MINUTES OF TORQUAY NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
Steering Group

Wednesday 12th June 2024, 6.30pm
At CDT Offices and zoom

Officers of the Steering Group: Present Rodney Horder (Chair), Nigel Goodman (Treasurer)
Steering Group Members: June Pierce, Anna Scarborough, Beth Huntley, Cllr Nicole Amil, Alan Griffey, Roger Carter, Pat Bishop, Iain Collinson
Other: John Arcus
Guests: David Edmondson, Rob Palmer

Item	
1.	**Minute taker:** John Arcus
2.	**Apologies:** Mike Cowdery (Vice Chair), Julie Brandon, Margaret Forbes-Hamilton, Cllr Darren Cowell, Margaret Forbes-Hamilton,– Tracey Cabache Torbay Communities
3.	**Conservation topics – discussion with Rob Palmer, Principal Historic Environment Officer and David Edmondson, Director of Planning** **Rob Palmers Presentation (Slides provided)** – 7 months in the role, now focusing on Heritage Assets, Delivery of Heritage Strategy, regeneration projects, policy, guidance and cases. • **Heritage forum –** aim to reestablish the forum. • **Lottery Heritage Fund / partnership over 10 years –** framework in place to raise profile of heritage in Torbay. Understand, protect and celebrate heritage. £250,000 this year -a development year, and then deliver over the following 9 years. Recruiting for 3 new heritage posts over the Summer (Historic Environment Officer, Project Officer, Conservation Officer) – they will deliver our projects and provide a dedicated resource. There are 24 conservation areas in Torbay – and we will be updating the appraisals through mapping, images, suggestions for improving accessibility, plans, consultation, improved multimedia and engaging with young people. Three Conservation Area Appraisals will be reviewed/updated initially, including Torquay Harbour. RH requested that the Forum be involved with Torquay Harbour. We need to obtain the draft for Lincombes CAA and send to Rob Palmer. **Actions: Wellswood to obtain LIncombes CAA draft for RH to submit.**

Rob Palmer to engage with Margaret Forbes Hamilton and Julie Brandon

- **Research:** We will be undertaking two research reports 1. Economic and social impact and 2. Looking at our audiences. We will develop an independent engagement strategy. Our aim over the 10-year funding is to achieve gold standard heritage projects.

- **This year's aim** - update appraisals and management plan and add design codes to plans – this would be a first in the UK for conservation areas
- **Heritage at Risk** – The Hindu Caves are on the risk register (since 2009). June Pierce noted that they were named by Charles Kingsley. –.
- **Other work planned:**
  - Events, trails, walking guides, apps.
  - Shopfront design guides. (NP Forum are working on Wellswood guides and putting design codes into updated plan)
  - Heritage action zones.
  - Upskilling Council Officers in Conservation. We have a talented team.
  - Regeneration projects.

Discussion Notes:

- **Culture Board** - Martin Thomas has left his role and has been replaced by Racheal Keeley - starts in 2 weeks.
- **Planning and conservation** – Pat Bishop noted that previously applications have been favoured that clearly go against conservation values (eg 213 St Marychurch Road).
- **Developer** – have managed to get design changes through once they have planning permission based on nonmaterial amendments. There is no Govt guidance. Can this be improved?
- **We look at impact** and make sure we scrutinize revised applications – Rob and David.
- **Neighbourhood plans** get ignored and overlooked yet they are a community-based document that needs to be considered by Planning Committees.
- **Torquay Neighbourhood Plan** – Rob – your comments on Applications using the Policy Checklist are really clear. Please raise it with me if you consider the plan has not been given due consideration.
- **Oldway Mansion** - can't wait for the local HLF scheme - they have been offered £8M to repair the roof.

How we assess Heritage Assets – are they designated and non-designated? Look at the legal duties (since 1990). They need to be enforced – and the laws respected. 'Significance is all', since the NPPF requires that the agent / applicant has to describe the significance. It is not enough to say – 'it is in a conservation area'. Discussion – planners should add environmental impact, for Torbay character of beach areas. Tourists respond to the characteristics of each beach and people want to experience the beauty and variety of Torbay. We don't just look at a structure, but consider an area.

