

Meeting 17th October 2019 - Setting up a Steering Group for Community Action

Meeting aim: Setting up a Steering Group for Community Action arising from residents via the Woodstock CIDP Consultation March 2019 to date

Attendees:

Colin Carritt- (Sustainable Woodstock, Hilary and Graham – (Sustainable Woodstock and Plastic Free Woodstock), John Brimble – (Heart of Woodstock, Parking survey), Helen Keen (PCSO Woodstock), Mark Westaby, Deepak Kalia, Rachel Woods (CFO)

Apologies: Ursula Corcoran, Saskia Merry, Peter Jay, Nick Mason, Polly Hipkiss (Marlborough sixth form)

Minutes

1. Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Development Plan (CIPD):

Rachel Woods (RW), Community Connector CFO briefed attendees on the following: CFO is currently completing its final report. Hundreds of residents have been consulted across the Plan process; 12 public consultation events have been held, a town-wide survey undertaken and over fifty community groups consulted directly. The guiding principles of community conversation were to ensure that as many residents as possible had an opportunity to take part and to take the discussion from the general to the specific.

Links to an electronic version of the report will be made available ahead of the upcoming November consultation events via the Town Council website, noticeboards, We Love Woodstock Facebook page and community email lists. Hard copies will be available to consult at the Town Hall.

Community Action Planning for existing community life:

From the 55 people of all ages that attended events in September, 14 expressed an interest in forming a steering group to prioritise and shape an action plan for community action projects arising from the consultation. [Click here](#) for a downloadable copy of the related CFO report published July 2019 which documents Woodstock's current social infrastructure and residents' concerns, issues and suggestions for new initiatives to strengthen community life. New working groups are being proposed to address the latter. These are in addition to already active working groups and projects, such as '[Woodstock Safer Routes](#)', '[Plastic Free Woodstock](#)' and [HOW's Parking initiative](#).

Disappointment was expressed by some about the low numbers attending this meeting considering the 55 people who attended the September meetings and the fourteen of these who expressed interest in being involved in the steering group. All were circulated with date and details.

Upcoming events in November - Presentation of Consultation Findings:

- **Friday 15 November @ Woodstock Community Centre - 2 sessions: 2-4pm and 7-9pm**
- **Saturday 16 November @ Marlborough School Enterprise Centre - 1 session: 10am-2pm**

Please come along to find out and further discuss what residents have said about: matters for consideration in planning applications at Hill Rise and north of Banbury Road; priorities for new infrastructure and improvements to existing infrastructure and; recommendations for community-led action planning.

N.B. Details of these November consultation events are attached with this email.

2. **Clarification of distinctions between Hill Rise and Banbury Road masterplanning, developer contributions priorities and the social infrastructure/community aspects of the CIDP:**

RW cleared up initial confusion regarding the purpose of the evening's meeting, explaining that this meeting was specifically focussed on setting up a residents' steering group (if desired) to take forward the ideas for community action to strengthen existing community life around ideas arising from the social infrastructure aspect of the consultation as distinct from the new housing development aspects and master-planning. (please see CFO's related report for Woodstock residents July 2019 circulated widely [here](#), referenced in minute point 1.)

The November consultation events will offer residents the opportunity to further engage with the masterplanning process (as well as presenting findings from the overall consultation).

3. **Exploring options, need and timing for a steering group for community action:**

RW introduced the aim of the meeting: to set up steering group as an agreed action from the September social action events. Most attendees agreed that a steering group would bring much needed coherence through overall action planning to link both existing working groups (Safer routes, Plastic Free and Parking working groups) with proposed community action for Woodstock.

Colin Carritt (CC) Sustainable Woodstock, suggested that a steering group is needed but that it is perhaps premature. Consensus of opinion amongst attendees was that timing was an issue, and potentially the reason for lack of attendance for this meeting, was that many residents were focused on the master planning aspect of the consultation and investing time in upcoming related meetings with master-planners etc.

RW raised the possibility of momentum around the issues and suggestions raised by residents relating to existing community infrastructure being lost if efforts weren't made to establish a separate steering group soon to move these ideas forward.

4. **Discussion about community action themes arising from social infrastructure consultation and September meetings:**

a. **Community Hub**

Hilary Brown (HB) - chair of Sustainable Woodstock, commented on ways that when mixing between different age and interest groups happens organically community and inclusivity is strengthened with activities across different age groups. There would be social value in Woodstock residents of all ages considering how meeting spaces, large

and small could be made available in the same building/community space e.g with for example a gym, alongside a library and café. There is plenty of community space in the town but they are spread out and don't allow for easy exchange of ideas /people etc The example of Charlbury Community Centre/Hub was given:

<https://www.charlburycommunitycentre.org.uk>

All agreed that the social club is the equivalent of a community hub in Woodstock, and though it is a popular venue with multi-use potential though, well placed in the town centre with accessible parking, it requires refurbishment.

