**Minutes of Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum meeting 23rd Feb 2023 at Desborough Bowling Club**

**Attendees: 16 members and 2 visitors:**

MNF Members: B Beauchamp, A Beauchamp, J Dacombe, R Davenport, A Donaldson, R Dulson, M Fessey, J Hudson, A Ingram, S Ingram, M Jarvis, P Knott, F Poate, I Rose, N Stingelin, A Woodcock,

Visitors: B Davies, J Poate.

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Update
2) Next steps – what we need to do
3) Public engagement – first stage
4) Questions and answers
5) Resourcing and Way Forward
6) Any other business

**Presentation**: Items 1,2,3,

**Item 4, Questions & Answers**

1: Environmental impact:

Andrew Ingram asked: Is there room for environmental input into the BLP?

Mark Fessey answered, Yes – and if Net Zero a theme, what exactly does BLP say?

Peter Knott advised us that Environmental targets can be imposed at planning stage.

2: Budget

Alisdair Donaldson asked: How will the £5,500 grant from Locality be spent?

Locality is a non-government body which supports development of neighbourhood plans all over country. It also awards cash for projects such as this.

This Locality grant is available until 31.03.23, Any money not spent by year-end needs to be returned to Locality.

BUT took longer to get designation than hoped, so we only had one quarter remaining of year to spend.

We are planning to use grant for funding public meetings, purchase of gazebo, pull-up banners, leaflets, publicity, IT, etc.

It is hoped more grant money will be available from Locality on application next year, and £20,000 from RBWM when the council issue a decision to send the plan to referendum

Money is currently held in Maidenhead Waterways bank account, as the accountable body which meets the requirement to be incorporated. MNF is not itself incorporated.

We need a Treasurer to be in post before Annual General Meeting or we will have to fold.

3: Democratic process and Community Engagement

Nicola Stingelin reminded us that community engagement goes on as long as members of public want it, and as long as we need it to produce a Neighbourhood plan.

There is no prescriptive scope of policy, Neighbourhood Plan can be as broad or as narrow as the public wants. There are 53,000 residents of M’head but 60 members of the Neighbourhood Forum, so we can’t pick and choose topics to focus on that MNF members want, must be representative of Maidenhead residents rather than personal missions of the Forum members.

4: What is the point of a Neighbourhood Plan?

Bub Dulson asked if we have a succinct answer to this question?

Once National and Borough plans are taken into account, what is left that the NP should be addressing? To convince the public we need their informed consent.

Where can we make a difference within the bounds of the policy that we can influence?

Parish Councils have a say in Planning Applications, would the Neighbourhood plan also have a say in planning applications and decisions?

There isn’t much history yet, Neighbourhood plans have only relatively been adopted as part of the planning process, and the earliest areas were designated less than 5 years ago, but neighbourhood forums have a role in planning policy.

We are a legally constituted body under an Act of Parliament. Planning officers must apply all 3 levels of policy, (National, Borough and Neighbourhood) when making decisions, once the Neighbourhood plan is made.

5 Reaching out to younger generation:

Mick Jarvis asked what social media are we using, and what are we doing to attract more people, especially younger generation.

Constitution states over-18s can be members of MNF, but we need to find a way to make it interesting to teenagers. Are schoolchildren not eligible?

Eco Hub have found a way to interact with school aged children. We need to approach them to find best way of engaging youngsters, TikTok, YouTube, etc.

**Item 5, Way forward**

Link with Town Team? Results of Local Council Elections 4th May might affect us.

Look at other successful Neighbourhood Plans, what worked, what topics were covered?

We need a Treasurer.

Members of Maidenhead Forum voted overwhelmingly to proceed. They were thanked for attending. We have a blank canvas and next steps would be to hold public meeting and pick topics to work on, not solutions. Post-it notes with ideas, and a report afterwards. Desborough bowling club is booked 30th March, but discussion about alternative venues closer to middle of town are preferable, so we will investigate.

For those people who can’t attend, website will be updated and people will have other opportunities to contribute and suggest topics for Neighbourhood plan policy.

There were no AOB items under agenda item 6.

**Meeting concluded 8.30pm**