

Neighbourhood Plan Steering GroupNotes of meeting held Monday 11th January 20163pm Council Chamber, Town Hall**Present:**

Cllr Joan Tebbutt	Morpeth TC	Chair
Cllr Philip Ashmore	Hepscott PC	
Cllr Nic Best	Morpeth TC	Minutes
Cllr Alison Byard	Morpeth TC	
Cllr David Cowans	Heritage	
Rob Naples	NCC	
Cllr David Parker	Morpeth TC	
Cllr Mike Sharp	Mitford PC	
Cllr David Woodard	Pegswood PC	

Apologies:

Tracey Bell	Morpeth TC	Town Clerk
David English	NCC	
David Lodge	Economy	
Colin Pearson	Education	
Cllr Bob Robertson	Morpeth TC	
David Rowlinson	NCC	
Dee Smith	Morpeth TC	Acting Deputy Town Clerk
Graeme Trotter	Sport & Leisure	

1 Notes of Previous Meeting:

The notes of the meeting held on 16th Nov 2015 were accepted with no matters arising.

2 NCC Update & Referendum:

The referendum will take place on Thursday 25th February.

Most of the documentation is going live on the NCC website this (Mon 11th Jan) afternoon, and everything will be posted by Friday (15th) with next Monday (18th) being the start of the formal period leading to the referendum. Emails and letters are being sent out to all interested parties this afternoon.

Action: RN will supply MTC (email to NB) with all documents, links and website text for use on the MNP website

Polling cards will go out to all 15,000 or so electors across the five parishes within the next few weeks. Normal polling stations will be used, except that St Aidan's Church Hall, Stobhill (now demolished) will be replaced by the Barnabas Centre.

The Steering Group will be invited to appoint polling observers to attend the polling stations and will be required to supply counting observers at the count which will take place on Friday 26th February, probably at County Hall.

A press release will appear in the Morpeth Herald this week, followed by publication of the formal notice next week.

Action: RN will supply MTC (email to NB) with a copy of the press release

The documentation includes NCC's Basic Conditions Decision Statement where they formally accept the Examiner's Recommendations. Publication of this Statement is the point at which legal challenges can be submitted. This would start with an injunction against the referendum, which could occur at any time. So far as is known, in most other cases of legal challenge to a Neighbourhood Plan, the LPA has gone ahead with the referendum despite an injunction and defended its action later in court.

It was noted that during a period of legal challenge, which must relate to process rather than content, the Neighbourhood Plan would have reduced weight in Development Control in those policy areas covered by the grounds of the legal challenge.

JT noted that the Steering Group were available should NCC wish to consult them on any aspect of the referendum process including a legal challenge.

3 Publicity

In line with the agreed publicity plan:

NB will produce briefings for Town Council staff, community groups, and social media administrators.

Action: All – suggest and provide contact details for community groups who should receive a briefing.

Deadline for the early February issue of Inside Morpeth has passed. JT will liaise with Tracey to prepare and produce the leaflet for household delivery. All parish councils have agreed to make pro rata contributions to production costs. Pegswood and Mitford PCs will undertake distribution in their area. Hepscoth PC will join with MTC's distribution arrangements. Target date for leaflet to be available for distribution *agreed* as Thurs 4th Feb with delivery over the next seven days, to allow people to register, arrange postal votes etc as necessary.

Action: NB to contact Hebron PC to bring them up to date.

Action: RN to provide (email to NB) the formula for calculating the spending limit for the referendum campaign.

4 Next Meeting

It was agreed to set a provisional meeting date of Mon 8th Feb to be called if a legal challenge materialises by then, and a final meeting date of Mon 14th Mar to respond in an appropriate manner to the referendum result.