

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum

Minutes / Action Points of the meeting held on 2nd October 2019,

at Elizabeth House, Cookham.

In attendance: Bob Beauchamp, Ann Beauchamp, Cllr Simon Bond, Richard Davenport, Andrew Ingram, Peter Knott, Matthew Shaw, Derek Wilson, Andy Woodcock.

Apologies: Rachel Cook, Mike Copeland, Jinx Dacombe, Bob Dulson, David Dyer, Grahame Fisher, Mike Gamage, Mick Jarvis, David Knowles-Leak, Deborah Mason, Martin McNamee, Derek Roberts, Ian Rose, Roger Panton, Richard Thorogood, Jane Wright.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed new members to the Forum.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:

Minutes of the meeting held on 04 September 2019 were accepted.

Matters Arising:

Privacy Policy:

Action: Management Committee to agree a draft privacy policy document (*Outstanding from September Meeting*)

Bank Account:

Chair advised that a Bank Account is now operational and that the grant funds have been deposited. The account has on-line banking but operates without debit cards, as agreed at the previous Forum meeting.

Report from Management Committee

The Chair reported on the activities of the Management Committee since the last meeting:

Meetings

2 meetings were held on 13 and 25 September.

Publicity:

An article has been published in the Maidenhead Advertiser on 12 September 2019 and as a result several new members have signed up to the Forum. The article also provided details of the website for the Forum which is now available and being populated with information for the public. Address is www.mnf.org.uk

A 'Mailchimp' mailing facility is now in use which enables users to alter their membership details on-line and allows people to unsubscribe should they so wish. Due to restrictions on the licencing arrangements, use can only be made via the Chair's Mailchimp account.

A mail shot to all 260 names held on the database of the previous Cox Green and Maidenhead Forum created in 2014, (pre-the current GDPR regulations), was opened by 144 recipients, with

only 13 individuals unsubscribing either as a result of residing in the Cox Green area, or no longer being interested in the work of the Forum.

A Facebook page and Instagram page have been established. The first Facebook post is being 'boosted' for a modest £12.

The initial Facebook post is to try and recruit a suitable social media communicator for the Forum, as the original plan to use local social media blogger Jodie Humphries, is no longer possible due to a conflict of interest with her ongoing work for RBWM.

The posts have been shared with Maidenhead Future c.1000 subscribers, it was suggested that other Facebook sites, such as Maidenhead Past and Present with over 10,000 members, may reach a wider audience.

External Meetings:

RBWM

Chair has met several RBWM officials

- Russell O'Keefe – Executive Director for Place
- Jenifer Jackson – Head of Planning
- Robert Paddison – Head of Neighbourhood Planning

This was an exploratory meeting to discuss the proposal to submit the application for designation within the next week and to seek support from the Borough.

It has become apparent that unlike a Parish or Town Council, MNF (as an unelected body), does not have the same right of access to council held data and information that a Parish or Town Council would have, e.g. we do not have the right to access Ordnance Survey Data or the detail Office of National Statistics data

RBWM is being somewhat non-committal at this stage on what information it is able to supply, this may improve once the Forum is designated. Members are also aware that there are changes in the administration of RBWM which may be creating some uncertainty.

It was noted that the Government Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning states that the local authority must support and assist a neighbourhood forum as well as parish/town council.

A Meeting was also held with Cllr David Coppinger - Lead Member for Planning and Deputy Leader. This was instead of the planned meeting with the former leader Simon Dudley who has resigned since the meeting was arranged.

A meeting with the Chair of the Maidenhead Town Forum Cllr Gurch Singh, has had to be postponed, due to his attendance at a party conference.

A significant issue for the MNF is the proposal by RBWM to commence a fresh consultation on the stalled Borough Local Plan (BLP). Several Forum members confirmed that the BLP is to be reviewed at a special council meeting to be held on 23/10, with papers released on 16/10. A

short public consultation is due to be held between 10-14 October – MNF members are encouraged to become involved.

A briefing for Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums has been arranged for 17/10 – MNF has not yet received an invitation.

It is unclear what the consultation will involve, it is thought that it may involve objections from the Environmental Authority to some of the sites in the BLP.

JTP Architects

JTP have been appointed by RBWM to undertake a 'Placemaking Masterplan' for the town centre. <https://www.jtp.co.uk/projects/community-planning/visionmaidenhead>

(N.B. this is a separate piece of work to that commissioned by Areli Real Estate for the Nicholsons Centre redevelopment).

On 30 September 2019 the Chair and David Dyer undertook a walking tour of various sites in the central area of Maidenhead with members of the JTP team as a prelude to a wider engagement as part of the RBWM commission.

It is important that MNF is seen as a voice of the wider community and that we should be closely involved as a group.

The JTP Director leading the commission is Rebecca Taylor, who has recently worked on a similar masterplan for Winchester. (See link below for more details)

<https://www.jtp.co.uk/projects/community-planning/central-winchester-community-planning-weekend>

Special General Meeting

The Special General Meeting (SGM) has been called by the Management Committee to adopt a revised constitution for the MNF. This requires a formal vote by the eligible members of the Forum.

