of architects, planners and urban designers, drawing on their experience and taking from the past, rather than looking to reinvent the wheel, to help create places that people want to live in – built well and beautifully.

PF don't do mono-functional development. They don't do sprawling cul-de-sac housing or shopping malls outside town. They don't do things that are anonymous and could be anywhere. Mark explained that these types of development create physical barriers between the default, separate areas.

PF prefer developments that have an interesting mix and are safe. They tend to include parks, schools and shops, along with homes that look like they belong.

Architectural principles are important, rather than being style specific. He referred to the

Community Capital model; sustainable, traditional urbanism where everything is incorporated within a network of streets that are 'walkable'. Such developments are designed to make it as easy as possible for people to get out and walk and meet their neighbours. It's about 'communities', where people should be able to meet their needs within five minutes' walk of their home.

Method – Enquiry by Design

The method brings together key stakeholders to talk together. It's not the old 'tick box' method and is about creating places, not just about development.

PF is an educational charity, educating people about the process. They invite planners along too and address issues head on in the early stages. It's place-based – all done around maps. PF are not precious about 'who holds the pens' as it's the locals who hold the real knowledge.

In Malmesbury, the intention would be to draw up a list of issues. A 3-5 day workshop leads to a consensus amongst everyone linked to the process. The tools can be quite simple and can unlock the difficult issues. The 'dot' exercise was demonstrated as an example, where dots are literally placed on a map to highlight problem areas, which leads to solving them.

Mark briefly touched on the Localism Act and its intention to allow communities to formulate a vision for their areas. However, production of a Neighbourhood Plan is not for PF to do. The aim is to provide principles for us to hopefully use / take on board. Two sessions would be run, open to the entire community to facilitate the beginnings of the Neighbourhood Plan and to build momentum and buy-in.

Mark described it as being about the long-term view, to be more responsible, i.e. looking at 30 years instead of 10 and considering our grandchildren in structuring places to stand the test of time. However, there may need to be some short-term wins along the way to achieve the long-term goals.

During the first day of the workshop data is analysed on the spot, e.g. after the 'dot' exercise. A consolidation diagram is drawn up after the first day, to which, for example, the forum might attend and the local authority could be asked to provide technical briefings. There would be discussion and feedback before working sessions in groups, which would then feed back to the rest of the group.

An example of a previous workshop at Cerne Abbot was given, where there were two entrenched camps – one that wanted to retain the status quo and one that thought that development was needed to support the existing school and shops etc.

Mark referred to the Memo of Understanding and asked whether the group felt that the list of issues suggested on page 2 (see document) was relevant.

CV asked how it ties in with the current pressure for growth, with a planning appeal (Park Road) and another planning application due soon. Felt a fresh analysis of sites would be appropriate as Park Road developer is claiming that the previous analysis of sites was not done properly.

MG Happy to start with a blank map to determine best sites.

PG feels we're in grave danger of being overtaken by events, with a major retailer application in too.

GCD Appeal will be 16th February and proof of evidence will refer to the NP process. If arguing on prematurity, we need to be joined up with a clear time frame – WC will be looking to put forward a very strong case of prematurity.

BS Does this work? Has it worked elsewhere?

GCD It's all new but why not be the first in giving it our very best shot? The document says this approach is in line.

SK There will always be ongoing applications. There's no such thing as coming out with less from this process. It's never too late as the system is moving on regardless. We need to take Localism and grasp it.

GCD We're having to take a fresh look – it's an opportunity here, as much as anything.

CV But is this objective?

MG and **GCD** Mark's team have the expertise.

CV. Ok. There was a Landscape Character Plan done some years ago, where Malmesbury was on the border of various areas and its relationship to the surrounding countryside was not incorporated.

MG Those organizations were bound by their own guidelines.

GCD They looked at the rural landscape but could look at towns in the future. Could perhaps include the landscape in PF's work / workshops.

JT reminded the forum that this is about the wider area, not just Park Road or any one single issue.

CW What area will this cover and is the surrounding area included?

GCD The NP area is clearly defined, although the group can choose to discuss the wider area if they want to do so.

CW Schools are a key issue for the wider area as the primary schools from the wider area feed into the secondary school.

HP reminded the group that it's the communities of the town, the immediate area and also the villages that rely on Malmesbury for schools, healthcare etc. He explained that these are people who want to look after and treasure Malmesbury.

MG Agreed that the future of the town centre is especially important as a hub to the wider area.

BD didn't feel that the concept of Malmesbury ties in with its boundaries. Malmesbury itself has closer communities. Some areas are integral and others are more remote, e.g. Milbourne.

JT again refocused the discussion on the NP as an inclusive process that will bring in all people affected by the NP. This is an opportunity to develop it in partnership with someone impartial in the community and at the end of the day it will need 50% support to become approved. The question is do we want to take forward PF and how to use it to best advantage.

MG confirmed it's down to the group to decide if they are the people to start building momentum for the NP and he is aware that it is a diverse town!

JT confirmed his support for going down the route of the PF.

SK was in agreement and felt it was important to say yes, we want to do this work.

MG It's the principles that will be provided, which the group can take forward.

CGD Community involvement is the first step of the plan as there could be a lot more info out there in the community from those with expertise in community and planning already.

BS wondered whether it is just a workshop or whether more guidance can be given.

MG The PF have a contract with central government. They don't like to walk away but there is a limit on funds. If additional issues come up it would be for the local authority to engage them further if required.

RB Will we be provided with enough building blocks to create the NP at the end of this process? (showed support).

MG warned the group that it's not always a smooth road but he thinks we will get enough of the fundamentals in place.

BT wondered if we should seek references and MG confirmed that they would be available if required.

SK referred to the Joint Strategic Assessment document, which is available from Wiltshire Council.

CV proposed to accept the MoU from PF, which was seconded by?(was it PG) and passed.

Next Steps

On 21st Feb there will be an Area Board event based around the Joint Strategic Assessment, now focused on this area. The plan will be to sit down and go through the data, including health, transport issues etc. that need to be addressed. Then, look at ways of approaching those issues. This event will be held at the school.

The PF's Community Planning Workshop will commence 27th Feb, starting with an evening event on the Monday (public) and finishing with an evening event on the Thursday (public). Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday will continue with the workshops during the day for representatives from local groups and local stakeholders.

GCD confirmed that she and JM will work with MG to identify a list of stakeholders, with feedback from this group.

Following concern about the time commitment needed to attend the whole event in February, MG confirmed that attendance will be flexible and substitutions would be acceptable – doors won't be locked!

BD asked how thick the NP will be and GCD suggested that it's entirely up to us – it can be as long as we want it to be.

SK closed the meeting and thanked Mark for coming down from Glasgow to attend.