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**Winchelsea Town Plan
Steering Committee
Meeting of 2nd February 2005
St Thomas's School
7:00pm to 9:25pm
Minutes**

- 1 **Present:** Richard Comotto (Chairman), Cindy Cogswell, John Haddock, Siobhan Hart-Jones, Martin Hogg, Katharine Manning, Annie Markey, Janet Mears, David Morris, Susie Nicholson, Melvyn Pett, Steve Turner.

It was noted that, under the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee, Michael Melvin ceased to be a member of the Steering Committee as he has not attended the last three meetings. It is understood that he is unwell and has resigned from the Parish Council.

- 2 **Apologies for absence:** Dominic Manning, Mike de Smith.

- 3 **Minutes of previous meetings**

1st October 2004. Subject to the deletion of a reference on page 1 to a list of attendees, which was not attached as stated, these minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

9th December 2004. The Chairman proposed that, as these minutes had not been circulated before the meeting, they be brought to the next Steering Committee meeting for approval. He drew the attention of members to the amendment of section 6 of the original draft and read out the original paragraph.

- 4 **Resignation of the Secretary**

The Chairman read a letter of resignation, dated 25th January 2005, from the Secretary, Mr Hogg, and asked for comments. Mr Hogg stated that he had had no intention of making accusations of dishonesty at the previous meeting, but had concerns over the transparency of hiring a consultant. Mrs Hart-Jones criticised the style of the Chairman. The Chairman called for a vote of confidence. Nine members voted in favour, no members voted against and five members abstained. The Chairman rejected a demand by Mrs Hart-Jones for assurances about the chairmanship. Mrs Hart-Jones asked for another vote of confidence. The second vote was unchanged.

The Chairman asked for someone to stand as Secretary but no members of the Committee were willing to undertake the task at present and it was agreed to seek a new member. **ACTION:** Chairman.

- 5 **Outstanding Terms of Reference for Working Groups**

The Chairman asked that the Chairman of the Townscape Landscape Working Group be reminded about the need for this document to be finalised. It was noted the Terms of Reference of the Youth and Recreation Working Group was due to be finalised at the next meeting of that group, which was scheduled for the following day. **ACTION:** Chairman of TLWG and YRWG.

The Chairman directed the attention of members to the draft document 'What is the Winchelsea Town Plan?' and the attached list of 'Essentials', and asked that members refer to these documents to guide their work.

Mr Pett asked for his 'vision statement' to be used as the start of the Plan. **ACTION:** To come to the next agenda.

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6 Availability of documentation

It was noted that the library in the Community Office is not up to date. **ACTION:** new Secretary.

The website is not yet complete but has most documents.

The Committee was content with the current distribution list.

7 Collection of data

The document 'Winchelsea in Figures', which provides precise bottom-up demographic information on Winchelsea, was discussed. In reply to a question from Mr Pett, it was pointed out that Census data is not adequate as the census areas do not match the Town, and that the Electoral Register is incomplete and only an edited version is available to the public. Little useful data was available from the District or County Council.

The Chairman noted that Mr de Smith had purchased a licence to use Ordnance Survey data. This was vital as maps would be used widely to convey information in the detailed report that would support the Action Plan. The Committee agreed to retrospective approval of the purchase with Town Plan funds (when these become available).

8 Reports from Working Groups

Transport and Traffic Working Group

In the absence of the Working Group chairman, Mike de Smith, the Chairman of the Steering Committee noted that a document had been produced and circulated on recent problems on the C298. This would be considered at the next TTWG meeting. It was also noted that members of the Steering Committee and TTWG were due to meet representatives of the County Council Highways Authority on Thursday, 10th February, in an initial fact-finding consultation. Mr Turner asked for and was given reassurance that any traffic schemes would be put out for discussion and consultation before being proposed to the County.

Townscape Landscape Working Group

Mrs Manning reported on behalf of the Chairman of that Working Group. Mr Manning. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 16th February, in the Court Hall (but this venue will have to be confirmed). The basis of a Visual Design Statement had been prepared by Mr Haddock. However, there was disagreement about whether this document was intended to be or fulfilled the function of a VDS. The Chairman of the TLWG had written to the Leader of Rother District Council about the closure of the public toilets in Winchelsea. An uninformative response had been received. The Chairman of the TLWG was due to meet the Chairman of the Friends of the Ancient Monuments, Mr Frank Noah, to discuss the Corporation's properties in Winchelsea. The Chairman of the Steering Committee reminded members that all external consultation had to go through the Steering Committee. **ACTION:** Chairman of TLWG to confirm venue of next TLWG meeting and to contact the Chairman of the Steering Committee to co-ordinate the meeting with the Friends of the Ancient Monuments.

