

Kent and Medway Neighbourhood Planning Summit

Wednesday 16 December 2015

9.00am - 1.00pm

Ashford Borough Council

This Kent Design Summit brings together central government, parish councils, local authorities, planners, urban designers and developers to share knowledge, discuss the challenges and work together to help deliver effective Neighbourhood Plans in Kent and Medway.

Speakers Confirmed are:

Christopher Mountain, Neighbourhood Planning, Department for Local Communities and Government

Simon Cole, Planning Policy, Ashford Borough Council

Paul Winchester, Chairman, Stone Parish Council

Mark Aplin, Planning Policy Manager, Dartford Borough Council

Tony Burton, Free Range Consultant

Angela Koch, Director and Founder, Imagine Places

Jon Allen, Development Manager, Commercial Estates Group

Biljana Savic, Director, Academy of Urbanism

Attended by Mark Airey & Andy Mackie representing Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan

FAVERSHAM CREEK

- Another example of a group like Phoenix Rising is Creek Creative Faversham. Alison will know
- Faversham Creek possibly an example how not to do it
- Richard Eastman noted as very helpful
- Beware of people with agendas
- -ve Bogged down to much detail overlap with local plan.
- -ve Bureaucracy
- -ve Lose-Lose
- -ve Raises expectations
- +ve local money used for separate project (in this case a bridge to link communities)

LOCAL AUTHORITY viewpoint/Bethersden

- Review your Aims & Purpose constantly
- -ve It is lengthy time consuming
- S106. Essential to identify prevalent levels
- Be careful to not exceed limits of jurisdiction
- The Plan must be legally justified
- +ve Single point of contact with Consultants is vital (Already actioned)
- Project management approach worked
- Have informal process meetings and set milestones (celebrate them?)
- Public Participation is key and paramount
- Ticking boxes was quoted by Local Authority (Not Bethersden Council) ☹️
- Regularly review of original aims to make sure it can go to Public Consultation
- Bethersden did not use a consultant, but Chairman is an architect
- Working Group should work not just oversee but be doers.
- Contacting all residents is essential, it can take several attempts

Keith Brennan Bethersden Council. Impressive.

- Into groups who interchanged task and not specific sector (Could be good or bad form expertise)
- Groups were coded RED, Green and Blue
- Not pretty Powerpoints, just a plan of action
- 40% return at Bethersden due to stamped addressed envelopes (return date specific)
- **Anything more than 70% felt strongly on was included, no matter what steering group thought.**
- **£70 display board was useful with the summary of Residents**
- Leader and 2nd for each team

- WHAT | WHY | HOW (I think)
- It must be a Community Vision (not the Committee's vision)
- Rural Environment (NB overhead head shot with blurred edges was a nice picture)
- Interaction with developers essential
- Define what is hoped to achieve
- Promote local economy a focus
- KISS. Keep it Simple
- Keep and maintain a clear vision
- Ensure objectives are attainable
- Community engagement is essential
- Democratically difficult decisions should be upheld
- Don't try and please everyone
- Beware of vested interests

PAUL WINCHESTER-Stone Parish Council

- Must be a cause worth fighting for
- Commitment and goodwill needed
- Avoid strong minded individuals with an agenda
- A residents survey is essential. NB Ensure we build on Succeed and Carnival
- Funds flow into the councils (eg Borough & benefit, we need to make sure our share is garnered)
- Stone omitted Bluewater as it was too big to control with NP. Check our limits.
- Air Quality is a big issue
- Make sure Councillors are not driving force, ensure equilibrium
- Don't be intimidated
- Commercial reality needed
- Strong say by residents required
- Be conscious and seek the views of the silent majority
- Stone targeted 1,000 out of 11,000. (NB I think that is low)
- Struggled to get engagement only 500. Not so much an issue ain PW unless it is perceived as a done deal
- So they decided to GO TO THEM
- Scouts (Brownies Guides, Rainbows) Schools, Fetes, Churches, even pubs
- Positive Collaborative, Imaginative engagement

Julia Newman Hawkhurst (With Jane Lynch Head of Planning TWBC who did not speak)

