

Emberton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
(A sub committee of Emberton Parish Council)
Minutes of Meeting held virtually – 16th June 2020

Present:

Jason Bevan- Chairman
 Joe Walker – Vice Chairman
 Melanie Duncan
 Colin Jamieson
 Fred Markland
 Virginia Tierney

Peter Geary – Ward Councillor
 Chris Akrill – Town Planning Service
 Karen Goss – Clerk to EPC

1. **Introductions Apologies for Absence** – Introductions were made. There were no Apologies for Absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda** - There were no Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda.
3. **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 26th May 2020** – The Minutes of the previous Meeting held on the 26th May 2020 were agreed. The clerk to provide the Minutes to the Chairman for signing. **Action: KG**
4. **Public comments, questions or representations** – There were no members of the public present.
5. **To agree the updated vision statement** – a discussion took place regarding Emberton being a thriving community and the fact that the Covid 19 pandemic had seen some changes with more people working from home and any development would need to reflect these changes. Chris commented that the vision statement also needed to say how things had changed. **Action: ALL** the committee to email some ideas to Jason on the vision statement.
6. **Review of sites put forward** - Peter commented that MKC had stated that Field 13 was never part of the park. Field 12 (next to field 13 and behind the pavilion) has been planted with trees and there were no plans to develop this field now or in the future. Field 13 was a site that potentially could come forward but MKC were not pushing this. Peter stated that the school was now closed and the possibility of the school re-opening was very small although MKC had not decided what was going to happen to the building. Jason stated that Field 13 wasn't put forward originally and it would need MKC to say yes. Jason queried the ownership of the school field. Peter responded that he should have more information by the end of the month. Jason asked the capacity for houses on Field 13. Peter responded between 12-15. Fred asked if there were definitive plans for Fields 12 and 13. Peter stated that there was a public sewer that ran across the middle of Field 13 so any development would have to be on the village side not the park side. Joe commented that most of the

sites put forward were ruled out by highways. Chris stated that any sites put forward would need to be compared on an equal playing field. Jason asked if there were any other viable sites; the school field was the original choice. Fred responded that this dropped off the radar as there were issues with ownership and it wasn't put forward. There was some good feedback from highways regarding access to sites and this was one of the criteria for ruling out sites on the western side of the village. Virginia asked if the sites were for smaller numbers, would highways support it? Chris responded that some of the sites off West Lane were not supported by highways because of the pinch points. Chris went on to state that the housing allocation needed to be worded positively.

A discussion took place around the original questionnaire sent to residents and the responses stating that small houses should be made available for Emberton residents or those with a connection to Emberton. It was noted that 3 out of 10 houses had to be affordable. Chris commented that the question was did the group want to go back out to calls for sites? Jason commented that he didn't think this would substantially change. Virginia stated that perhaps it was best to wait to see what happened with Field 13 and the school field before making any decision to go back out to consultation. Fred commented that Gravel Walk was a development in the 1970's and was unfinished. There were other areas that could come forward for development; if you were to draw a line to extend the settlement boundary to the A509 it would take in the houses in Olney Road and Gravel Walk. Chris responded that there were a lot of strong reasons why the group selected the school field in the first place. Melanie stated that she agreed with Chris; the school field would also help with parking in the village. Melanie asked if the school would then be sold with change of use. Peter responded that the school was a difficult one as it had a covenant on it as it was given for education. Peter suggested that the group should make an approach to MKC for the school field and Field 13.

8. **Housing needs assessment refresh** – Chris commented that he hadn't had the opportunity to start this yet but now the group had met and had a clearer idea, he would finalise it over the next week. It was a case of going back over the questionnaire results and how we get to a number of houses that people would support. **Action: CA.** Peter responded that it was important to get the justification; people were expecting between 10-20 houses in the village and if the group produced a plan with more than that figure, it would be unlikely that it would be voted through. Melanie stated that there had been 8 infill sites in recent years. Peter stated that he would like to see a policy coming forward for shared ownership houses. Chris responded that there was the question of affordable and affordability. There could be an agreement with a developer for low cost housing (20% of market value) but this would have to be offset against other development. Jason asked how this would work. Chris responded that it was essential that the houses were transferred at 20% less than the market value but he was unaware how the actual administration was processed. Peter stated that people registered with an organisation; he felt that the group may need to do more work on shared ownership and affordable housing. Fred asked if there was the option of approaching EUC and asking them what they could provide for us and finding out what part they might like to play. EUC owned land and properties in the village and put forward a couple of sites. Peter suggested speaking to EUC would be a sensible approach. Virginia referred to forthcoming development in Olney and Lavendon and stated that she felt house prices were coming down a bit. **Action: KG** to draft a letter to EUC. It was suggested that they be invited to speak at the next meeting to ask for their input.

9. **Next steps** – Actions **PG** – to come back to the group regarding the school field and Field 13. **KG** to approach EUC. **CA** to draft Housing Needs Assessment. **JB** to put together vision statement with input from group. **ALL** – review sites and settlement boundary at the same time. Reference was made to getting in touch with MKC to find out when the consultation process could start again. Peter responded that he didn't think this was far off. Fred asked about people speaking at meetings. The clerk responded that the meetings were open to the public and they were permitted to speak. Melanie asked if there was anything in the meantime that the group could be working on. Chris responded that David Blandamer at MKC had made some comments on the plan and these could be incorporated. Jason commented that the clerk had drafted up a brief for the website and Well & Towers, this was agreed with an amendment of removing the word "affordable".

Melanie stated that the parish council had asked her to provide a time line for the whole process. Peter responded that getting the structure correct was really important. Peter suggested that as soon as possible that Melanie, himself and someone in MKC should work out a timeline. Chris commented that he agreed with Peter; he felt it was in the region of 32 weeks. **Action:** to arrange a meeting with David Blandammer at MKC. Jason commented that he was happy to join that meeting; it was worth getting the communication started.

10. **Any other business** – The clerk reported that a grant needed to be applied for. **Action: KG/CA.**

11. **Date of next virtual meeting** – Tuesday 21st July 2020 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 8.15pm