



RURAL WORKING GROUP

BOTOLPH'S BARN, HELPSTON – 25TH MARCH 2009

Present

Henry Clark, Chair, Peakirk & Rural Working Group
Richard Astle, Director, GPP
Nick Goodman, Environmental Capital Officer, GPP
Rosemary Morton, Willowbrook Farm
June Woollard, Barnack Parish Council
Rohan Wilson, Bretton Parish Council
James Beale, Housing Strategy Manager, Peterborough City Council
Frieda Gosling, Ufford Parish Council
David Harrington, Newborough ward
Rob Smith, Peterborough City Council
Graeme Law, Peterborough City Council
John Holdich, Glinton and Wittering ward
Mark Davis, RAF Wittering
Sally Jackson, Peakirk Parish Council
Chris Britton, Helpston Parish Council
Zena Coles, Bainton Parish Council
Matthew Hogan, Peterborough City Council

Apologies

David Over, Barnack ward

1. Welcome and Introductions

Henry Clark welcomed members to the first official meeting of the re-formed Rural Working Group (RWG), individuals introduced themselves.

2. Positioning the Rural Working Group

Henry Clark outlined his thoughts on the role and function of the RWG. A place where Rural communities can share their experiences, formulate responses to the activities of the city and bring together a collective voice for the rural communities. This group can promote and ensure the recognition of the rural communities as an asset and June Woollard welcomed the opportunity for rural communities to work together. The RWG does not replace, duplicate or wish to undermine the role of the parish councils and will not be a talking shop. The Group felt that -

Reconnecting the city to the countryside, sustainably

was a powerful message and that villages must be live rural communities. Richard Astle re-iterated that there is no pot of gold associated with this agenda, working in partnership, with clarity and direction would raise the profile of the rural agenda.

3. Setting priorities

The group was asked to identify a set of priorities and areas of focus for the coming year. Members were particularly encouraged to think about what they want the RWG to have achieved in 9/12 months time.

Sustainable Transport – public transport, A15 traffic flow lobbying role, transport around points of interest, Promotion of the Green Wheel and cycling and walking upgrades, Supporting the TravelChoice programme into rural areas, reducing “rat running”, supporting a 1 hour cross Peterborough by public transport aim.

Housing – concern around over-development, shortage of affordable homes

Rural Economy – More help for businesses and post offices, particularly in the economic downturn. Encouraging economic growth and start-ups businesses in the rural areas.

Environment – Green spaces and Green belt, Wildflower corridors and conservation areas.

Children and Young people – Closely linked to transport, over 13's, ensuring a sustainable provision, extended schools (Sharif Al-Rousi) and ensuring adequate facilities.

It was noted that 4 of these 5 were the priorities identified in the Rural Vision and Strategy.

4. Rural housing Strategy

James Beale presented the latest draft of the Rural Housing Strategy and action plan. As it stands this strategy would not form part of the material planning considerations for planning (and therefore its ability to directly influence the planning process will be limited) but it would help identify a number of activities and actions that could be developed in the rural communities. It is suggested that we use the RWG to further develop the Rural Housing Strategy and the next meeting scope the finer details of the strategy and what other methods for influence rural housing exist. It is important that the group understands the opportunities and limitations of the strategy. Members of the group stressed the need to de-jargonise the language and keep it simple.

Action - In keeping design to have a profile within the strategy - MH

Graeme Law gave a brief overview of the Local Development Framework documents. The Regional Spatial Strategy, the Core Strategy, the site allocations and the planning policies. Graeme encouraged the group to look into the policies which affected rural, villages, village envelopes and rural economy whilst also suggesting that we engage with developers to identify how the RWG can help and hinder the process. Next meeting to include a specific item on the Rural Housing Strategy, Planning policies and Core strategy.

5. Rural Economy and the Economic Downturn

Deferred until a later meeting

6. AOB

Future invitees – Cambridgeshire ACRE, Local Access Forum representation, Local MP's

Sallyann Jackson outlined the Peakirk Wildfowl site and explained the desire to purchase the site from private landowners.

7. Date of next meeting 29th April, 7-9pm Bainton Reading Rooms

RESPONSIBLE	ACTION	DEADLINE
NG	Invite representation from Cambridgeshire ACRE, Local Access Forum representation, Local MP's	asap
MH	Ensure that the strategy includes in keeping design	Next meeting
	Rural Housing Strategy and Core Strategy and planning documents to be discussed at the next meeting	Next meeting