

Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

Wednesday 25th July 2012

7 - 9pm

The Guildhall, Faversham

1/ Apologies and agreement of June Minutes

Those Present:

Andrew Osborne, Faversham Creek Consortium Management Group Member
John Sell, Faversham Town Council Planning Agent
Mike Cosgrove, Swale Borough Councillor (SBC) – Vice Chairman
Mike Henderson, Swale Borough Councillor
David Simmons, Mayor of Faversham Town Council
Andy Culham, Faversham Town Councillor (FTC)

In Attendance:

Tony Fullwood, Independent Planning Consultant
Natalie Earl, Swale Borough Council Senior Planner

Apologies:

Nigel Kay, Faversham Town Councillor– Chairman
Anne Salmon, Faversham Creek Consortium Management Group Member
Trevor Payne, Faversham Town Councillor

Mike Cosgrove, the Vice Chairman, chaired the meeting in the Chairman's absence. He welcomed David Simmons, Mayor of Faversham.

The minutes of the June meeting were agreed and **ACTION:** John Sell noted that he had not done his action from May of drawing up a plan for the road and buildings layout on the BMM Weston creekside site to ensure the protection of the views across to the church and the town and to estimate the site's capacity.

2/ Update on the bridge, Medway Ports and KCC

Mike Cosgrove advised the group that Kent County Council (KCC) have agreed that they will fund £400,000 for a new fixed bridge in the next 5 years.

It was agreed that this work was vital for the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan vision and the group needed to start looking at sources of funding to cover the gap in the funding for a swing bridge if that were to continue to be a key aim.

Mike Cosgrove, Andrew Osborne and Tony Fullwood had met with Medway Ports (MP) and they were undertaking their agreed 25 point programme of work. However, as was mentioned at the June meeting the abutments on the town side of the bridge have moved so KCC need to do a survey of this which they have agreed to do. They will then need to get an estimate for the remedial work. This will increase the money needed for the replacement bridge scheme. The Town side gate will not open fully now due to the moved abutment so this will restrict access to the basin under the bridge. Medway Ports had also mentioned the ongoing cost of dredging and the viability of bridge opening which would need to be covered by paying users.

The Swale Borough Council (SBC) legal opinion on who is responsible for navigation, the sluices and the gates will be ready in the next couple of weeks.

3/ Update from Faversham Creek Consortium

Mike Cosgrove informed the group that the Consortium had supported the recent Festival of Sails which had been well attended.

They are not now applying for HLF funding as HLF had informed them that they were no longer supporting regeneration projects like the bridge and sluice gates. However, this would not preclude applying to HLF in the future for other projects such as TS Hazard.

John Sell informed the group that HLF have just published their strategy for next year's funding and advised that it may be worth the Consortium looking at it.

The Consortium's main focus is now the bridge, sluice gates and navigation.

4/ Communications Strategy

Mike Cosgrove outlined two main issues:

- The Neighbourhood Plan needs community buy-in and have a golden thread of meaningful consultation running through it to show the Inspector and for the success of the referendum.
- The Town Council had had difficulty in managing communications and engagement around the Plan. He considered/acknowledged that the group had held two successful public exhibitions and every resident in Faversham had been leafleted.

The group had expressed increasing concern about communications.

Communication needs to be undertaken to make the Plan process transparent and engagement is needed to increase residents understanding of the process and proposals.

We need a constant, up-front message through leaflets, newspaper articles and regularly updated websites.

John Sell suggested that he had been talking to people around the town about this issue, especially engaging people. The group agreed that he could take this work further. **ACTION:** John Sell.

It was agreed that the group needed to produce a list of all the past consultation undertaken.

Mike Cosgrove concluded the discussion with five key points/actions required:

- The Town Council needs to accept that community consultation is part of the evidence base and is therefore a vital component of the plan.
- A budget is needed for communications/engagement.
- A communications officer/champion/group is needed to plan and monitor communications/engagement. They would need to attend Steering Group meetings.
- John Sell will talk directly to David Simmons about how to facilitate communications.
- It was noted that Christine Rayner (ex editor of Faversham News) is now freelance and be worth approaching.

Tony Fullwood suggested looking at the Prince's Trust Foundation Enquiry by Design approach was an extremely useful engagement tool. **ACTION:** Tony Fullwood to circulate.

It was agreed that all of the Town Councillors would now be sent the minutes and the work of the group would be a standing item on every Town Council meeting so as to engage all Town Councillors and the press.

ACTION: Natalie Earl to email minutes to all Town Councillors and send them a CD of key documents.

ACTION: David Simmons to put the Vanguard project as a standing item on every Town Council meeting agenda and invite the new Town Clerk to attend the next Vanguard meeting to bring her up to speed with the project.

5/ Development Proposals for each site – Discussion to look at responses to the public exhibition

The group looked through the table of a summary of all the representations received and discussed the main issues and themes that had arisen through the consultation.

Tony Fullwood presented to the group a document entitled the 'Evolution of Proposals' which documents what the Steering Group Parameters for each site were, the developer's proposals for their site, the Steering Group's Response to these plans and then the May Exhibition public responses.

ACTION: Tony Fullwood to talk to David Simmons about how to take this document forward and to James Freeman about how to facilitate it.

ACTION: Natalie Earl to tidy up the table of summaries of responses with a view to placing it on the Vanguard website.

6/ AOB

ACTION: Tony Fullwood to get an indicative bottom line on what can be expected from public gain once draft proposals have been formulated and what the gap would then be for a new swing bridge.

The group will then need to look at how this gap will be funded and the risks of funding and not funding it, and the consequences of each.

It was suggested that the Town Council could underwrite it as that would attract other funding sources and would show the Inspector a strong intent and that the Plan was deliverable.

Natalie Earl will be taking a report to the Joint Transport Board (JTB) in early September to advise them to adopt the Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy. **ACTION:** Send the draft report to Mike Cosgrove and David Simmons.

ACTION: Natalie Earl to chase up SBC legal on the legal opinion.

ACTION: Tony Fullwood, Andrew Osborne and Mike Cosgrove to do a short paper on the facts to date around the bridge, sluice gates and navigation and options for the bridge and sluice gates by the next meeting.

It was agreed that after the next meeting this would be placed on the website with an accompanying press release. **ACTION:** Natalie Earl

Next Meetings: 22nd August and 11th October for the workshop on the way forward/timetable/resources.