**Garforth Neighbourhood Planning Forum**

**Minutes of AGM 2018 held at The Gaping Goose on Wednesday 24th October**

**Present** : J. Andrews, R. Clarkson, C. Coyle, L. Crosland, C. Exley, P. Exley, B. Flynn, J. Lawn, C. Lomas, J. McCormick, S. McQuire, M. Norman, P. Roberts, R. Utley, D. Walker, R. Walker.

**Apologies** : Jo-Anne Benn-Day, P. Dolan, M. Tonks, S. Williams

The chair welcomed everyone to the AGM

**Update on the work of the Forum:**

**Secretary’s report** It has been a busy year for the Forum, following last year’s AGM we attended the first part of the Inspector hearings to discuss LCC’s plans for office, employment, retail, greenspace and traveller sites.

* Garforth has not been allocated any traveller sites, retail no changes
* Some of the office and employment relate to the vacant plots on the industrial estate, however the site behind the Weigh House by Jct 47 has been identified for office and employment with reduction for HS2.
* We explained that this site has been available for employment development for the past 19 years with planning permission and yet has not been developed, due to land instability.
* There are many empty employment premises in the OSE and east,
* Housing developers have acquired this site and wish to change the designation to housing. This land is not in the green belt. The inspectors said they would take this into consideration.
* On greenspace we explained that Garforth was short of many of the different typologies according to LCC own core strategy policies and we suggested that this site be allocated for greenspace. We would lose half of Hawks nest wood due to HS2 although LCC had not amended their calculations of Greenspace for Garforth.

In the spring we objected to the specific planning proposal for the clinic site,

* On the grounds that the site would be overdeveloped with houses 3 stories high , out of keeping with the immediate area,
* Inadequate car parking spaces and very little storage,
* The proposal to remove the hedge and replace with walls. Hedges play an important role in absorbing gasses and particles from vehicle emissions and on routes to 2 schools.
* LCC refused permission on grounds of over development and passed a subsequent proposal for 6 houses all 3 stories buildings 4 x 3 bed as semis and 2x 6 bed detached.
* The developers have taken this to appeal so we have another chance to comment. This is an ideal site for older people’s housing.

In June we had to submit comments on the LCC SAP for housing, greenbelt and infrastructure as well as statement of community involvement and methodology ( process of allocating sites ).

 June we had a stand at the Gala seeking opinions on Main Street. More on this from the writing and working groups.

For 7 weeks in June, July and August The hearings took place and were complex,

 **MAIN ISSUES :**

1. Housing numbers needed to be reduced in line with national guidance from 77 – 42,000
2. LCC wants to keep to original numbers but offered to keep some of the green belt reserved as broad locations which could be used if necessary before the end of the planning period which was 2012- 2033 and is now 2017 – 2033
3. Methodology was challenged it was not a transparent process on the allocation of some sites and discarding other equally suitable sites
4. The infrastructure necessary to support development, The Traffic modelling report discussing alterations to Jct 47 and a southern bypass for Garforth none of which have been funded.
5. Aireborough, Oulton and Woodlesford , Garforth and many parish councils presented their concerns
6. All the developers and their barristers presenting their objections to any site allocations and the benefits of allocation their sites instead.
7. Our concerns mirrored the other forums and Parish council concerns
8. The inspectors have issued an interim report, and suggest that LCC makes amendments to make the plan sound.

We now have further concerns as there are proposals to continue the stocks development into our proposed natural greenspace near Kennet Lane and also some land near the water tower and the Park homes for another 51 houses.

**The Writing group report:**

Since the last AGM the Writing Group has met on 8 occasions to continue writing the Garforth Plan.

2 of the meetings were with LCC officers, Ian Mackay and Abbie Miladinovic; I meeting was with a trainee town planner on placement at LCC to work on a vision for the future of Main Street.

A significant amount of work has been done on the Draft Plan and we are now working on version 6, having been on version 3 at the last AGM.

A lot more evidence has been added and, following guidance from LCC, we are making slight changes to the structure and are still awaiting promised input from them on a number of points.

The timetable given last year has slipped significantly but LCC do not see this as a problem.

It seems probable that we will be in a position to complete the final draft and go forward to consultation before the end of 2019.

**The Working group report:**

CC thanked the members of the working group for their outstanding work over the last 3 years.

The WG has produced a series of documents to be proud of, in support of the Writing Group’s conclusions. Published on the Garforth Plan website under menu item Working Group, submenu Evidence Base

We have produced reports on local greenspace, Main Street, parking, flooding, education, health provision, community facilities, housing needs, local industry and the character of the area.

