**ENVIRONMENT SUB-GROUP**

Meeting 2

7 April 2015

Present: Sue Prochak, MartinBates, Alex Hammond, Stephen Hardy, Peter Davies

Apologies: Amanda McIntyre, Edward Flint , Cherry Mitchell.

Resignation: Emma Watkins

1. We began with a recap of the NP process and the decisions taken last time. Alex confirmed he was happy to take on energy generation and to coordinate with Sue on this. Martin is to lead on the built environment and liaise with the infrastructure group and other groups as necessary. We discussed opportunities to make existing housing stock greener through retro-fitting e.g. solar panels or other equipment. Alex mentioned BREEAM in Watford which show-cases model houses. Building regulations have various levels of building efficiency and the NP could demand that all new houses attain a level higher than the minimum set by building regs.

2. One of the areas for further work for the group is to prepare questions relating to the environment for the public questionnaire. This is likely to happen in September so we have time to prepare. The questionnaire will cover all aspects of the NP and so we will have to focus on a few key questions. We will need the answers as part of the evidence base for our proposals.

3. We discussed the mill race and the mill site. Alex and Sue have both worked on this before. There is substantial money available for a feasibility study from various sources including the EU and DEFRA but we will need both the current owner’s agreement in principle and the Council’s. (Actions below).

4. Peter mentioned the need to be able to share files, including maps. He had signed up for “jumpbox” but was not convinced this was the answer. Most solutions seemed to require a subscription. Stephen mentioned a possible website. We discussed getting the community college to design and manage a website for the NP as an IT project. Stephen mentioned that Nick Greenfield is to contact the Head as part of the education sub-group’s work.

5. Alex mentioned possible innovation: e.g. there are solar powered street lights available, including very low tech ones for the third world. Robertsbridge might want to adopt such technologies.

6. Stephen mentioned that Rye has done a lot of work on environmental issues. We agreed we should liaise with their group.

7. Stephen mentioned that Rother Council would decide in due course whether we needed a strategic environmental assessment which we would have to organise and pay for. He did not think that finance would be a hurdle: it was accepted that writing an NP would necessarily incur expense.

8. We agreed the date of the next meeting (DONM) as Tues 5 May. This is a week before the relevant steering group meeting and on a Tuesday to avoid clashing with the elections. 2000 at Peans Farmhouse.

9. Date for Diary: 19 April is Village Clean Up day: volunteers welcome.

**ACTIONS:**

a) Sue to i) identify and contact existing owners of mill site and ii) speak to Planners re feasibility study

b) Alex will identify companies who might carry out such a study

c) Stephen will identify a Point of Contact (POC) in the Rye Environment group for Peter to contact

d) Alex will contact the Community College about a possible web-site project.