

## **Minutes of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting: Thursday, 13 December 2012**

### Present

Nigel Kay, Faversham Town Councillor (FTC) – Chairman

Mike Cosgrove, Swale Borough Councillor (SBC) – Vice Chairman

Trevor Payne, Faversham Town Councillor

Mike Henderson, Swale Borough Councillor (SBC)

Anne Salmon, Faversham Creek Consortium Management Group member

Andrew Osborne, Faversham Creek Consortium Management Group member

John Sell, Faversham Town Council Planning Agent

Tony Fullwood, Independent Planning Consultant

### In attendance

David Simmons, Mayor, Faversham Town Council

Natalie Earl, Senior Planner, Swale Borough Council

Jackie Westlake, Faversham Town Council Clerk – Secretary

### **1. Apologies for absence**

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

### **2. Presentation on the Swing Bridge (this was item 3 on the agenda, but was moved to the start of the meeting)**

2.1 Simon Foster (SF), on behalf of the Creek Trust, gave a short but informative presentation on the alternatives to a swing bridge. Using photographs (retained by the Town Clerk for public inspection), he explained that there were five considerations to be taken into account:

- safety: the current pedestrian walkways were too narrow
- traffic flow: the bridge acted as a traffic calming measure
- opening times: the bridge, when it did open, used to take between 12 – 15 minutes to open and close
- appearance: the bridge should be a focal point and one of the attractions of the Creek
- costs: these would be a major consideration when selecting a replacement bridge

2.2 SF went on to explain that a lifting bridge, as opposed to a swing bridge, could be installed in one piece (the lifting mechanism to be located on the Front Brents side), reducing the impact on road closures; it could be key operated (keyholders to be designated responsible persons); and would not take a fraction of the time to lift and descend.

2.3 A number of bridges were considered, including the Yalding Lifting Bridge and the New Islington Bridge, Manchester. The Creek Trust had also identified a number of organisations which could deliver a lifting bridge. SF would provide their details for the Steering Group and Faversham Town Council to pursue with KCC Highways.

2.4 There was some discussion about the sluice gates. Andrew Osborne (AO) asked that the minutes be clear that the sluice gates were critical to the maintenance of a clear and navigable waterway down the Creek. Members agreed.

2.5 The Steering Group thanked SF for his presentation, and the Creek Trust for its work in identifying viable alternatives to the swing bridge.

### **ACTION**

- Faversham Town Council to approach KCC Highways to discuss the different proposals for the replacement of the swing bridge and to seek a long term solution that would incorporate a moving bridge (either swing or lifting) and the sluice gates

### **3. Minutes of the meeting of 22 November and matters arising**

3.1 The minutes were approved.

3.2 All matters arising had been completed, with the exception of:

- (a) Cllr Kay to seek a replacement representative at the next Town Council meeting. To be presented to the Town Council on 17 December;
- (b) A meeting to be organised with Swale policy planners and the Steering Group. This was being progressed, and it was hoped the meeting could take place early in the New Year;
- (c) Steering Group to formally approach KCC concerning the various options put forward by the Creek Trust and highway/cycleway issues (but note the above related action point);
- (d) JW to apply for designation (for the next Town Council meeting);
- (e) JW and others to develop a set of slides (to be taken forward after the presentation to the Town Council);
- (f) NE to create a Facebook page; and
- (g) Cllr Henderson to draft a note accompanying a set of slides on the progress to date (to be taken forward after the presentation to the Town Council).

### **4. Meeting with CPRE: update, including final report of the workshop**

4.1 Cllr Kay (NK) gave a brief update on the discussions with CPRE. CPRE had offered support on communications and engagement, as well as pulling together information for the NP on the various sites, following the workshop. The following points were made:

- Designation needed to include the whole of the Creek footprint (including the bridge), which was part of the definition of the Area Action Plan. Removing any element would raise questions in the mind of the independent examiner as to why certain areas were not included
- All sites were important to the development and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan. None, though, should be described as key to its success

- All sites had to be measured against deliverability. The other criteria were viability and marketability
- Some opposition to particular sites' development was based on design issues (e.g. proposed height of buildings); other opposition was more fundamental (e.g. use), but there could be both on individual sites
- SBC had undertaken an employment land use survey, and e.g. Ordnance Wharf had scored badly because of access issues
- Options for all sites were industrial use, housing, or mixed use. It was important to look at the Plan as a whole, rather than identify individual sites on an ad hoc basis
- Where there was still a lack of consensus, it would be important to put various options into a draft to be assessed for deliverability
- There was an opportunity to modify the draft NP between examination and referendum, taking account of views expressed at that point

#### **ACTIONS**

- Tony Fullwood (TF) to be instructed by the Town Council to draft the NP, following the presentation to the Council in January 2013
- JW to prepare a designation letter
- CPRE to be asked to help with the communications and engagement strategy
- CPRE to provide support on a pre-independent examination feasibility study on the viability of sites' proposals where there was limited or no consensus
- CPRE to be asked to provide support on another workshop/one-to-one discussions with stakeholders on sites where there was limited or no consensus

4.2 The Steering Group considered the workshop report. There were some factual inaccuracies, which members identified.

#### **ACTION**

- JW to collate amendments (factual inaccuracies) on the report and feed back to CPRE. Report to be published on the website as soon as possible

### **5. Next Steps**

#### Communication and engagement strategy

5.1 The Steering Group (SG) considered the points made by CPRE and the independent facilitator on communications and engagement. They included the following:

- SG to place CPRE's summary report of workshop event on 9th November on TC's website; a factual and independent report of the day
- SG to give a presentation to the full Town Council
- FTC to speak to editors of local press. Meeting to consider the need to dispel myths and provide accurate information for all Faversham residents
- To discuss with editors the possibility of a Q&A page each month to provide impartial and accurate information about the NP based on residents' questions
- Community and stakeholders asked to submit their questions to the Town Clerk for them to submit to the local press, along with the SG's responses
- Where necessary to discuss questions with planning technical specialists
- Keep running a questions page right up to referendum
- Use Swale newsletter to raise awareness of the Q&A approach and of the mechanism for publishing questions and getting answers to these under this initiative
- Place the Q&A on FTC website
- SG to meet Creek Trust to explain about proposed consultation and engagement strategy
- There needs to be engagement further into the town, to ensure all Faversham residents can engage in the process
- Consider working with the Local Engagement Forum to engage further with residents and business in the town.
- The outcomes of all previous consultations needed to be captured and a consultation framework/ strategy developed
- SG to chase up SBC to ensure necessary actions to get the results of May's exhibition onto the TC's website asap.

#### **ACTION**

- JW to meet TF to talk through the project plan and communications and engagement strategy

#### To review presentation to the Town Council

5.2 The Steering Group considered Natalie Earl's (NE) draft presentation. Further comments were made on the paper.

#### **ACTION**

- Members to provide further written comments for inclusion in the paper before 7 January 2013

### **6. Any Other Business**

#### ZF5 Footpath

6.1 The Regulation Committee Panel's decision was discussed. The Group agreed a continuous footpath around the Creek was important. The Town Council would be responsible for objecting to the decision of the Panel and any subsequent appeal.

### Budget

6.2 The budget would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

### Information on Creek businesses

6.3 Mike Cosgrove (MC) suggested SBC provide information of the number and categorisation of all businesses within the Creek footprint.

### Public feedback

6.4 This was with SBC. It was expected to be ready for publication in the New Year.

## **7. Date of the next meeting**

7.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed:

- 10 January 2013

## **ACTION**

- JW to send round dates for the next three meetings.