Report by Pauline Whitehead. Parish Clerk, Cranleigh Parish Council
21st December 2015

Cranleigh Parish Council and the Launch of the Neighbourhood Plan

Designation of a neighbourhood area for the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Development Plan.
The application for the whole of Cranleigh Parish to be designated a neighbourhood area for the Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan (NP) was submitted to Waverley Borough Council on 12th April 2013 and approved by Waverley Borough Council on 16th July 2013.

The launch of the NP
Cranleigh Parish Council launched the NP at Cranleigh Village Hall on Monday 13th January 2014. It is estimated that around 600 people tried to gain entry to the Village Hall on that evening, but due to the capacity of the Hall, only 300 people were able to be present when the meeting started. A duplicate of the meeting was arranged on Monday 27th January 2014 at Glebelands School which has a slightly larger capacity (360 people). There were around 320 people present at that meeting.

Queuing for the launch of the NP

Inside the Village Hall

The Chairman opened both of the meetings by outlining the background to Neighbourhood Planning and explaining the opportunities that having a NP brings to the community.
Mr Chris Bowden from Navigus Planning Ltd. gave a presentation which was split into three sections:-

- The outline of what a NP is and what it can achieve.
- How to produce a NP.
- Getting started.

Mr Bowden's presentation resulted in a large range of questions which expressed the concern felt by local residents that additional development in Cranleigh would put major services such as electricity, transport, water, etc. into crisis and that issues such as flooding, car parking and building in the Green Belt may not be addressed. Members of the public who were interested in taking part in the NP process were invited to sign a sheet giving their contact details and any skills which they wished to offer.

A total of one hundred and fifty seven people expressed an interest in taking the NP forward following the two meetings and were contacted by e-mail or letter with an invitation to attend one of two follow up meetings which were held on Monday 10th March 2014 (am and pm) in Cranleigh Village Hall.

Glebelands School Question Time

Establishing the framework under which the NP would work

A total of seventy people attended the follow up meetings which were aimed at enabling working groups to be formed. Mr Chris Bowden of Navigus Planning Ltd. hosted the meetings. He first outlined the process, then explained what working groups do, how a Steering Group is formed, how a NP is produced, ideas on the type of evidence that may be required and Terms of Reference. He then shared information about other NPs that were being undertaken throughout the country. At the end of the meeting those in attendance were asked to sign up to six specific working groups; Housing, Heritage and Design, Environment, Transport, Economy or Community and Infrastructure. All of those who signed up were invited to a Cranleigh Neighbourhood Plan meeting on Monday 31st March 2014 in the Village Hall.

Sixty people attended the initial working group meeting. Those who came were asked to sit with the volunteers for the same working group, to discuss the issues associated with the topic and to nominate a leader. The leaders of the working groups would form the voting element of the NP Steering Group along with an independent Leader elected by those present. Two people put their names forward for consideration and at the end of the evening, Michelle Morgan was appointed the Leader of the Cranleigh NP. It was agreed at this point that liaison with the Parish Council would be through a Link Councillor and that administrative support would be provided by the Parish Council until such time as the NP Steering Group was able to provide its own.

At this point everything was handed over to the members of the community working on the NP for them to explore the issues that would face Cranleigh in the future and to take the NP forward.

Pauline Whitehead . Parish Clerk, Cranleigh Parish Council
Photographs by Ruth Reed and John Bainbridge
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