

## Meeting of Crosthwaite & Lyth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with Kirkwells 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 10.30am in the Argles Memorial Hall, Crosthwaite

**Present:** Alan Gerrard, Dorothy Grace, Simon Johnson, Robert Sykes, Louise Kirkup (Kirkwells)

Based in Burnley, Kirkwells was recommended by CALC (Cumbria Assocn. of Local Councils).

LK had been previously sent copies of the results of the Vision Document consultation of parishioners. She has much experience of Neighbourhood Plans, though none so far in the Lake District National Park.

Following introductions, SJ described the current progress and status of the SG's work, and the background to setting up the SG.

- The Lake District National Park (LDNP) Draft Local Plan published early 2018 identified 51 houses to be built in Crosthwaite on land around the school and village hall. There had already been 30% increase in housing over the previous three years, so why this much?
- In the light of this, the Parish Council held a public village meeting in September 2018 at which there was overwhelming support for setting up a SG to develop a Neighbourhood Plan (NDP). The SG carried out a survey of the neighbourhood by means of the Vision document, the results from which were collated, and will feed into a more detailed questionnaire for parishioners.

From the results of the NDP consultation, housing appears to be one of the principal concerns of the parishioners. Louise clarified the definitions of local occupancy and affordable housing, and indicated that if we can make a case for a change in definition of local occupancy, then the LDNP should be open to discuss it. Affordable housing is a national standard, and thus is not really challengeable. Current national guidelines defines affordable housing as 20% below open market costs.

SLDC has a relationship with Housing Associations, though the LDNP does not. This affects local occupancy rules, and other definitions and criteria.

**Action for Steering Group:** Meet with Castle and Coast to gain an insight into their business models.

The NDP would apply only to the Civic Parish of Crosthwaite & Lyth; however, SLDC looks at a larger area when drafting housing policies, so there is an element of mis-match but also the potential to deflect some requirements to areas outside of this parish.

### Housing issues already identified

- Young people who have grown up in the area may wish to remain in it.
- Farming is an important industry in the area; offspring wish to stay in the area but can't afford market prices.
- Services industry is a big employer in National Park (NP), but not well-paid so can't afford market prices.
- High demand for tradespeople, but many have to live out of the NP.
- Lack of suitable housing for downsizing for an older population; family members moving back for caring roles cannot afford the prices.

In a previous meeting with Paula Allen (SLDC), she suggested we look for unique areas to focus on in the NDP – aspects that are different from the Local Plan, to develop policies for those.

Evidence for everything is very important. Technical supporting evidence, such as design codes from technical consultants and other specific markers are available; however, these do not always reflect the characteristics of a small rural population. Louise advised that housing needs are better gained from local review rather than consultancies which use existing LPs and census data (2011 – now very old).

One option, at a further stage of NDP development, is to define the parish boundary including the cluster communities (i.e. define Crosthwaite plus Row, Howe etc. all as separate entities) and identify any areas for development and how they should be developed within each (there may not be any). This is very specific and potentially yields greater control over possible development. However, it may not be an appropriate option in this parish.

Another option is for the Parish Council to undertake a 'call for sites' for local landowners to put forward proposed sites for new development (i.e. not community suggestions). Landowners are invited to complete a short form about their proposed site(s) and submit this with a site location plan, at a scale clearly showing the boundary. Submitted sites are then subjected to a technical site assessment process for which technical support is available through the national organisation Locality ([www.locality.org.uk](http://www.locality.org.uk)). The technical site assessment is undertaken by AECOM on behalf of Locality. The sites that are considered 'suitable' from the technical assessment are then published for public consultation locally as a shortlist and then the final sites in the NDP should be those which are considered most appropriate taking into account the responses to the public consultation.

More details at <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/technical-support/>. LK mentioned that ACON gave free support for technical information. A condition of support is that there should be an intention to allocate land for development in the NDP.

For example, Wennington (near Lancaster) developed a NDP but there was no pressure to develop housing, and no land was identified for building.

Louise also suggested looking at Stretton Grandison in Herefordshire: see <http://strettongrandisongpc.org.uk/neighbourhood-development-plan/neighbourhood-plan-documents/>. They are a very rural group parish with several 'settlements' identified for housing growth by Herefordshire Council. In reality, these are mostly just tiny hamlets – they don't have a village hall or school on their patch. They have recently completed public consultation on their options for new housing sites (i.e. the ones that got through the AECOM technical assessment) and Kirkwells is currently looking at the results to try and identify which should be included in the NDP to meet their growth target. Local people wanted smaller sites and affordable housing but they can only get affordable housing for schemes of 11 or more. Hence the questions try and spell this choice out to them. Luckily for them they have a local co-operative / commune type group living in a very grand former stately home and grounds who want to build some affordable housing there.

#### Suggestions for engagement with the community regarding the next consultation stage

- Write to all organisations active in the locality
- School – description in newsletter to carers/guardians
- Meeting with school staff and PTA
- Presentation at the Exchange
- Drop-ins
  - Perhaps ask school children to serve refreshments to encourage parents to come?
- Young Farmers' groups
- Everything must be available online
- Website

- Local Facebook Group
- Posters
- Promotion at local group meetings

There will be many documents to go on the website; Alan will check with Webmaster of the C&L site to ensure that it is sufficiently robust with adequate storage allocation.

**Action: AG**

Instead of just a questionnaire, it might be appropriate to do more detailed document to identify issues and options for consultation, with more explanation. There would be a few full copies available in public spaces, while leaflets containing the questionnaire part would be delivered to all permanent dwellings, just as the Vision consultation documents were. It would also be available online to complete (Word doc or Survey Monkey...). All sectors of the community should be included in the consultation, and have access to the questionnaire in a medium appropriate for them.

As a matter of good practice, the whole history of public consultation is required as evidence. Therefore, all consultation must be fully recorded. Any objections to the draft NDP will need to be addressed, and be either rejected or accepted. Parish Council approval is needed at every stage, evidenced in its meeting minutes.

**Many aspects are fixed within the framework of the LDNP Local Plan, so there is no point in coming up with other ideas if they are not negotiable, or go against criteria in the Local Plan.**

Therefore, some items cannot be addressed, such as public transport or infrastructure services, because they are defined by the LDNP/SLDC Local Plans or the responsibility of a third party. Instead, LK suggested that all the issues of this nature should be included in an appendix of Related Actions so that they are not lost and are seen to be actioned, even though they are not in the planning policy as they are outside of the remit.

It was suggested that all respondents are asked for an email address and permission to contact in this way, to improve communication. The details would be held in a manner that is GDPR compliant, in line with the Parish Council's Privacy Policy.

**Next steps**

LK will prepare a quotation that identifies costs for individual actions.

The PC Clerk will submit a grant application with Simon's assistance to pay for the consultancy work.

Kirkwells can provide support for this application.

SG is to recommend to the PC that Kirkwells be engaged as consultants on the NDP.

There will be a working meeting with the consultant to develop the first draft of a questionnaire, or a broader document containing the questionnaire.

DJG

15.8.19

2nd draft 17.8.19

3rd draft 26.8.19