- Next 2 or 3 steps majorly focussed on
- Ask if you need help (Already done)
- Again emphasised a project management approach
- Key stakeholders eg KCC
- Locals engagement essential eg good local schools initiative
- Create an Identity that is easily visible
- Create a brand for posters around (limited by political colours)
- Also work with adjoining parishes
- FAST VISIONING
- Tables to focus (Will already be actioned by Feria)
- Red and green dots what is not liked/liked
- Keep going. Be teacious
- 3 day event is key (Feria model)
- Add more detail afterwards
- Ensure engagement Into all roads and shops
- Drop in sessions to be published online & paper survey
- Ensure lots of publicity inc. local papers
- 50/50 Committee mix
- Enthusiasm is a pre –requisite
- R14 & R 16 stages
- Needs champions |Budget |Ask for Help | Plan | Early engagement of KCC/TWBC
- Working group needs to be established (Already actioned)
- Highways Matthew Breethan? NB Key for roundabout

- Beware of scope creep
- Beware of spin off projects
- Maintain engagement at all times

DCLG

- Keep it simple
- CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) is coming (?)
- Local engagement essential
- Planning supported by all
- NPPF is coming
- THINKLINK (?)
- Neighbourhood Planning website
- Twitter @ChristopherMountainNP (?)
- Best practice needs to be adopted guides around
- 8% vote yes as average. All voted yes (Good or bad thing??) 70% yes vote minimum in all cases)
- Top 5 policies
 - Local | Parking | Pedestrian /cycle (NB personal view too much focus by TWBC & it is too easy) NB Rydon entirely focussing on this b/c it is cheap
 - Scale development density
- Must be what locality wants
- NB we could get examples of surveys
- Starters homes will be a new focus in the NPPF
- Acknowledged the Plan is skewed to planning

TONY BURTON my.community.org | @Tony4Place | Civic Voice chairman. Very impressive

- Limits, not suitable for all occasions
- Scope and scale be established
- Be focused
- Establish boundaries
- Ensure constant engagement
- Definitely NOT a tick box exercise
- NP do not have to be restricted to political or geographical boundaries

ANGELA KOCH of Imagine Places. Very impressive

- Her presentation we stood up for, not able to make notes
- Charvettes?
- Money in the Ground from day 1 should be the aim (!!!!!)
- Extensive Consultation leads to better HP. NOT statutory minimum (NB Persimmon/Rydon)
- It is difficult because of the lack of professional resources available
- Take control
- Counteract developers interest
- Don't allow their armies of advisors to stall and confuse matters
- WALKABLE TOWN (NB a key message for Paddock Wood)
- Local input essential not just steering group view

JON ALLEN COUNTRYSIDE. DEVELOPER

- NB Rydon/Persimmon could speak to John Allen
- Could present to PWHP group
- Advocated on engagement for better outcomes

BILJANA SAVIC

- Re-emphasised that plans cannot stop development
- Plans c (and should) an influence direction
- A stocktake and monitor of Project assets is needed
- Plans can help reverse decline
- Plans are able to improve public spaces/remove eyesores
- BE wary of a disenfranchised Planning committee

- Engage with residents and the community all the time
- Avoid the trap of tick the box
- Timeframe can change on the ground
- Plans can unlock key assets
- Be aware that asset transfer is an option
- Assets can go to local groups on long lease eg Triodos Bank other resources local groups e.g. Exeter St James
- Important to highlight the not for profit angle. This saved £1/2m (TBC) tax e.g. Ton Pool
- Get kids to draw to become engaged
- Planning approach to a project you deliver
- Red dot project management
- Advocates design code to streamline remain flexible

LESSONS

- ENGAGEMENT. This was the most emphasised word
- Review where we are
- Keep It Simple
- Review our scope and scale, ensure boundaries established.
- Have an engagement plan and make it central to each meeting
- Ensure devolution is not stopping at Council level
- Beware of obstructive councils
- Planning not just plan
- Avoid Project creep
- Locally raised money can help smaller projects EG Play Paddock Wood. NB they want tyre for Mem Park
- Establish milestones
- Continuous engagement
- Use SAE envelopes for consultations
- Interact with developers
- Ensure open transparent meetings open to any public member

SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE ACTION

- Establish the Local Planning Person name
- Get a contacts list (Already underway)
- Highways person
- Need to get examples of surveys
- Revisit SUCCEED & Fayre.
- Obtain the Summit presentations by speakers esp Angela Koch
- Review what TWBC is negotiating on our behalf, as it might not be what we want. Right to know?
- Speak to Bethersden Council nr Ashford for succinctness/board/what public want
- Get survey summary and put in on £70 for each meeting. For focus
- Establish branding options to present to group
- Directory of all community groups for contact (already asked for) e.g. new version of Parent Mail)
- Invite developers in
- Publicise each NP plan meeting
- Pitfalls: Beware of scope creep.

RESOURCES

- www.mycommunity.org
- Locality
- Imagine Places Angela Koch