* Compilations of statistics – census data for Garforth constructed from LSOA’s (lower layer Output areas) data
* Analysis of reports – extracting the Garforth bits of the Council’s Ward -wide greenspace analysis
* Lists of Assets – community buildings and who is using them, local greenspace
* Advice from specialist groups – Flood Group, local Schools Trust, local Estate agents, local doctor and dental practices, Health Service
* Business surveys –both retail and local industry on the business parks
* Opinions of the residents –Housing needs survey on housing and infrastructure requirements
* A Character assessment - of both the built up areas of Garforth and the surrounding farmland.

Residents are urged to visit these documents and see for themselves what Garforth is all about.

**Parish Council Report**

When trying to set up a parish council there are rules, guidelines and precedents that you must follow - rules eg about how many signatures to collect on your initial petition, guidelines eg about setting boundaries and precedents set by the council’s previous decisions that you expect them to continue to follow if they are to be even handed.

We began collecting signatures in June 2016 and submitted our petition to LCC at Easter 2017. We were required to collect signatures from 7.5% of the local electorate, we actually achieved 9.33%

LCC agreed to include our Petition for a parish council on 2nd Oct and the Governance Review consultation took place for 6 weeks from 2nd Oct to 14th November. 821 people responded to the consultation. 95% were supportive. 6.6% of the local electorate had responded to the Governance Review consultation

On 20-24th Nov an Electoral Working Group drew up recommendations to be presented to LCC General Purposes Committee on 11th December. The options available to the EWG were to:

1. approve the application,
2. revise the boundaries and approve the revised boundary
3. throw out the application

Despite the overwhelming support they decided to reject the application. The published reasons for rejection were:

1. No support in the 4 voting districts belonging to other parishes
2. Only 6.5% of the electorate responded to the consultation

At this point we discovered that Electoral Services had incorrectly analysed the petition numbers, omitting the numbers for the 4 voting districts belonging to other parishes. We also pointed out that there is no legal requirement to achieve a set response to the Consultation and that the response we achieved was double that of the previous Guiseley PC application and 5 times the response to the Rawdon PC application.

Despite these errors and discrepancies the EWG recommendations were passed without discussion by GPC.

Ahead of the Full Council Meeting we wrote to all council members pointing out the errors made by Electoral Services and proposed revised boundaries. This letter was ignored and the application was thrown out.

We made a formal complaint to Leeds City Council. They found that they had done nothing wrong. We complained to the Local Government Ombudsman who declined to investigate. We are currently collecting evidence to ask the Ombudsman to review its decision not to investigate.

Because LCC have decided that a requirement for a CGR Consultation response would be in excess of 6.5% but have not said what percentage would be acceptable so this requirement is currently unachievable.

We will not be collecting a new petition for a parish council because when our Town Plan is approved we can apply for a parish council without the need for a petition to trigger it.

CC thanked the members of the parish council group for their tremendous effort in ensuring that we met all the targets we set ourselves

 The Business Meeting:

1. Declaration of Interest : made by R. Clarkson
2. Minutes of the last AGM accepted with the addition of the date 21st October at the Miners’ Welfare Hall. And the amount of funds raised at the AGM was £37.40
3. Matters arising ( items not on the agenda ): none
4. Treasurer’s report: R. Utley gave the financial statement see attached and explained that grant received from Locality and the Lottery were returned as the cut off date for expenditure would expire before the funding could be spent. Once we know the approximate date for Regulation 14 application we can reapply. The balance at the end of September 2018 is £388.81. An application has been made to the Tesco bags of help scheme.
5. Election of the Steering group : The following members offered to stand and were re-elected : L. Crosland ( chair ), R. Clarkson ( Vice chair ) S. McQuire ( secretary) S. Williams ( treasurer ) R. Utley ( assistant treasurer ) J. Lawn ( membership secretary ), B. Flynn ( Writing group lead ), C. Coyle ( Working group lead ) other co-opted members : J. Andrews, C. Exley, J. McCormick, P. Roberts, M. Tonks. Proposed and seconded by R. Clarkson and C. Exley
6. Review of the constitution ; The secretary explained that LCC Neighbourhood Planning Officers had advised that we ensure that the constitution was fit for purpose. The secretary explained that the constitution was produced for the designation application and several paragraphs were no longer applicable and new clauses needed to be included. Please see attached. The discussion included the direction the forum should take after the 5 year designation status had expired in November 2019. By then we will have used all grants and there will not be any further funding available . When we have passed referendum and reapplied for a PC to continue the Forum’s work funding will be available but funding is uncertain if we remain a Forum. Further information to be sought from LCC Action Secretary. The changes were proposed by B. Flynn and C. Coyle.
7. AOB:

 J. Lawn read a letter received from our MP and his support for retaining the green belt during the Inspector hearings.