

Radford Semele – Neighbourhood Planning Meeting

14th October 2016 – White Lion, Radford Semele

Present:

Cllr Brian Follet (Radford Semele Parish Council)
Olly Aries (Chairman – Radford Semele Neighbourhood Planning Group)
Emma Nelson (Radford Forge)
Judy Steel (Radford Forge)
Barbara Wyatt (Radford Forge)
Cllr Brian Friar (Radford Semele Parish Council)

Guest

Cllr Bob Grainger (Wolston Parish Council)

1. Introductions

As the size of the group had increased significantly since the previous meetings, those present introduced themselves. Thanks to Cllr Bob Grainger for taking the time to come to the meeting and input such valuable insight.

2. Apologies

Janet Neale

3. Notes of 9th September Meeting & Actions

Minutes from the meeting were circulated and accepted that they were a fair representation of what was discussed and decided at the time.

Actions

These were shown on the actions progress document – the outcomes were discussed below.

Matters Arising

Action 1 – Contact had been made with WDC culminating in a meeting on 28th September 2016 with Hayley Smith, Senior Planning Officer at Warwick District Council, Olly Aries, Emma Nelson and Cllr Brian Follet.

This meeting was considered a valuable and useful session, separate minutes had been produced and much had been gained from the meeting to give guidance to Radford Semele on the way forward – see 28_09_2016 Notes of Initial Meeting with Warwick District Council. Some key initial actions were generated as a result of those discussions as well as valuable insights into the stages that should be followed in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Some of the key findings and required actions are discussed later in this meeting.

Action 2 – The matter of submitting a declaration of interest in developing a Neighbourhood Plan was raised at Radford Semele Parish Council meeting on 26th September 2016.

The minutes and actions from the Radford Semele Neighbourhood Planning Group were shared at the council meeting and the request made to submit a Declaration of Interest to the

District Council. The Parish Council's while supportive of the development of a Neighbourhood plan, requested clarification of a number of points before it would consider the submission of a Declaration of Interest.

- What is the proposed or preferred area to be included in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.
- What are the potential costs associated with this process, and how was it envisaged that these would be funded?

Action 3 – Contact had been made with Cllr Bob Grainger at Wolston Parish Council as he had been recommended by Radford Semele's parish clerk as someone to talk to and gain insight into the Neighbourhood Plan development process.

Action 4 – Indications of the primary grant support had been given by Hayley Smith during the meeting on 28th September.

Action 5 – Contact had been made with others in Radford Semele who may be interested in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, notably Janet Neale Infrastructure Delivery Manager at Warwickshire County Council, although her involvement may have some limitations given her professional role and any conflict of interest.

Action 6 – Contact was made with Sarah Brook-Taylor, however, after explaining the progress to meet up with Warwick District Council, Sarah felt at the time should would add very little more to our group at the time.

4. General Discussion (Visitors)

The Group welcomed Bob Grainger to the meeting during the introduction – Bob suggested we progress with our main agenda and he would try and add insight and assistance where he could as the discussions progressed.

The following points were made:

A significant element of the plan will be based on evidence to support the propositions put forward in the plan.

Housing Needs Survey

As one of the most significant elements of the Radford Semele Neighbourhood Plan will be on housing, we will need a current Housing Needs Survey to support the plan. The last one was carried out in 2014. Preliminary discussions with WDC, suggest the current proposals for housing development in Radford Semele could be taken into account when considering housing needs. A Housing Needs Survey would need to be requested by the Parish Council, although we may be able to get this supported by WDC, or failing that the Parish Council. We may also use this opportunity to include an initial questionnaire to all households about their perceived needs and the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mandatory Consultation Period

When the request to Designate the area as a Neighbourhood Planning Area, there will be a six week consultation period, during which the levels of activity may be put on hold, although this would not preclude completing some back ground work – developing a first pass questionnaire and a covering letter for the Housing Needs Survey letters.

There will be a need to consult more directly through advertisements after the six week consultation period using press and local resources such as the Radford Semele Sports and Social Club Newsletter, the Forge Newsletter, District and Parish Council notices, and where appropriate more detailed and direct interaction with residents and other interested parties.

