Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee

of Saddleworth Parish Council Held at the Civic Hall, Lee Street, Uppermill on

Thursday 27 September 2018

Present:

Parish Councillors: Rob Knotts (Vice Chair)

Geoff Bayley

Paul Fryer

Sam Al-Hamdani

Borough Councillors: Pam Byrne

Valerie Leach

Andrew Fletcher

Geoff Willerton

Georgina Brownridge (Oldham Council)

Lisa Macdonald (Oldham Council)

Jane Soriente (Oldham Council)

Observers: Hugh Broadbent (Denshaw Community Association)

Mike Billing (Denshaw Community Association)

**169. Apologies for absence:**

Apologies were received from Cllr Barbara Beeley

**170. Oldham Council’s Housing Strategy:**

Tim English (Oldham Council Housing Team) was unable to attend this meeting so this item will be deferred to a future meeting. The date will be arranged with Pam Bailey.

**171. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018 were **APPROVED** as a correct record

**172.** **Matters arising:**

None

**173. Actions agreed at the last meeting:**

1. Making Saddleworth Climate Ready, including plastic waste – update from Cllr. Fryer:

Cllr Fryer informed the group that The Environment Committee meeting was Inquorate in July so this was not able to be discussed. He informed that Oldham Council was completing its own plastic waste audit. Lisa Macdonald informed the group that she was asked to be part of the Plastic Free Oldham Working Group which is making its own pledges and commitments to Reduce, Re-use, and Recycle plastic waste and she will feed back. She has informed that group that the Parish Council are interested in work in this regard from their point of view. She will share information as and when it comes through.

1. Unoccupied properties in Delph – report from Cllr. Bayley:

Geoff informed the group that he has identified two more empty properties

1. InSaddleworth – update from Cllr Knotts

Cllr Knotts informed the group that money has been paid to InSaddleworth to promote the Neighbourhood Plan. There has been little activity in this, so it was agreed to defer payment of the next installment. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

1. Administrative support – update from Lisa MacDonald

The contact that Cllr Barbara Beeley had with the Get Oldham Working Team has left Oldham Council and she will be making further enquiries. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

**174. Feedback from Youth Meetings:**

See report appended to minutes

**175. Update from Fletcher’s/Tanner’s Meetings:**

There had been no further discussions since the last meeting. Georgina Brownridge advised that the next Consultation is in November and she will update the group following that meeting.

**176. Survey Launch:**

It was agreed that information from the Youth Survey is to be included, and then the survey will be complete. The Launch date will possibly be in October 2018.

**177. Funding:**

Cllr Knotts informed the group that there has still been no response to the letter written to Debbie Abrahams MP as she has been in hospital. Once a response has been received, he will update the group.

**178. Website and Training:**

Cllr Barbara Beeley has been ill and so this item has come to a halt. The group has expressed their wishes to Barbara for a speedy recovery.

**179. Letter of concern to United Utilities re press comments about water leaks:**

Those present at this meeting were unsure if this letter had been sent and so needs chasing up. Georgina Brownridge stated that there seemed to be a lot of activity in the press and on the TV concerning the reporting of any leaks and also conserving water.

**180. Taxes on empty properties and empty business premises – Clarification:**

No progress has been made and clarification is still required.

**181. Any other business:**

1. Cllr Knotts to speak with Cllr Beeley to find out how long it will take to input the data onto the website.
2. Cllr Bayley suggested that the issue of inconsiderate parking could go into the non-planning section of the Neighbourhood Plan.
3. Cllr Knotts raised the issue of the future of electric car charging points. Georgina Brownridge will speak with Joanne Betts for information. It was asked how this issue could fit into the Neighbourhood Plan.

**182. Dates and times of next meetings:**

It was agreed that the next meeting of 25th October be changed to 18th October

**18th October 2018**

29th November 2018

20th December 2018

31st January 2019

28th February 2019

28th March 2019

25th April 2019

at 9:30am

**Discussions with Saddleworth School students about the Future of Saddleworth.**

When the Saddleworth Parish Youth Committee visited Saddleworth School we discussed the Neighbourhood Plan which is currently being written and asked the students for their input as it is their futures that will be affected.

**Housing:**

When asked about housing the students produced some unconventional ideas about the future of housebuilding in Saddleworth. Some believe that properties should be eco-friendly and perhaps energy efficient in order to contribute to the tackling of climate change. New builds should be fitted with solar panels.

Many when asked whether they would like to live in Saddleworth when they grow up, said they prefer the more cosmopolitan city life of London and Manchester, so will move away. They will come back to settle down and paint pictures of the beautiful landscape; they would like to see houses to suit family life and are nice-looking. Others would like to travel.

When asked where houses should be built many said Delph and Diggle, with some mentioning that Denshaw should have more houses built (no specific sites mentioned). Others would like to see more apartments constructed in Saddleworth.

One student in particular believes we cannot maintain the beauty of Saddleworth while constantly building houses.

**Environment:**

Big support from the students in terms of renewable energy. There was a number of students who mentioned hydroelectricity and the use of this within Saddleworth.