	• **Buildings outside conservation areas** affecting the setting of the area can be part of the assessment of impact. • **Planners should have two hats** – guardians for residents (public guardianship) as well as assessing development impacts. Junior Officers can be too lenient or have pressure from Planning Board members or developers. • **Pre- applications** do require adequate significance and should be assessed accordingly, • **Aim expressed by David** - encourage more developers / agents to meet with NP Forum. Validation in previous years was stronger. Example – proposals with no drainage and highway data have gone through planning. • **Significance categories** - Evidential, Historic, Communal and Aesthetic values. Assess Designated or undesignated. • **Description:** Heritage (is a thing) and conservation (is management of the thing). • **Avoiding harm** - We assess enhancement, preservation and harm. We try and avoid harm but if not, how can it be justified – ie what are the public benefits that outweigh the harm. Optimum viable use is considered. Economic, social and environmental benefits should be considered and the benefit for the public, not an individual. Different aspects of a scheme impact on the different assessment categories. Good design principles provide a good check list for assessing impacts. **Comments:** • **Developers -** have pushed the economic benefits over recent years. They seem to share inside knowledge of what developers can get through the planning process. Example: extensions to villas - some are terrible. • **The planning process** is about management of change (not preservation) – this process is key and needs to be followed. • **Officers** get undermined by developers going to the planning members. Pressured to change views. • **Regeneration through the town deals** - has created a pressure to see change and economic benefits in the Bay. We want to see due diligence. • **Reply -** 'Heritage led development is what we want to see' - Rob. **Suggestions:** • **Guides** to show people around historic assets. • **Scale** - keep developments to an appropriate scale. • **Jobs** - we need jobs and to broaden employment base / opportunities. • **Seabury Hotel** – Rodney described changes in design based on engagement with NP Forum. The Forum supports the new Application (P2023/0721), but Emily Eliot was recommending Refusal. Due at Planning Committee on 24 June. • **Contemporary design** - we won't see the end of contemporary designs in historic areas – but it is important that fits in. • **Maidencombe example** – certificate of lawfulness. This has been communicated to McCarthy's – and is currently live. • **Advice to Rob** – please stick to your guns, if under pressure go to CEO. Officers' role's should be non-political.

	Active Travel: Dept Transport want Council to progress new cycle ways – but we haven't progressed as far as requested. One challenge is on-street parking. Andrew Gunther and Louise Holloway lead on Active Travel, and there is a new national body Active Travel UK. Our segregated cycleways plan is not finalised. • Beth - we need to know what will be built but it is not in the public domain. • David – currently, engineering plans are hard to identify – Council has funding to produce clearer visuals for the public. • The aim is less cars on streets. (But people come to Torbay on cars, buses and trains). • Please consider pedestrians when planning cycleways. **KPIs and applications:** a new Enforcement form has been done, but the policy hasn't been completed. • Is it just ticking the box that KPIs have been done? Who is checking validation? Example - boundaries were wrong, drainage not adequate in recent planning application. Assessment should identify if the application is within design guidelines. **Pavement issues -** Ian Jones from SwisCo is responsible. June. **Action: Andrew Gunther meet with Beth on cycle ways. David Edmondson set-up.** **Action: David Edmondson - Council teams to talk to NP Forum and CPs on areas like Union Square and Paignton centre .** **Action: Invite Rob, Rachel and other officers again to NP Forum.** **Email address for Rob – conservation@torbay.gov.uk.**
4.	**Meeting with Alan Denby et al – Suggestions for making the Torbay Planning Function "Best in class"** DE agreed meeting was too short. IT was agreed to resume the Neighbourhood Planning Group Meetings to discuss issues. Brixham will come to session. Paignton has no representation yet. Next meeting will be before end of July with Agent Forums. For Alan Denby economic development is the driver. **Planning Committee** • Sometimes it is clear Councilor's haven't read the papers, and the debate can go over time. • Concerns were expressed about the expected Political balance – no Independent Councillors. Cllr Katya Maddison was a very effective Chair, but not proposed by new regime.

