

THORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

3rd AGM OF THORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER 2019 5.30PM – RUTHWYKE ROOM, THORPE

List of apologies and Forum members attending attached and also Minutes from previous AGM agreed at this point

1. Welcome

Linda Gillham, Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all present. Linda said that exactly four years ago in November 2015 proposals were mentioned about Thorpe being removed from The Green Belt and this prompted both Elaine and Linda to attend training seminars to discuss the way forward for Thorpe to have its own Neighbourhood Plan.

One year ago, Jon Dowty the Planning Consultant from O'NeillHomer was appointed. He has completed in excess of 100 Plans, but states that this one has proved to be more complicated than most, especially with the constraints. This will be the first in Runnymede with two others proposed – Virginia Water and Englefield Green.

There is also new guidance in the NPPF with particular relevance to Para 136 where the Forum can bring forward changes to the Green Belt boundary to include or exclude land. This is being considered for site at Coltscroft and also the potential site for Cemex land at corner of Ten Acre Lane and Coldharbour Lane. Linda wanted to pass on her gratitude to Nigel Robbins for all his help with the TNF website.

2. Constitution

It was agreed that the only amendment to the Constitution was under 5 – Management Committee – (2) which should say Committee members.

It was agreed that the Constitution would be further reviewed at AGM in 2020

3. Election of Officers

Linda Gillham, current Chair, Elaine Gill, Secretary and Ian Patenall, Treasurer were all voted on bloc with Margaret Harnden nominating and Mary Abrahams seconding the nominations. Nigel Robbins stood down as Vice Chair but will stay on Forum for a further year.

4. Reports from Officers

Linda, Chair of TNF had read her report in the welcome. Elaine Gill, Secretary read her Report. It was confirmed that eight meetings had taken place between December 2018 and October 2019 and also a third Drop in Open Event in June.

There has also been various meetings with the sub working group, RBC Officers, and potential developers for sites within designated area. Letters have also been sent during the year and also email correspondence with the Planning Consultant O'Neill Homer (Jon Dowty) and AeCom to formulate all the policies and wording for the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Ian Patenall, Treasurer distributed his financial report. We have applied for and been successful in applying for 5 grants. The breakdown of the last grant shows that from the £9000 agreed, expenditure was £8232.34 leaving a balance of £767.66 plus £494.78 available after 5th April 2020. All debts incurred up to October 2019 have been paid.

Runnymede Borough Council also allocated a grant of £7000.00 and £3300 has already been spent towards consultants fees. It is hoped that we have sufficient funds but there are concerns about ongoing costs especially with guidelines constantly changing.

There are no formal accounts as money is sent back to locality and then has to be reapplied for and this is all dealt with via Accounts Dept at RBC.

4. Regulation 14 Consultation

Linda said that we are now prepared to go out to consultation from Friday 8th November for six weeks, ending on 20th December. It was agreed there may be some slippage and so questionnaires will be accepted up until 23rd December.

All statutory consultees and all landowners would be notified and all properties within designated area and folders containing the draft Neighbourhood Plan and questionnaires would be left at St. Marys church, Thorpe, The Red Lion public house, Egham Library and Virginia Library. Both leaflets and questionnaire forms are ready for distribution.

The sub working group will then collate the information to prepare for meeting on 8th January where responses/and possible modifications will be discussed.

This will then go forward to the planning examiner via RBC who will organise a Referendum.

Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan must coincide with the Runnymede Local Plan. It cannot take the lead. There is also the question of purdah during local elections in April/May 2020 so the timeline is critical.

It was proposed by Nigel Edwards and seconded by Mary Abrahams that we proceed to Regulation 14.

5. Views/comments from Forum members and attendees

Philip Hall asked about the funding of River Thames Scheme, Linda confirmed that RBC are making a contribution towards the funding but the vast amount will come from SCC as a levy across the whole of the County.

There are concerns from some present that this project will do very little to alleviate any possible flooding in Thorpe and surrounding area. Nigel Robbins said it was not a panacea and nothing would totally resolve the flooding issues.

Neil Jeppeson said that existing information goes back to 2009 and the more recent surveys from 2017-2018 are not officially out there and being used. They are not on the RBC website. The E Agency have completed surveys for zones 3 & 3a but not 2.

It was stated that our Neighbourhood Plan only covers the here and now and cannot fully detail the RTS and new possible designation of flood zones. Neil Jeppeson also made the comment that the proposed changes do not take into account the possibility of the River Thames Scheme.

There was a query about a pumping station to help with flooding on roads or Meadlake ditch and Neil would follow this up on our behalf.

Those attending also enquired about the Cemex HQ site which Eden are planning to redevelop. Linda said there were reports awaited on noise assessments carried out during the Summer but it was hoped that agreement would be reached soon.