

UPPINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Notes of an Extra Ordinary Meeting of the Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Group (NPAG) held on Wednesday May 8th 2019 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber

Present (18 voting members)

David Ainslie, Sharon Aumis, Edward Baines, David Casewell (Chair), Pam Dalby, Christine Edwards, Cornelius Vincent-Enright, Kath Gilbert, Miranda Jones, Jane Lang, Chris Merricks, Richard Reeve, Mark Shaw, Margaret Simpson, Ron Simpson, Pat Taylor, Janet Thomson, Phil Wignell.

1. Chair's Welcome

David Casewell welcomed everyone to the meeting and, in the absence of the proper officer, invited members of the committee to approve that Ron Simpson, Neighbourhood Planning Champion and NPAG Vice-Chair take the notes of the meeting. The proposal was unanimously agreed. The Chair next confirmed that all 'councillor delegates' present had signed their 'acceptance of office' paperwork to enable them to vote. It was noted that they had. Reminding everyone that the meeting was being recorded and would be published on the town council website, the Chair welcomed four members of the public sitting in the gallery.

2. Apologies for Absence

Pete Rees, Howard Thompson – both were on holiday

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Point of Information

A member of the committee queried the missing minutes of the group's last meeting which appeared not to have been circulated to everyone, nor published on the town council website. The Chair confirmed he would make enquiries but believed there had been technical difficulties in publishing the minutes.

5. Formal Agenda Item 1 - Vote of No Confidence in the Chair

The Chair invited Chris Merricks, a NPAG school representative, to speak.

Chris outlined a number of areas of concern which he clarified were about the leadership and governance of the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group rather than about the Chair personally. The issues included:-

- a) No action or progress on the Plan for some months
- b) The failure of the council to deliver the community engagement event agreed by NPAG
- c) Community concerns were non-political, hence non councillors calling the extraordinary meeting and raising the matter for debate
- d) It was felt that stronger leadership of the plan process for the future was required

Chris closed by stating that the majority of community representatives present were therefore calling for change, hence the second item on the agenda.

Janet Thompson, Chair of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum, was next invited to speak. She reminded everyone that NPAG representatives were democratically elected by their groups and working on behalf of the community. They deserved to be heard. Change was required.

Business representative Jane Lang echoed the concerns expressed by community and resident group representatives and indicated that three elements needed to be addressed to move forward. They were:-

- a) Governance of the Neighbourhood Plan updating process
- b) The election of a new Chair and Vice Chair
- c) Effective partnership working

Following much discussion, it was proposed by Mark Shaw and seconded by David Ainslie that this agenda item should be formally deferred until the next NPAG meeting and that the current meeting should move forward to the next item on the agenda: 12 votes in favour and 6 abstentions.

The Chair was also invited to provide the group with a report before the next NPAG meeting as to why progress to date had been so slow.

6. Formal Agenda Item 2 – Nominate a Chair and Deputy Chair of NPAG

Following extensive discussion on:-

- a) The need to forward clear recommendations (giving a choice) for the position of Chair of NPAG for 2019/20 for consideration at the Town Council's AGM to be held on Wednesday May 15th 2019
- b) Possible motions subsequently withdrawn

It was resolved that:-

- a) The position of Vice Chair be determined by the group once the Chair had been agreed by council (Unanimous)
- b) Chris Merricks (proposed by Christine Edwards: seconded by Janet Thompson) and Jane Lang (proposed by David Ainslie: seconded by Mark Shaw) both be nominated for the position of NPAG Chair with all nominees for the role being required to prepare, and submit in advance to the Town Council, a short written presentation on their suitability for the role and why they might be the best candidate (17 votes for with 1 abstention).

7. Formal Agenda Item 3 – Results of the above to be tabled at the next Council Meeting

It was agreed that these notes be forwarded in time to inform the 2019 AGM of UTC and that NPAG should next meet in June 2019. It was also agreed that the council be invited to bring the minutes of meetings up to date on the UTC website.

Ron Simpson 13.5.2019