	• Adam Billings has Conflict of Interest both as a developer and his position on the Churston & Villages Neighbourhood Forum. It was noted that Darren Cowell stood down from our Steering Group when he was on the Planning Committee in order to avoid apparent pre-determination. Same should apply to Adam Billings. • Planning officers should use the checklist to provide an objective assessment. • Mike Fox has a planning background. **Discussion on presentation guidelines Paragraph 16.2** • The proposal is intended to prevent information being distributed 'on the night' without prior review. • Text 'Members of the public may not present' – gives the wrong message, and is not clear. We object to no slides. Change to 'this is what you need to do'. • Legal team - are concerned about misleading images. Annotated images can misrepresent – David E. • RH is working with Monitoring Officer to clarify wording. If not changed, our Councillor Members will be asked to try to amend at the meeting on 20 June. Suggested text: 16.2 Members of the public who wish to present any written materials, photos or mock-ups at the Planning Committee meeting must use the following procedure: Slides, written materials, photos or mock-ups must be submitted through the Council's website at torbay.gov.uk/planning app and searching for the property or by emailing planning@torbay.gov.uk up to 4 pm the Friday before the meeting, which Members of the Planning Committee will be able to view prior to the meeting. Members of the public who have registered to speak may refer to such documents and present slides when speaking at the Planning Committee meeting (Note: where speakers intend to refer to submitted documents or use slides at the Planning Committee meeting this must be agreed with the Planning Officer in advance of the meeting so that they can include it in their presentation).
5.	**Membership of Forum:** Tracey recruiting and growing Community Partnerships - need to demonstrate the benefits to communities. Suggestion that 5 representatives from each CP is too many for the All CPs Meeting.
6.	**Minutes of meeting 15th May 2024** Approved.
7.	**Matters arising from May meeting:** **ACTION: Rodney to raise HELAA at next Neighbourhood Planning Meeting –** raised at meeting with Alan Denby, still under review. **ACTION: Darren to complete Neighbourhood Plan Aspirations for Shiphay**

Commented [Ma1]: Who is they? Not clear if it refers to the Planning Officer or the speaker.

	ACTION: Rodney to raise Good Design at next Neighbourhood Planning Meeting – noted this evening **ACTION: Rodney to raise Shedden Hall Enforcement at the Neighbourhood Planning Meeting –awaitign meeting** **ACTION : Rodney to send an email to Malcolm Coe to clarify the process for distribution of CIL funds, copy Darren** **ACTION: Rodney to contact current steering group members who are unable to attend and ask them to stand down.** Note that Neighbourhood Planning Group meetings scheduled for the year have been cancelled. Rodney will ask for them to be rescheduled. **ACTION: Re website Mike to follow up with Hubert to see if he could offer some redesign support** **ACTION: Re training Julie to circulate the letter received from English Heritage** **ACTION: Darren to provide the briefing/presentation Cllrs have received on the refresh of the Local Plan** **ACTION: Re Lincomes Conservation Area Appraisal Mike to send to Rodney who will send onto Rob Palmer, Conservation Officer**
8.	**Bank accounts/balances** Balance is £3500.47 based on a cheque in and one payment out.
9.	**Website – maintenance** (tabled for next meeting)
10.	**Possible training seminar** related to The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) – should happen at some point but there is no further guidance. **ACTION: Tracey to keep a watching brief**
11.	**Housing supply** Still no update
12.	**Neighbourhood Plan update** **Review and confirm Aspirations section** –Aspirations (background to communities) –Policies are in the main body of the reports. **ACTION: ALL please go through these about what you want.** • The Policy section includes some aspirations, but best not to include Policies in the Aspirations section. • Example: Corbyn Head hotel development had a large piece on aspirations, but it was not relevant. Steve Parrock, when CEO, promoted the hotel and then signed off on the hotel development – this should be investigated.

