

Emberton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

(A committee of Emberton Parish Council)

Minutes of Meeting held virtually – 29th September 2020

Present:

Jason Bevan- Chairman
Joe Walker – Vice Chairman
Melanie Duncan

Warwick Clarke – Emberton United Charities
Chris Akrill – Town Planning Service
Karen Goss – Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for Absence were received from Virginia McTierney.
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 3rd September 2020** – The Minutes of the previous Meeting held on the 3rd September 2020 were agreed. The clerk to provide the Minutes to the Chairman for signing at the next face to face meeting.
4. **Public comments, questions or representations** – There were no members of the public present.
5. **Introduction to Emberton United Charities** – Jason welcomed Warwick Clarke, Chair to the Trustees of EUC to the meeting and asked about the objectives of EUC and where they might fit in with the neighbourhood plan in providing affordable housing. Warwick responded that EUC and the FEOFEE charity were the owners of 5 properties and The Institute. The KAH Sams trust was left a significant sum of money, the income from which was divided; two thirds to the charity and one third to the church. Warwick stated that he was trustee by way of the church and the other 4 trustees were on a 4 year term. EUC put forward The Institute as a site for development and the group were actively looking at converting the meeting room into accommodation. Longer term, EUC would look into converting the rest of The Institution into a small rental unit. The interest in property was to provide accommodation at a below market rate for people who have connections with Emberton. The EUC portfolio was 3 properties around the clock tower end of the High Street, The Institute and caretaker's cottage and 6 Church Lane. EUC's future interests were not something the group had considered but there probably would come a time when a discussion would need to be had with the parish council regarding working together to provide one village hall facility. One of the constraints was that EUC had a caretaker that lived in one of the cottages and this was an important asset. Jason asked Warwick how long he had been a trustee and the time taken for the role. Warwick responded that he had been a trustee for five or six years and it did not take up much time as the bookings for The Institute were handled by the caretaker and there was a treasurer and secretary. He went on to state that some of the properties were old buildings and required quite a lot of

maintenance. The properties produced an income of about £6000 per annum in total. The charity's remit had changed over the years; most of it today related to the provision of The Institute. Joe asked if the properties had been owned for a long period of time. Warwick responded that they had apart from 6 Church Lane which was purchased 4 or 5 years ago by mortgage which had since been paid off. Joe asked how the purchase came about. Warwick responded that EUC's financial assets had accumulated and the property came on the market and an offer was made. Chris stated that the group needed to look at how The Institute could be brought into the neighbourhood plan so that EUC could change its use for using the building in a different way and if there was potential for housing whether EUC would be interested in being part of the process to purchase one or two properties to keep a local interest. Warwick responded that the charity's interest was in acquiring additional properties. Jason asked if the charity would look at one or two properties if the funding was available. Warwick commented that funding was one issue that the charity hadn't really considered and it hadn't been discussed at any length amongst the trustees. Warwick stated that the charity would be interested in any discussion which might involve the provision of a caretaker's cottage. Jason responded that the group had been looking at 10 houses or around that level and two of these could be for EUC. Warwick stated that these would have to be suitable properties not executive style properties. Chris responded that the group were looking at the smaller affordable end of the scale. Warwick commented that the charity had credibility. Chris asked how The Institute had fared during the last six months. Warwick responded that bookings had not been permitted despite pressure from hirers; EUC had received a grant from MKC through the small business rate scheme.

Chris asked if The Institute site was something that EUC would like to put back into the plan for development. Warwick stated that it had not been withdrawn from the plan; it was originally identified as a possible development site and then it was taken out for various reasons. EUC owned two parcels of land in Petsoe End, either side of the road which might not be suitable for development. Chris responded that there might have been a misunderstanding regarding withdrawing The Institute from the plan. Chris stated that it could come back as a site that could be considered. Warwick stated that the existing site could be split into two units and combine The Institute and Pavilion into one village hall. Chris responded that one village hall would be a better facility as it would be in greater demand. Warwick commented that the meeting room of The Institute was rarely used but the charity would not want to convert this into a single unit without understanding what could be done with the rest of the building.

6. **Settlement boundary** – Jason raised the question as to whether the settlement boundary needed to be changed. Melanie commented that she felt this would be the case because of the regrowth that might be imposed on the village through the new Planning White Paper and that the settlement boundary needed to be changed from that proposed in the last version of the neighbourhood plan ie. that it should be left as currently fixed by Milton Keynes Council. Chris asked if the group was sticking to garden boundaries as defined in Plan:MK. Chris went on to state that there were two versions of the settlement boundary which covered Acorn Nurseries and Petsoe End and a hybrid version which stuck to the other side of Emberton and had some of the gardens which had been excluded and these were included so that they were part of the village. Following a discussion, it was agreed to leave the settlement boundary as it was currently fixed by MKC.

7. **Review of sites put forward** – It was noted that MKC property services had put forward a call for sites for Field 13 but not the school field as they were uncertain with the status of the school and had heard that there could be a possible judicial review into the process of closing the school. Chris stated that now the group had a formal submission, this could be logged through the process used on previous sites. Chris would do this and circulate it to the group so that a planning assessment could be undertaken on its merits. **Action: CA** Chris stated that the site had some surface water issues and asked how the group felt about this site. Karen commented that there had been localised flooding across Hulton Drive in recent years but some work had been taken to the drainage system in Field 13 in recent years. Jason stated that he needed to take a walk down and have a look at the site. Chris commented that the site tied in very well with the pavilion. Karen commented that there was a triangle piece of land to the right of the pavilion where ownership had not been ascertained. **Action: KG** to provide information to **MD** Jason commented that the only sites considered suitable at the present time were The Institute and Field 13 as MKC had not put forward the school field. Melanie stated that it might be possible to reintroduce the school field further down the line as it would help with the parking problems. Chris commented that if there was a judicial review on the school there was a time frame in which to do it from the date of the decision, so the time had probably elapsed.
8. **Housing Needs Assessment refresh** – nothing to report.
9. **Affordable Housing options** – Jason stated that the explanation from Warwick was very useful. A discussion took place regarding affordable housing and it was suggested that this was dealt with in the plan by defining the type and size of housing required.
10. **Agree changes to V6 of the Neighbourhood Plan** – It was agreed that the group were not in a position to do this yet. Melanie commented that that the Needham's had put forward some sites but they were an either/or option and there was a maximum number of housing and this needed amending in the plan. Chris stated that he would have a look at this and asked for the group members to have a look at the draft of the plan and feed back any comment. **Action: ALL**
11. **Next steps** – To have a look at field 13. **Action: ALL** and feed back at the next meeting.
12. **Any other business** – Jason thanked Warwick for attending the meeting.
13. **Date of next virtual meeting** – Tuesday 20th October 2020 at 7pm
14. The meeting closed at 8pm