Revised Constitution

The draft revised constitution was circulated to members for comment on 12 September 2019, the few comments received have been incorporated into the final version circulated with the Agenda and notice of the SGM.

Key changes being:

Article 4 – Membership. The creation of a non-voting Associate category of membership. This change will enable interested parties who for various reasons are ineligible to be Full Members to be able to join in the work of the Forum.

Article 10 - Neighbourhood Planning. The adoption of a fixed quorum for decisions concerning the Neighbourhood Plan at meetings of the Forum.

The Chair explained that since the decision to call the SGM, various new members have joined; it was agreed that only individuals who were Full Members of the Forum on 26th September 2019 would be eligible to vote.

Resolution 1:

To adopt the revised constitution:

Proposed: Chair

Seconded: Secretary.

The resolution was unanimously approved by a show of hands of those eligible Members present in the meeting (6) and eligible Member's proxies received by the Secretary (3), a total of 9 votes. This being above the required one third quorum (8) of the eligible Members (22) necessary to amend the constitution. Therefore, the Resolution was approved.

The revised constitution is adopted henceforth.

Designation

The Chair reported that following discussions with the Locality consultants AECOM, there is still a concern that the proposed Neighbourhood Planning (NP) area, is potentially too large. AECOM cite c.25k population as being the typical upper limit for a 'large' NP area. They have suggested that we need to canvas support from the wider community to test that the proposed area does reflect a true 'neighbourhood' in the spirit of the 2011 Localism Act.

Members of the Forum are clearly of the view that the 7 unparished wards do constitute a viable neighbourhood and in terms of completeness of vision for the town it is perhaps unfortunate that the Cox Green Ward has to be excluded from the Maidenhead NP. It is as much part of Maidenhead town as the unparished area is.

Survey

A suggestion to issue a questionnaire to residents using social media and other channels has been considered as a way of confirming the Forum's view, that the 7 wards constitute a viable neighbourhood area, it would also serve to raise awareness of the Forum and its work. After some discussion it was generally felt that given that as RBWM had previously designated the combined Maidenhead and Cox Green area as a Neighbourhood Area, seeking further justification was not necessary. It was also noted that even by using a questionnaire there is no guarantee that the responses will be representative of the areas canvassed. It was however acknowledged that using a questionnaire to raise awareness and canvas opinions was a useful method.

Based on these observations it was generally agreed that designation should proceed without conducting the survey at this stage, noting that community engagement would be necessary

once the application for designation has been submitted and RBWM starts the 6 week period of formal consultation.

Justification of NP area

The Chair outlined the basis of justification for the NP area:

- The NP area is bounded by existing Civil Parishes and on the eastern boundary by the River Thames
- There are no historical settlements which have been absorbed. Maidenhead has grown organically from the town centre outwards to its current boundaries.
- No new nodes have emerged as neighbourhood centres
- Businesses are spread throughout the NP area not just concentrated in a single area

The chair has produced some mapping resources which illustrate how business is spread throughout the town.

Action: Application for Designation to be submitted.

Topic Groups

Getting Around – David Dyer leading the group

An initial scoping meeting has been held

Natural Environment – Deborah Mason leading

Built Environment – Martin McNamee leading supported by Bob Dulson

Business – Vacant. The Chair has engaged with the Maidenhead Town Centre Manager Steph James and the Management Company of the Nicholsons Centre, resulting in Jane Wright from the company joining the Forum. A meeting with Paul Brimacombe from the Chamber of Commerce has been held and the Chair is due to give a presentation on 9th October to a meeting of the Chamber. From the analysis undertaken the Chamber of Commerce lists around 110 members, which represents about 4% of the businesses trading in the plan area, but is nevertheless potentially a valuable partner

Community Facilities – Matthew Shaw

Status of draft Neighbourhood Plan

In response to a question concerning the work previously undertaken by the former Maidenhead and Cox Green Neighbourhood Forum, Ian Rose is custodian of the draft plan as drafted and it is the intention that each of the Topic/Special Interest Groups should review that information and built up on it adding or updating material as is necessary. The Management Committee and IR as editor, will then pull all the information together to create the submission document and the pack of supporting evidence.

Post meeting note: The Chair also has received various hard copy and electronic information from the Cox Green Parish Council relating to the previous draft plan which can be used as a reference for plan writer however some of the information is dated.

AOB

Meeting documents

The Secretary asked the meeting for views on the amount of printed material members felt was necessary to be provided at Forum meetings. Members agreed that they either printed their own copy or used a portable device.

Agreed that printed copied copies need not be provided.

Post Meeting Note: Printed copies can be provided on request if any member is unable to download or print relevant documents for meetings.

Meeting room

Note that the current venue is booked until December 2019, there is a general consensus that a venue in central Maidenhead would be preferable.

Action: Management Committee to identify a suitable venue

Meeting Closed at 2100

Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th November @7.30pm - Elizabeth House, Cookham.

AW

07/10/19