

Minutes of the VANTAGE (Village Action Network - Toppesfield & Gainsford End) Business Meeting held on Monday 24th October 2011 – 7.30 pm The Green Man

Present: Brian Moody, Trisha Roberts, Claire Condie, Paul Thompson, Mary-Ann Stevenson, Nick Hasler, Richard Evers, Lynn Collard, Allan Collard, Sheila Braithwaite (Minutes Secretary), Malcolm Braithwaite (Chairman)

1. **Apologies-** Ray Papworth, Maureen Dimmock, Ros Castle. Some doubt had been expressed over membership of the steering group. It was emphasised that business meetings are open to everyone in the village and that there is no “membership” as such. Those attending are the core group of villagers who set up the project in the first place and then, additionally, those who have specific tasks to report as the Village Plan process proceeds.
2. **Minutes of the last VANTAGE Meeting** (29 September 2011) and Meeting Notes from Open Village Meeting on 13 October 2011 - Minutes were agreed.
3. **Matters Arising**
 - a. Progress against Timeline - All reports and meetings are on track and within the time line, noting new launch date of 1st July 2012.
4. **The Questionnaire Results**
 - a. **Brief overview of documents available relating to results**

The raw data that was received prior to the meeting on 13/10 were made available at the meeting on 13th October. Thanks to Ray Papworth for all the hard work in converting spread sheets to understandable pie charts. Subsequently, copies of the charts have been made available as hard copies to be ‘lent’ through the shop or via Malcolm (as hard copy and on disk). The Findings Report (an initial interpretation of the questionnaire results), independently produced by Warwick and received on 12th September, has been circulated to the VANTAGE steering group, and has also been put onto the website and the villagers made aware of the open access to information. (maybe notices need to be posted to alert villagers to this source of information). Malcolm will be writing an article for the newsletter detailing this and other elements arising from this meeting tonight. It was agreed that there would be some provocative ideas of possible action plans attached to the article, to be provided by others, hopefully to stimulate reaction from the villagers (see item 7).
 - b. **Discussion of the Village Meeting 13/10/11**

It was considered by all attendees that the meeting had been successful and positive responses had been verbally given. However, disappointment was stated that no written feedback had been received.
5. **Engagement of subject leaders and group members**

It was agreed that the next steps would be to collect data relating to the key findings, by group leaders or other interested parties, i.e. an Infrastructure Audit. This would provide a clearer picture of ‘where the village is now’. Some information had been collected in Nov. 2010 (e.g. from the shop re customers and community and leisure group). All parties were requested to bring up to date information to the next meeting

Land, land use, funds, charities, etc. – Malcolm
Ecology & Environment – energy used in the village - Nick
Social & Community, update past findings - Mary-Ann
Leisure & Recreation – playground equipment information – Mary-Ann and Mollie
Communication and Transport – bus timetables, website hits, etc. – Richard (see item 6).

6. **Stakeholder Engagement** – Buy-in from community interest groups
- a. School – Clear support, but what further active support does the school need from the Community and what facilities can the school offer to the Community? - Lynn and Nick
 - b. Church – Brian had produced a statement of aims and objectives for the church locally. This was read out as an excellent example of what is hoped all stakeholder groups might produce for the Village Plan exercise.
 - c. Village Hall – A similar one page document setting out the aims and objectives of the Village Hall Committee has also been received and will be circulated for information. The questionnaire findings indicate that the hall is valued but under used. There was debate about how this could be developed. It was agreed that this is the business of the Village Hall Committee to consider the findings and incorporate them in their plans if they so wish. It may rather be an approach to ask clubs and groups to indicate if and why they might use/not use the Village Hall to its full potential. It was considered that the hall required positive marketing and that the potential users would then approach the Hall managers.
 - d. Farming Community – an important group to engage, but little progress to date.
 - e. Local Business – Alan advertised that a business directory was being assembled – there were very few taking up the offer of free promotion.
 - f. Local Transport – Copy of data passed to Richard for forwarding to Hedingham Bus Company (and as a disk for sending to Braintree DC/Essex CC). Richard will produce a brief overview of the key results from the questionnaire.
 - g. Parish Council – Malcolm to report to next PC meeting in usual slot but with some potential action plans to discuss.
 - h. Shop – Management Committee interested in what happens in Hall – a brief aims and objectives statement had been received and indicated key need for more storage space.

7. Next Steps

For the next newsletter, an article is in preparation on the VP progress and it was agreed that this will include some suggestions of action plans. Various participants were asked to provide such comments to be collected by Malcolm to incorporate in the article. The key suggested action points were as follows:

1. About you and your family – demographics – ageing population requiring support for transport, fuel, affordable housing, leisure – retaining younger

- population – school – affordable housing – jobs - Mary-Ann to prepare statement.
2. Ecology & Environment – expense of fuels – sources of energy e.g. wind, biomass, solar (Note: grants for solar panel installation expire March 2012) – sourcing and selling local food production (within 10 miles) – clearing snow in winter - Nick Hasler
 3. Social & Community – Liaise with school re play area and further use of school resources - school support by local Community – Lynn
 4. Leisure & Recreation – Village Hall review – Playing fields require new playground equipment for youngsters and outdoor gyms for grown-ups – Malcolm
 5. Economy & Employment – directory of Business services – employment for young and parents of young children – Malcolm.
 6. Communications & Transport – broadband, buses, and car sharing – Richard
 7. Youth Survey -Youth representation either in a Youth Council or as a Parish Council Youth representative - Mollie

All information to be prepared and forwarded to Malcolm for the dead line copy date for the newsletter Friday 28th October.

8. **Launch Party** – 1st July 2012
9. **Funding** – It was also suggested that an early start is made on funding sources available to the Community - Malcolm
10. **Any Other Business** – none raised
11. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 21 November 2011 – 7.30pm The Green Man

Key agenda items - Area groups evidence/data to be reported - **All**
Very rough framework of draft Village Plan to be written, based on the structure of Ridgewell's first plan and incorporating the findings from T&GE's questionnaire. (It must be emphasised that this exercise will only provide a framework and by no means any more than that.) - **Malcolm**