Limitations at County Level

The Neighbourhood Plan does not have any direct effect on any County plans, or elements controlled by the county such as highways, schools, mineral rights etc., however, if there is a sensible and supported rationale regarding some aspirations to be included in the plan, the County may take them into account.

There must be a clearly defined project plan, that sets out what the Neighbourhood Plan wishes to achieve and the points are backed up by evidenced need.

WDC Local District Plan

It was recommended that all members of the Neighbourhood Planning Group become familiar with Warwick District Council's Local Plan when it is published as all aspects of our plan must not contradict the Local Plan in our Neighbourhood Plan is accepted. In the event that our Neighbourhood Plan is accepted before the Local Plan is adopted and published, there is a possibility that our plan could inform the Local District plan, but it is dependant on timings.

Infrastructure

We do need to consider infrastructure not only the hard elements e.g. highways, communications, utilities, shops etc., but also and potentially more significant is the Soft Infrastructure – community groups, social fabric elements (the things that make Radford Semele).

5. Proposed Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

- I. The description and definition of a Neighbourhood Plan would need to be specifically defined, however, it was agreed that such detail should be developed later in the process as there would be other stages to pass beforehand.
- II. The proposed defined area of the Neighbourhood Plan is a prerequisite to submitting the request to designate that area as a Neighbourhood Planning Area.

This was also a point raised at the Radford Semele Parish Council meeting on 26th September 2016. Cllr Grainger did clarify that the area could be any area that the Group and Parish Council agree that they want to consider; this could include spaces outside the Parish Boundary with the consent of any neighbouring authority. The extent of the area to be included was discussed and it was subsequently agreed unanimously that the area should be the whole area encompassed within the Radford Semele Parish boundary.

This will be put forward to the Parish Council for submission to Warwick District Council in the Designation as Neighbourhood Planning Area.

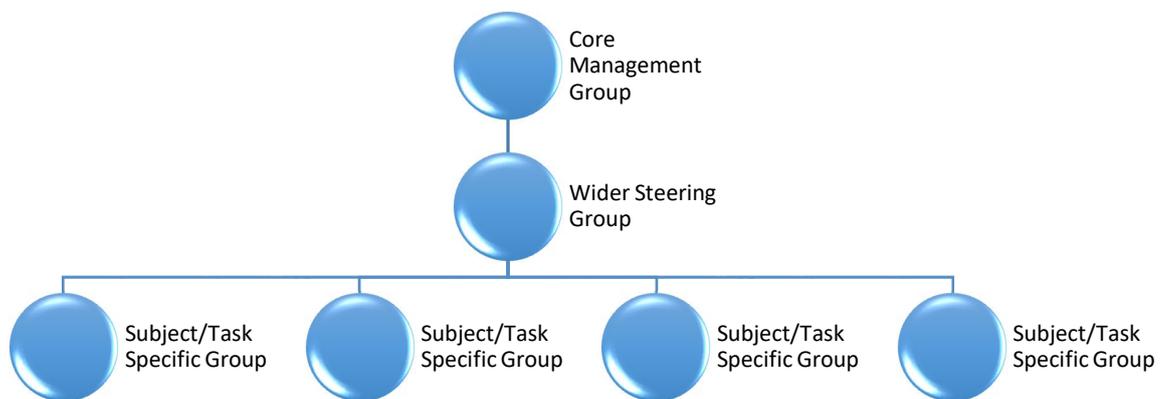
- III. Timescales were discussed and there was a considerable amount of work to do and approvals to gain before other actions can be enabled (for example – seeking grant support). As a typical timescale for the starting to acceptance and adoption of a Neighbourhood plan could take a number of years.

- IV. Discussion covered the options of using consultants to work with and develop the Neighbourhood Plan, although there would obviously be a significant cost to this, although in principle that is what we would be applying any grants received towards. The alternative would be to try and complete the plan using the volunteers from within the Parish, however, the success of the plan will be heavily dependent on it being technically correct, so unless we have an “internal” to the village resource, the likelihood of self-developing a successful Plan is lower than if we do make use of consultative expertise. However, we should look to balance what we are able to do against those areas where technical expertise will achieve a better outcome and a more timely one.

