

St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Meeting date:	24 January 2018
At:	19:30, The Maltings Cafe
Present:	Steering Group members: Julia Davies Chair, (JD) Robert Bennett, Treasurer (RB) Sarah Chapman (SC) Andrew Clayden Mike Dormon (MD) Robin Jewett Clare Maynard (CM) Vanessa Murphy (VM) Christine Stevens (CS) Maria Tasker (MT) Ann Washbourn Christine Whellams Julia Witting, minutes (JW) In attendance: Jacqueline Veater, planning consultant (JV) Catesby Estates (item 1 only) Jonathan Trower
Apologies:	Mike Allen; Angela Barrett; Andrew Clayden, Leah Pybus, Gini Trower

1. Catesby Estates

Representatives from Catesby Estates attended the start of the meeting only (Dawn and Katy). The company works with landowners to bring land to the market with planning consent for housing. They described themselves as sensitive to the wishes of the community.

Their organisation comprises:

- Land team (surveyors)
- Planning team (town planners)
- Technical team (Highways, flooding experts etc)

<https://www.catesbystates.co.uk/about-us>

They were invited to the meeting following a letter to the Parish Council. They have an option on the land between the B181 and A414 between St Margaretsbury and the Amwell roundabout (25.9 hectares). There is no intention to submit a planning application at this time as it is Green Belt land. So they want to develop it as a community-led scheme. They will then sell the planning permission to a house builder.

It is a risky site at the moment because the Green Belt constraint means there is little likelihood of development at this stage. They need the community to support it. Their

argument for exceptional need to build on Green Belt is housing need, where there is a neighbourhood plan supporting it. For this reason, they want to work with the Neighbourhood Plan group to look at community benefits they can offer. They have read that the school is at capacity with no room to expand. So they have drawn up initial plans of 120 houses and school.

Catesby said that the landowner also owns the fields to the south, and the Council say that they are opposed to development there on grounds of coalescence.

If ever released for housing, landscaping would be important. Biodiversity would be “a huge factor”. Would look to enhance with new green space.

An “attenuation area” (ie a flood basin) would be in the design to meet flood risk need.

Affordable housing would have to meet East Herts Council criteria, ie. 40%. This would be intermediate housing and council housing. Size of houses would have to be aligned with council evidence of demand/need. The density is planned at 32 per hectare, which is at the lower end for developments. Affordable housing will be “pepper potted” across the site and allocated by the Council to the Housing Association they work with.

The group asked how committed they are to meeting the affordable housing policy. There was some discussion about the risk of Catesby’s plans being changed subsequently by the developer. They said they will cost it all out so that the house builder takes over the outline plan that Catesby works up. As Catesby take a percentage of the profit, they have an interest in profitability. They assured the group that they have never had a situation where the planner then goes on develop something different.

The group discussed the feasibility of setting a condition that the homes are offered to local people first. Catesby said that it is possible to ask for the first offer to go to local people on the housing waiting list. It is unlikely to be possible to lock in a condition to sell only to local people. It is only possible to control this via renting and community-led housing schemes.

It is possible to attach to a decision notice that only certain parts of the land can be built on. Would need a management company to maintain the open space that’s left, via a service charge on the residents. The council won’t maintain such spaces.

2. Planning updates

- i. East Herts Council are opposing the Briggens Quarry in the Minerals Plan consultation.
- ii. An application was rejected at Home Farm – a retrospective application at the industrial site.
- iii. The group was encouraged that the focus of the Catesby presentation was on a community-led scheme, unlike the sites the County Council has sold off in St Margarets, with no affordable housing.
- iv. The Spinney, Hoddesdon Rd, development has been agreed by East Herts Council.

- v. The Wilderness, Hoddesdon Rd has been sold. No information about the buyer or plans has been located. **ACTION CS.**

3. St Margarets walkaround

Photos 2-15: CM to ask Nigel Copping why the open spaces on the Granary were not built on. It was noted that if these sites are not built on, we can still ask for them to be brought into more effective community use. **ACTION CM**

Photo 12: The Pumping Station has a reference to “the Common”. To check the Common Land register. **ACTION RB**

Photos 13-14: There was a proposal to develop this, but it seems to be off the market.

Photos 15-17 and 21-23: Catesby have an option on this land (see above)

Photos 18-20: Application for 6 dwellings was turned down 6 years ago on environmental grounds and the developers have just come back with another scheme.

There was a discussion about the feasibility of coming up with enough sites around the village to meet the target number of houses. We should identify empty homes, empty flats above shops, brownfield sites and heritage assets as well as green houses. (**ACTION - group**)

4. Community Engagement Strategy

SC has obtained the Otley Strategy and will use it as a template to develop our plan. It is important to group the stakeholders, identify consultation methods that can be used and develop an action plan.

It was agreed to form a Comms Working Group, comprising Sarah Chapman, Vanessa Murphy, Maria Tasker and Julia Witting. The group will meet and work on this – **ACTION Comms Working Group**

It was noted that Hertford Heath has done a good village survey that we can look at. **ACTION JV**

It was agreed that a project plan must be developed so that the Comms plan can be mapped to it. **ACTION JV.**

5. Management Working Group

A Management Working Group will be formed to address financial control and governance. It will comprise, Rob Bennett, Julia Davies, Mike Dormon and Christine Stevens. Jacqueline Veater will provide support. There was some discussion about the extent to which the Parish Clerk is needed to support this. It was agreed to invite her to the initial meeting to clarify this. **ACTION Management Working Group**

6. Neighbourhood plan policies

These will be developed at a later stage in line with the project plan.

7. Governance arrangements

JV explained that we are unusual in having a Neighbourhood Plan that involves several parishes. There is one in Surrey that has 4 parishes but it is bigger, with 28,000 residents; they have just submitted their plan, which has taken 5 years. Buntingford had lots of parishes involved, which did not work well. It is essential to have the right governance arrangements in place so we can work efficiently and effectively. The following must be addressed:

- JV suggested that Stanstead Abbots should be the lead parish.
- A Terms of Reference is needed. Allendale is a good model.
- Confidentiality agreement is needed that everyone should sign.
- We need to determine which meetings are public and which are private.
- Register of interests

ACTION Management Working Group

8. Events

- Community Led Housing training in Dacorum – **JD, SC, JV will attend**
- Beat the boundary walk 13 May 2018 14 miles (4 hours) 10.15am Rogation service at St James and the walk will follow. See Parish Magazine for details.
- Next walkaround covers the Folly Sunday 25 February 2018 meet 11.30am at the station
- Next Neighbourhood Plan meeting – Maltings Café –7.30pm Wednesday 7 March 2018