A note of a meeting between members of the Steering Committee and the National Trust on 20th December 2004 will be circulated ahead of the next meeting of the TLWG. It is currently with members who attended the meeting for comments. **ACTION:** Chairman of the TLWG.

Community Working Group

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The Chairman of this Working Group, Mr Pett, was concerned to accelerate the public consultation exercise as he had his questions prepared and did not feel that the Working Group could do much more before seeking views from the community. The Chairman of the Steering Committee asks about progress in collecting data on the clubs and societies, particularly their external use. The Chairman of the CWG asked for a copy of the list of organisations in the Town. **ACTION:** Chairman.

Youth and Recreation Working Group

The Chairman of this Working Group, Mrs Hart-Jones, reported on progress on the 'kickabout' area in the Jubilee Playground. She noted that, following the inclusion of the proposal for a public tennis court on the agenda of the YRWG, letters of opposition had been received from the Mr John Priestley of the Bowls Club and Mr Ben Thompson. Mrs Hart-Jones announced that she was resigning as Chairman of the YRWG due to pressure of other work and that Mrs Jenny Chishick would be taking over.

Business and Tourism Working Group

The Chairman of this Working Group, Mr Turner, reported on the work done on the promotion of tourism in Winchelsea and its surrounding area by 'Green Visitors' project group, in which the BTWG participates, including a new brochure for visitors to Winchelsea. The 'Green Visitors' project had been succeeded by a group under the aegis of the 'Hidden Britain' campaign. This group had met on 1st February and new initiatives were under discussion.

Orange Action Group

Mr Les Parker was asked by the Parish Council to liaise with Orange to discuss their plans for a second mobile phone mast in Winchelsea. Mr Parker and other members of the action group would be meeting with representatives of Orange on Monday, 7th February 2005. The meeting would explore alternative sites for the new mast. The preference was joint use of the T-Mobile mast on Sandrock Hill.

9 **New projects**

The Chairman asked that the Town Plan consider the 'sustainability' of the community, eg issues such as the demographic imbalance in the population, support for vulnerable residents and the elderly, affordable accommodation, etc. It was suggested that the Community Working Group should look at these issues. **ACTION:** Chairman of the CWG.

The Chairman raised the issue of a Town Emergency Plan. Parishes had been asked to complete a pro-forma by the County Council which would provide information and help organise a local response to emergencies. He asked whether this should be done under the Winchelsea Town Plan. It was agreed that the Parish Council would be asked if they intended to complete the document for the wards in the Parish. **ACTION:** Councillors Turner and Comotto.

10 **Newsletter**

No content has been received. **ACTION:** Chairmen of all Working Groups.

11 **Plans for consultation**

The Chairman proposed that the Steering Committee seek the assistance of a consultant to help organise the public consultation exercise in order that it use innovative techniques which will secure the participation of those residents who do not normally get involved in local affairs. Mr Pett was confident that a questionnaire would achieve an adequate response and felt that, if residents did not respond, it was their choice. It was suggested that questionnaires should be taken to houses and filled in by volunteers. Mr Hogg expressed his reservations about the use consultants,

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claiming from personal experience as a consultant that they were a waste of money. The Chairman reminded members that the success of the Town Plan depended on securing the participation of all sections of the Town, not just offering the opportunity. He did not believe that members had the expertise or time to set up the sort of consultation required. He outlined an idea for a consultation combining a public event and a questionnaire. Displays explaining issues, providing supplementary information (eg costs) and proposals would be set up in the New Hall, Court Hall or school hall. Residents would be asked to walk around the displays in a certain sequence and fill in a questionnaire, which would be similarly structured, as they completed each display. The Committee supported the idea. It was decided that the Court Hall be used, as it is centrally located, and that the consultation be staged over several Saturdays to allow everyone to attend. It was agreed that a well-known local consultant, Nick Wates, would be asked to talk to the Steering Committee about what a consultant might do and to also ask someone from Sedlescombe Parish Council to describe how they had organised their consultation. It was hoped to organise a presentation in about two weeks. **ACTION:** Chairman.

*Winchelsea Town Plan Steering Committee
3rd February 2005*