Cllr Grainger highlighted one particular consultancy (Avon Planning Services – Managing Director - Neil Pearce) that had been significantly involved in the development of neighbourhood plans throughout Warwickshire County and in particular Warwick District at Kineton & Barford. (see www.avonplanning.co.uk), another consultancy Kirwells who’s rates are considerably lower than Avon Planning Services were also mentioned, although they are based in Burnley so are unlikely to have the local knowledge that Avon would have. It was agreed that the Group should obtain estimates, wherever possible, on indicative costs for consultant support in developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Organisation Structure

There was some discussion on how there would be a need to develop an organisational structure for the Radford Semele Neighbourhood Planning Group, as well as clear definition of roles. Cllr Grainger shared the detail of how things were set up at Wolston as an example:



In addition, there are key roles such as chair’s, finance and secretariat, where possible subject matter experts. This hierarchy reports to the level above, although as the mix of people may cover many roles there is a collective awareness of other teams work/activity.

It was agreed at the next meeting the RSNPG should map out a structure to work with before the expansion of the group becomes too unruly.

Advice from Cllr Grainger was to ensure any groups or meeting are strongly chaired to manage time and keep focus.

7. Parish Council Matters

The while the Parish Council would endeavour to support the Group and the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, it was felt that the commitment to any funding could not be open ended without some reasonable estimates of cost and how much of that, the Parish Council would be asked to fund.

The Parish Council will need to allocate a budget in the 2017/18 financial year and beyond if it proposes to help fund some of the activities of the Neighbourhood Planning Group over and above any grant that is applied for and obtained.

To enable the submission of a request to designate the agreed area of Radford Semele as a Neighbourhood Planning area, the Neighbourhood Planning Group needed to decide on the area to propose.

Cllr Grainger also pointed out that the Neighbourhood Planning Group and the Parish Council would need to decide how the group would be positioned in relation to the Parish Council; either as a sub-committee of the Parish Council or its own working Group.

8. Funding

Grants are usually available for the development of the neighbourhood plan up to a maximum of £9,000. The size of the grant is dependent on the size of the designated planning area, and therefore adopting the whole of the Parish as the Neighbourhood Planning area would allow the grant to be maximised.

Only one grant is available for a designated planning area and the application for a grant requires the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan to be fully stated. Some Parish Councils have joined together to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, but financially only one grant would be available for the whole entity and that is still capped at £9000. Some discussion was around our interaction with neighbouring Parish Councils, but it was concluded, that while out of courtesy we would contact them, we would not wish to join with them in the development of a common plan as this may introduce delays in registering and developing the plan for Radford Semele.

Additional funding may also be available for specific specialist technical support up to £6,000.

A question was posed regarding the funding of the project by the Parish Council – to clarify the level of expenditure required is beyond the current financial resources of the Parish Council. While the Parish Council will act as banker for the application for, the holding and distribution of Grants, and can be approached for some funding or cash flow support, it would not be able to fund the whole process. Cllr Grainger did suggest that in some areas, the councils have temporarily increased the precept on the parish to fund the development of the plan, however, this would simply reload the cost of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan back on the villagers of Radford Semele, this may still ultimately something to consider, but in the first instance, if there are opportunities to gain grant funding, these should be pursued in preference.

It should be noted that where a budget is set by the Parish Council to support the Neighbourhood planning process, anything not used in any one financial year would be lost

as it cannot be accrued to the following year, whereas grants that have been obtained will not be lost from one financial year to the next if it not used up.

Should the cost of developing the plan exceed the grants obtainable, then the group may have to consider other methods of fund raising to supplement any shortfall. The Parish Council may be approached and if it within its funding capability, may well try and assist, but this should not be assumed.

9. Review of actions

See 7 to 12 of action list.

10. Date of Next Meeting

23rd November 2016 8:00pm – Olly to check availability of the Church.