They think we should all do our bit to preserve the planet and its resources. Many support the use of wind turbines and do not see them as a blight on the landscape.

It is important to reduce CO2 emissions. They agree that the current generations will not see the effects of climate change as strongly as future generations will.

**Employment:**

When asked about the issue of employment the students agreed that they would like to see more work opportunities for young people, however, they understand that more businesses will lead to an increase in competition. Many would like to see a petrol station, but not too many shops as they do not want it to become another Oldham.

It was said that there are not enough part time jobs available, and that there is not enough for young people in places like Grotton. A lot of employment in terms of places to shop, are very much concentrated on Uppermill, but there are many pubs and cafés in surrounding villages. More shops in Denshaw!

Some would also like to see a cinema but understand it is unlikely.

Farm shops and food places are seen as being very popular in Saddleworth. Some of the students see that there are not enough shops in Springhead where there are large amounts of people living. Some saw that if more businesses were near Saddleworth School, they would make a lot of money, with the influx of young shoppers.

**Tourism:**

We then quizzed the students on tourism to Saddleworth and what it was that brought tourists to this part of the world, the idilic scenery was seen as the biggest appeal to visitors, although many would not like to see more tourists.

One student made the point that locals avoid Dovestones, like the plague, on a hot day as there are too many people there. The number of cars causes a build-up of traffic which becomes a serious hazard especially along Binn Green.

Dovestones is a massive source of tourism to Saddleworth, however, it is recognised that the Saddleworth vernacular also attracts people to the area; the character of our architecture.

Some saw that unless businesses begin to struggle no more tourism would be needed but if we did want more people to visit then we need to intensify our advertising efforts. Public events like Whit Friday and Yanks Weekend are seen as being very popular; many like the festival culture which is taking over Saddleworth.

**History:**

When it comes to the history, it is common belief that we should celebrate Saddleworth's past as it is a source of tourism; Saddleworth Museum is a good way to showcase this past. We should sustain and care for old buildings, conversions in certain circumstances.

They say we should preserve our heritage as if it how we have developed into what we have today, it gives us origin and meaning.

**Transport:**

One issue with transport is that there aren't enough car parking spaces. Another problem is the amount of pot holes, one student actually had an incident when he fell into said pot hole.

In regards to public transport, there are not enough going through Saddleworth and the ones that do, are rarely on time. There was no mention of the 'Saddleworth Rambler'. The bus services are unreliable.

It was said that Lydgate can become easily clogged up by cars but bus prices tend to be very expensive. Generally roads are too narrow in parts of Saddleworth and in bad condition, for example, Oldham Road through Grasscroft is very bumpy and many road signs are very dirty.

**Wellbeing:**

It was said that there aren't enough practises, you usually have to travel to see specialists. You can't get appointments and waiting times are very long, no more dentists are needed but there is more rooms for doctor services.

Many have to go out of Saddleworth and use Leesbrook Surgery.

**Education:**

When asked if there are enough places to learn in Saddleworth, one child says there is not with the current number of new houses they intend to build. One student said Greenfield School is very cramped. However, others said that there are certainly enough nursery and primary schools, the real issue amongst the students as you can well expect was the issue of secondary education in Saddleworth.

Saddleworth School, it was agreed has many amazing teachers and is a good place to learn, however, there are many problems with the current building. As a student was writing parts of the ceiling were crumbling onto the desk. Many were tired of waiting for a decision to be made on whereabouts of the new building and thought an extension to current buildings or new school on the existing site would be the best option.

Although, the secondary school needs replacing and quite frankly the students don't care where. They struggle to understand why a derelict mill was more important than the quality of their education; they regularly watch parts of the roof blow off. The school is rotten and falling down with teachers leaving regularly.

One students think the battle has gone on long enough over the Diggle site and that they should just get on with it, even if that means a complete renovation of the current building.

**Leisure:**

Some believe that leisure facilities should not only be focussed on sports; there should be more art courses. Some would like to see painting and sculpture classes, perhaps an arts centre would be useful for this, a name has already been proposed, Saddleworth Centre of Creative Arts.

The sports facilities are seen as being of very good quality, the Saddleworth Leisure Centre in Uppermill is very modern, but can be too crowded.

Many of the boys, in particular, would like to see more agility and/or parkour courses, generally more outdoor spaces wouldn't go a miss as police usher teenagers off parks (which are for young people).

They also like the idea of a similar organisation like Mahdlo, in Saddleworth where young people can meet up and use the facilities, keeping them off the streets.

**Safety:**

In general Saddleworth, as a whole, is a family-friendly place and is safe for young people. However, it was said that the police should be more supportive towards young people in-and-around Saddleworth. More police patrols and a wider police presence would be nice, they should be tougher on the use of alcohol and drugs in public places.

It is not as safe at night-time with many suspicious characters about with occasions when men have asked the girls to get into their cars. Other students said they feel safer out of school than in! It was said that the TESCO Greenfield staff are somewhat prejudice.

Many thought they were lucky to live in a community as safe as Saddleworth, although house parties can get out of hand the young people of Saddleworth are generally friendly.

More speed cameras are seen as being of use as people drive far too fast on the narrower roads.