Several people agreed that it was a priority to consider how community hub space for multi-age and use, where all ages could meet, needs be identified and to gather people together to form a working group to explore this, including discussions with Blenheim Estates about options for spaces and investment

b. **More opportunities for leaders of volunteer run organisations, societies and social action initiatives to network – share practice and problem solve**

HB and others expressed the hope that people and community groups could work together more to discuss common needs and how best to strengthen community cohesion and communication, e.g. seeking collective ways of improving publicity, strengthening volunteer pipeline, sharing resources, fundraising for community initiatives/facilities etc.

The success of the Saturday town meetings held in the town hall was noted allowing residents to find out about societies, groups etc. what is going on and where. Holding these more regularly could be good especially as new residents move in.- perhaps there are more planned for 2020?

RW drew attention to the up to date list of community led groups, societies and organisations in the CFO July 2019 report (available [here](#)).

Also that the WUTW model of homeworker networking meetings and business reps mixer events that Dennis Allan set up, could be worth noting.

PROPOSED ACTION

- To find out if a community hub is a possibility or of interest to residents before groups come together to discuss possibilities of plans and actions. Perhaps suggestions could be made via social media WLW, WUTW etc.
- Woodstock central, updatable, accessible database of organisations, clubs and societies and centralize volunteering opportunities and needs across the town – e.g as Bampton, Oxon have done. Could WTC compile and hold this list and update annually. That way the centralized information will always be updated and is easy for residents wanting to find out about groups as well as leaders being easily able to contact one another to address common issue as well as take new ideas/projects or campaigns forward.

- RW signposted up to date list of Woodstock's organizations, clubs and societies. CFO, during the course of the consultation, has compiled this list which can be found as an Appendix 2 p17 in the report on consultation with community groups, organisations, and businesses downloadable [here](#)

c. **Potential of unoccupied buildings for community use**

Deepak Kalia (DK) raised a query alongside CFO's community space survey, re: the numerous unoccupied buildings in Woodstock, some of which might lend themselves to community use a potential hub. All attendees agreed that it would be good if Blenheim and the WTC could be approached to provide a list of all potential available space.

Also, what about the former police station – is it unusable? Could this be used by community temporarily as a hub/ space for young people. What about a couple of Portacabins?

John Brimble (JB) mentioned the workshops that he had seen on the plan for East Woodstock site? Are these going to be located elsewhere? Could this idea be proposed to Blenheim and WTC?

HB mentioned 'Make Space' as a good example of community use of unoccupied buildings <http://makespaceoxford.org/>

AGREED ACTION:

CFO advised that the unoccupied buildings issue could form part of the activity of a working group to take forward the recommendations from the community spaces survey conducted as part of the CIDP consultation. This report will be available as an appendix to the final CIDP report.

d. **Facilities and opportunities for young people, (16 plus and school leavers young adults)**

Helen Keen (HK), PCSO, brought an invaluable insight from her work as the PCSO for Woodstock and surrounds, particularly in relation to young people and her concern for the lack of outdoor and indoor space for young people to meet, particularly for those who are too old, or not interested in attending the Youth Club. She cited examples where a local village pub offered space for over 18's to meet on certain evenings to use pool table etc. Helen was also involved in creating a graffiti wall within the playing fields for Eynsham's young people. This was built to address a local graffiti problem and proved to be very successful, so effective that the wall has become a hub for young graffiti artists across Oxon.

HB reported that she had had first-hand conversations with the young leaders at CFO's Sept community/social action about what they would like to see in their community for children, families and young people. Some of the ideas included a community gym,

place to rehearse bands, record music, outdoor socializing space where residents weren't going to complain

RW confirmed that the issue of limited provision (beyond new youth club) of appropriate social spaces, both indoor and outdoor for children, families and young people, has arisen as a top-level concern to address, from the community survey and the social infrastructure mapping process. RW has gathered evidence of their hopes and ideas from her work with young leaders at The Marlborough and other young people aged 8-16 years (via Youth Group, Guides, Afterschool Clubs) about their concerns and needs around a lack of social space for them in Woodstock, distinct from the Youth Club, which is a great asset but not the whole solution. RW is delighted to share this evidence with the proposed working group.

JB suggested that there might be a potential partnership between Blenheim Estates apprenticeship scheme and Woodstock's young people. Who could follow this up?

RW reported that Ursula Corcoran, director of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire was keen to be involved with a young people's working group linked to her priorities for the museum outreach. Also, that there are several people as well as organisations who have expressed an interest in working with others to form a working group to address issues children, families and young people.

AGREED ACTION:

1. Establish working group: HK and others agreed to be involved in a working group with other residents and representatives from organisations responsible for young people. RW advocated that young people should be involved and offered to discuss with young leaders at the Marlborough, since CFO's support of them to engage with the community action as part of the consultation was ongoing.
2. RW will collate contacts of those interested in this working group and pass them to HK and DK to follow-up

e. Affordable housing

Mark Westaby expressed concern that people were not confident that there will be affordable housing for existing residents. RW and other attendees drew attention to the current housing needs survey (deadline was 11 October) that has been circulated across Woodstock as part of the consultation. West Oxfordshire DC also has requirements regarding the proportion of affordable homes to be provided on new developments (see policy H3 in [West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031](#)).