	• Noted that the Conservation Area Policies apply across all the Wards. • Special policies are for the rural areas eg Cockington, Edgnswell and Maidencombe. (Helen Warren and the volunteers at Cockington - are in a poor state at the moment through lack of resources.) **Wellswood Shopfront Design Guidelines** – • We are writing up the Shop front guidelines for Wellswood. • Our aim is to get the policies working with Wellswood and then broaden the guidelines to other areas. • There are clear areas that are historic areas and then others that are more modern (town centre and Union Square). • Signage should be uniform – in keeping with area. • Suggestion to have a general Policy with specific requirements for certain areas (eg Wellswood, Town Centre, Redenhill Road, St Marychurch) **Green Spaces** – there is a tiny green space on the corner of Lucius Street and Tor Hill Road, added to Neighbourhood Plan. **Good Design (checklist) & Design Review Panel**. • Guidance will be added to Plan as Appendix. • Forum to become involved with Design Review Panel **Amenity/overlooking** (not tabled) **Neighbourhood Development** Orders (tabled for next meeting) **Community Funding bulletin** – grants available. (tabled for next meeting) Previous actions **ACTION: Tracey to update CPs names and maps** **ACTION: Rodney to prepare an Article 4 directive** **ACTION: Any further changes to aspirations and Policies need to be submitted within the next two weeks**
13.	**Local Plan update** No update.
14.	**Planning Concerns** • Report on 05 June meeting with Alan Denby, David Edmondson, Katya Maddison, and Adam Billings distributed.

	• Planning/Enforcement Concerns (Overview & Scrutiny) • 'Overhill', Maidencombe – confirmed Certificate of Lawfulness for Residential use was Refused in 2006. DE has advised McCarthy **ACTION: Tracey to provide Anne with contact details for Cricketfield Community Garden**
14.	**Planning Committee – meeting cancelled** Next one is 24 June and we will be recommending approval for Seabury. **ACTION: Rodney not available to attend meeting. Mike Cowdery requested to substitute**
15.	**Planning Applications** **1.** Planning Applications • Review of new Applications • Current specific Applications: • Corbyn Head Hotel P/2024/0264 -(no update) • Land off Nicholson Road (no update) • Singleton Gardens P/2022/1186 – Appeal status unknown • Shedden Hall (Enforcement) - (no update) • Soak Containers, Torre Abbey Sands P/2024/0112 - withdrawn • 4, The Strand P/2023/1092 – ACTION: Margaret to provide statement and policy guidance. • 3, The Strand P/2024/0367 - ACTION: Margaret to provide statement and policy guidance. • Cinnabar, 19 Victoria Parade P/2024/0142 Darren supports this application. • Sladnor Park – Gallagher has sold to SuperVox Developments. • Stoodleigh Knowle – review at next meeting • Watombe beach town houses - approved a long time ago. (There is a large field close by which may come up for development)
16.	**Town Deal & Levelling-up Funding -** £20 M over 10 years – now waiting until after the election. It may disappear**.**

17.	**Section 106/CIL** **1. Section 106/CIL** • **CIL Applications - process & funds available -** not discussed. • **New proposals:** • **Barton Cricket Club -** Jim Parker has requested £100,000, which we wouldn't approve but we would consider £25,000 for the community benefit. He will present at next meeting
18.	**Torbay Council** • **Peer review** not discussed
20.	**Any other business** • **Devon Live meeting** (tabled for next meeting) • **Debenhams**. Development too expensive, possible revised Plans • **Torquay Museum** – looking to come into town. They own their current building. They have a display showing the development of Fleet Street. • **Solar panels in Paignton** –Council approved SW water installation (to power the purification process) and they pay Council for a cheaper rate for power. Cheaper power – at our expense – should that have been approved? • **Balance Sheet for Torbay Council** – would the loss by the retail outlet in Exeter owned by Torbay Council, currently with no tenants, show on their balance sheet? The development is losing money.
	Meeting closed 9 pm. Some items not covered to allow for an in-depth discussion with Rob Palmer, Principal Historic Environment Officer and David Edmondson, Director of Planning **Next meetings:** Next meetings: **11 July** (to avoid Cabinet and O&S clashes) No meeting in August, Then 10 September